City Administrators Report

February 4, 2013

WWTP Warranty Walk Through

On Tuesday February 29th, the one year warranty walk through was completed. The plant had a few things left to be resolved by Shannon Industrial, the prime contractor on the project. Most of the issues were small and Shannon came in the 29th to take care of them before the final inspection. There were problems with the main door lock not working and also some piping unions to the screw press.

The biggest problem continues to be the Vogelsang Sludge Pump. The crew has been experiencing issues with the pump 5 months after the installation. The pump is not operating as it should. The problems seems to be with the “grit” that is in the material. It acts as sandpaper to wear on the inter portion of the pump. A representative from Vogelsang, and staff from M&M’s office in Helena are working to correct this problem.

Travis Meyer, with Morrison & Maierle, out of the firms Helena office, along with Pernal Whitehead and Denise Hansen, were here on the day of the walk through. They spent most of the day testing pressures and observing the condition of the Vogelsang pump. They believe the pump is having a problem with wearing prematurely, due to the grit issue. They are going to look into getting the manufacture to replace or rebuild the pump using a harder ceramic or steel surface. Travis said that they are going to stay on this until it is fixed and working properly.

Devin Bucher, from Industrial Processor out of Columbia Falls has been installing a new data recorder for the SCADA system. This will replace the old time clock style recording charts. The old system failed late last fall and parts are no longer available. Devin designed a new system and upgraded the computer to go with it. This will allow the crew to have more accurate monitoring of the plant for their reports to the state.

Unmetered Water

As you are aware, Rural Development has required the city to replace all the stopped meters. Another part of their requirement is to place meters on all the areas that are not metered now. This includes 7 blocks on Lincoln Boulevard, 2 blocks on Mineral Ave, the American Legion Baseball field, Fireman’s Park and Cemetery, Riverfront Park and the Little League fields.

On Wednesday, Jan. 23rd, Jeff Cicon, Corky and I spent the morning locating areas where these areas could be metered. After locating the vaults where the areas control valves are, Jeff took photos to put together a plan to have meters installed. Some of these vaults are too small to get inside to install a meter. Also, there are some areas with no vaults at all and will need a meter pit installation.

The vaults that are too small will have to be dug up and replace with a large vault in order to gain access. Once the unmetered areas are accounted for, we will then have a better number of how much water loss we are having in the system.

Water Treatment Plant

Things are about the same as before at the WTP. Jeff and the crew have been dealing with the valve issues on the clarifiers and the filters. With the cool temperatures and the creeks staring to ice over, the turbidity has not be as bad. They are having spikes every now and again which are really hard to figure out. The raw water coming in has numbers lower on the turbidity side than the numbers at the filters and clarifiers.

Some of the problems may be related to the valve issues. Mike Fraser has been talking with Devin Bucher and he is putting together a proposal for replacement of the valves. The problem is that they are all starting to fail and you can’t get parts, so the whole valve has to be replaced. Because of the monitoring by remote, the valves have electronic components that take signals from the computer system that operates the plant.

The problem we may have is that these new valves may require a new computer and lap top to operate. The computer that is at the plant is very old and out dated, as is the lap top that the crew remotes with from home. The new system will have the technology to be operated from a “smart phone” or lap top. Once the upgrade is in place, the system can be diagnosed from anywhere and save the city money on having a technician come to the plant.

We will have more information on this later as Devin and Mike finish working out all the details.

Departments

With January being fairly dry, the crews have not had to plow as much and have been doing maintenance on vehicles and equipment. We have had only a few water leaks to speak of this month. A couple frozen water lines broke and crew was called out to shut them off, but all in all, it has been pretty quiet.

Jim Hammons