

Mayor Beyer called the March 8, 2011 Special Council Workshop Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall, 6031 Main Street, Rockford, MN.

The purpose of the special meeting was to review the city's emergency response plan in regards to flooding.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken and the following members were present: Beyer, Graner, Hafften, Martinson and Wenz. Also in attendance were: Engineer Statz, Public Works Supervisor D. Peterson, Water/Waste Water Operator Duda, Emergency Management Director Waletich, and Deputy Clerk Etzel.

Discuss Potential of Spring Flooding

Dennis Peterson the Public Works Supervisor presented the city's Emergency Flood Plan in response to flooding. Mr. Peterson stated that the protection of the city's infrastructure is a priority.

A chain of command has been established starting with the Emergency Management Directors, to Public Works, to Fire Department, to Administrator to Mayor and Council. The Emergency Operating Center (EOC) is located at the Fire Station (6700 Main Street) and their phone number is 763-477-4840. Staff will be looking for trigger points on the river: examples at 10' public works will be watching the pumping stations and 16' a city wide meeting will be called.

Staff is waiting for approval from the Rockford School District to use the High School Community Center at 7600 County Road 50 as a location for evacuation if needed. School District Superintendent Paul Durand was present and offered the use of the High School Community Center as an evacuation site for the city. Final details of the plan should be completed by March 16th.

Two years ago the levee was improved when freeboard was added. Should staff need to add to the levee a contractor is on notice and would be able to bring material within twelve hours.

Staff will be watching the water levels. They are concerned about County Road 20 on the north end of town, behind the building in the northwest corner of Highway 55 and Main Street, Riverview Estates and Parkwood Development on Greenwood Court. A water monitoring gauge is located here in town. Should the water reach 15' the city would be concerned and put on high alert and County Road 20 may be closed.

The north fork of the Crow has only one monitor between Painesville and Rockford. The south fork of the Crow has monitors in several locations. The north and south fork come together southwest of the Parkwood Development.

Sand will be provided and will be available in the public works parking lot and Greenwood Court. Home owners and business will need to purchase their own sandbags and put them in place. A list of locations of where to purchase sandbags was provided along with directions on how to sandbag. Mr. Peterson was willing to do one bulk order, but he would need the order by early next week. The residents in Parkwood were strongly encouraged to have about 2000 sandbags for 85' to go 2' high.

Mr. Peterson will be going to businesses and houses in the effected area to provide a piece of poly and two sand bags to cover their floor drains. One thing everyone can do is conserve on water. If too much water is put down the drains, there is potential for the sewers to back-up.

The potential for flooding is a state wide event. Many organizations from Homeland Security to the local fire department will be participating if needed. The river(s) can go up fast but usually take a long time to go back down, up to a month or more. Plan to for road closings due to high flood waters in the area.

Mr. Peterson recently attended a conference and was told to plan for 2001 (14.5') flooding and be ready for 1965 (19.5') flooding, depending on snow/rain (two more snow events are predicted) or no snow pack loss. The message was to plan for the worst scenario. The water would have to reach 20' to top the levee (100 year flood).

Staff and volunteers will be watching for ice dams. Ice dams can change the situation drastically. If needed, the National Guard will be called in to break up the ice dam within 6 to 8 hours. Public works also has allowed a contractor to store their equipment at the public works building and will be able to use in the event of an ice dam.

Several businesses and home owners in and near the flood plain have been sent preventative measures along with many resources. Staff has been meeting with surrounding communities and they are all willing to assist if needed.

Residents and businesses in and near the flood plain are encouraged to move items of value out of their lower level/basement.

If sand bagging is needed volunteers will be contacted along with news media, city website, school and surrounding communities. Property owners would be responsible for putting the sand bags in and removing after the event. We all need to work together to help each other. Contact City Hall if help is needed and staff will see if volunteers are available to assist.

In the worst case scenario, should the levee fail – the siren will sound and everyone should evacuate. Do not stay, you may not be able to be rescued. Stay away from the situation, unless you are there to volunteer and help.

Those in attendance were given a map of the city (showing areas of concern, sand pile locations and evacuation site), list of web sites to assist with flooding and more sand bagging information.

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Submitted by,
Audra Etzel