

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING, MAY 25, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Mike Kuhle with the following Council Members present: Larry Janssen, Alaina Kolpin, Chad Cummings, Amy Ernst, Chris Kielblock.

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Matt Selof, City Planner; Stephen Schnieder, City Engineer; Hyunmyeong Goo, Assistant City Engineer; Angela Thiner, Assistant City Clerk.

Others present: Emma McNamee, The Globe; Ryan McGaughey, RadioWorks; Larry Potter, Brian Dressen; Larry Doeden; and Janice Doeden .

BLUE LINE TRUCK STOP/POTTER PROPERTY ANNEXATION DISCUSSION

Staff reviewed the discussion item stating Larry Potter, former Blue Line owner, and current owner of property surrounding truck stop, is proposing to annex the 2 properties in order to get the truck stop connected to city sewer allowing for future development of the area surrounding it. The total area proposed for annexation is approximately 125 acres and is part of the orderly annexation area with Lorain Township. Annexation would require a joint resolution between the City and Lorain Township.

Staff listed several issues with the proposed annexation:

1. Annexing just the 125 acres owned by Larry Potter and the Blue Line Truck Stop would create an “island” of 10 parcels of county land surrounded by the City. “Good” annexation would dictate that you annex property piece by piece from the City outward. If the City were to annex all of the properties in the area so as not to create “islands”, approximately 519 acres would need to be annexed. To do so would require working with both Worthington Township and Lorain Township. Further, staff doesn’t believe that the City would truly have justification to annex that much property at this time.
2. Connecting the truck stop to City Sewer would need to happen via 27th Street. Connecting to the south across the interstate would be extremely costly and may not be feasible. The first available location to connect to existing sewer lines would be Eleanor Street. However, the flow line of the sewer line at Eleanor Street is about the same as the elevation of the truck stop septic system. The minimum gradient for an eight-inch sanitary sewer is 0.4 ft/100 ft length. The distance from the truck stop area to Eleanor is around 3,900 feet. As such, the pipe elevation change alone would be around 16 feet deeper than the Eleanor sewer flow line making this connection unfeasible.

The next closest sanitary sewer is at North Douglas, the flow line here isn't deep enough to service the truck stop area either.

Staff is also unsure of the ability of the existing systems to the south to be able to handle increased usage from new development north of I-90, an engineering study would need to be done. Additionally, the City does not own property along the south side of I-90 and so easements, of an unknown cost, would need to be acquired.

3. To service the area with Sewer the best option would be to come from 27th Street (at the wastewater plant). A lift station would be needed to serve the entire undeveloped area north of I-90. Any sewer system built in the area proposed for annexation needs to be able to accommodate future growth. With no future growth plans known at this time it is extremely hard to design a sewer system for the area. Any system in the area will require engineering studies to be done.

Additionally, running utility lines such as sewer creates unbuildable areas. Without platting the area first, it's difficult to plan routes for utility lines. Putting sewer lines in before platting may actually hurt the landowner in the end as they would be creating a large area that is unbuildable.

4. Platting the area proposed for annexation would also be difficult. Access to the truck stop comes off Highway 60 where MNDOT controls access permits. When the truck stop was built the entrance goes right into the truck stop as opposed to a frontage road. To fit a city street that meets standards the entire entrance from Highway 60 would need to be relocated. MNDOT would likely not approve another entrance permit near the current one.
5. The City currently has a significant amount of property for sale on the north side of the interstate. Much of which is served by utilities already. It would not be in the best interest of the city to incur significant costs to open up more property for development before more of the existing areas are developed.
6. To staff's understanding, this annexation request is largely stemming from the sale of the Blue Line Truck Stop. Nobles County requires that septic systems be brought up to code upon sale of the property. Often the seller is the one responsible for any upgrades needed. Mr. Potter believes that a city sewer line to serve the truck stop can be done for \$200,000. This number comes from an estimate from Double D Gravel out of Pipestone. Staff has spoken with the individual who put together the estimate and learned that this estimate was a very rough guess and essentially estimated the costs to bore a line straight from 27th Street to the truck stop with a lift station to serve the building. The estimate noted that easements would need to be obtained at an unknown cost and that any system would need to be built to city standards. The \$200,000 estimate did not account for creation of a system that would be capable of serving additional development. The

actual cost would likely be much higher.

Staff stated the issues with annexing the subject properties had been previously discussed with the property owners.

Larry Potter explained Cenex purchased the Blue Line site, including the drain field located on existing property. The current drain field is 23 years old and the life expectancy is 25 years max. Brian Dreessen stated he and Larry felt it was in the best interest of everyone if an agreement could be reached to connect to sanitary sewer and they'd be willing to split costs with the City. Council member Cummings noted that with development a mile down the road, currently platted, ready to go and for sale, adding the annexation of the subject property would be an additional expense. Mayor Kuhle added it is difficult to market property without it being platted and having a plan. Council Member Ernst stated she would like all options presented to the subject property owners.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed different locations of the sanitary sewer, including possibly connecting via JBS industrial sewer. Steve Robinson explained the industrial wastewater plant is currently over capacity however a study is being done by Bolton and Menk. Steve will follow up with JBS on the viability of connecting to their sewer.

Additional discussion took place regarding the JBS sewer connection vs. 27th Street connection and lift station location. Steve Schnieder stated it would be a lot of investment without much of a return for the City. Mayor Kuhle stated it would be long term expansion and he'd like the City to work with a willing participant. Council Member Kolpin stated going forward she would like to see a cost estimate of a feasibility report and would then like to know who would be responsible for the cost.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Council Member Cummings, seconded by Council Member Kielblock and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 4:31 p.m.

Angela Thiner
Assistant City Clerk