



MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

Prepared for: **Naperville City Council**

By: City Manager's office

12/10/2020

A. MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

- | | Source: | Subject: | Action: |
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| 1. | Department of Public Utilities - Water | Water 2.0 Project (Water AMI) Update | FYI |

**CITY OF NAPERVILLE
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: December 10, 2020

TO: Doug Krieger, City Manager

THROUGH: Marcie Schatz, Deputy City Manager

FROM: Darrell Blenniss, Director, Water Utilities
Katy Librizzi, Project Manager

SUBJECT: Water 2.0 Project (Water AMI) Update

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Council with an update on the status of the Water 2.0 Project, including the pilot program slated to begin in January 2021.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2020, RFP 19-214 was awarded to Core & Main in the amount of \$7,155,860 for Automated Meter Infrastructure (Water AMI). The City is branding this as the Water 2.0 Project in its communications.

The Water 2.0 Project involves the addition of a meter interface unit (MIU) to existing water meters that allows the Water Utility to receive wireless water meter readings, which it will then use to bill customers for their monthly usage. Moving to wireless meter readings will improve data collection, accuracy, and sustainability and eventually will allow customers to access their usage data through the Empower utility dashboard. It also will pave the way for an improved utility billing process in the coming years and will help users more quickly detect any leaks that might occur.

DISCUSSION:

Upon approval of the RFP, Core & Main and City staff immediately began the installation of the back-end infrastructure that makes this project possible, including the installation of three base stations (radio receivers) on water towers, the installation of the Regional Network Interface (RNI) software on virtual servers located at Electric, and five test MIUs (radio transmitters) on water meters at City buildings. That work is complete, and the base stations are successfully communicating with the test meters over the backhaul network with the RNI.

Software integrations are in progress with anticipated completion set for the end of December. These integrations include the billing integration between the RNI and the City's billing software (Navaline) and the integration of the field deployment software (VPie) with the billing software (Navaline). Training on the hardware and software are anticipated to occur in December and January.

Internal and external communications plans have been developed, and a project webpage was launched in fall to introduce the project to the community and explain options and rights customers have. Communications staff will continue to promote the project through ongoing resident newsletter articles, website updates, and more, in addition to targeted mailings to customers in advance of installation. Reference materials are also being created for the City's call takers to ensure an optimal customer care experience during deployment.

Pilot Program

An important first step in the Water 2.0 Project is conducting a pilot program to ensure the logistics of data transmission, remote meter reading, and billing operations are all running smoothly. This pilot area includes 35 locations throughout the City representing a mix of use types and meter sizes and mirrors the one used successfully by Electric during its advanced metering deployment.

Work in the pilot area is anticipated to begin the first two weeks in January. The customers selected for the pilot area will begin receiving their first letter about the project during the week of December 14, 2020. As these customers will be moved to a different billing date/cycle to accommodate the unique billing needs associated with this pilot, ample time and additional communications are being provided for customer convenience. Customers in the pilot will receive two letters in advance with more detail, and a doorhanger will be left following meter interface unit installation in January.

Two successful billing cycles in the pilot area are required before full deployment can proceed. Full deployment is currently anticipated to begin in March 2021 with a completion date targeted for the end of 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

Please distribute this memorandum to the City Council through the Manager's Memorandum.