

August 2023

FYI

1st Phase Downtown Drainage Bids Exceed Available Funding

Engineers and City Staff have been meeting to discuss options, priorities, and expectations for the 1st phase of downtown drainage and street improvements that was bid on June 29th. The bids came in at \$8.7 million dollars but included \$750,000 in contingencies. Regardless, the City anticipated much less for the first phase and has approximately \$3.7

million available in bond funds for the project and had anticipated adding reserve funds to the project. Total available was probably around \$4.5 million.

The water line bids were high, but did come in at about the amount of available funds that are set aside for improvements so that work could probably commence. They bid at over \$1.2 million just for installing a new line from Kate Smith to Pittman, one block of Kate Smith, and one block of Mock Street.

In a meeting on August 8th, the City discussed Option A, a plan to reduce the project and proceed with a plan the City can afford.



Priorities Will Be Focus of Project

As the city wades through the best way to begin the first phase of improvements, they have identified priorities for the project.

The water line improvements from

Kate Smith to Pittman, the Highway drainage crossing west of the post office, and drainage along Kate Smith and W. Buchanan, are of prime importance and staff

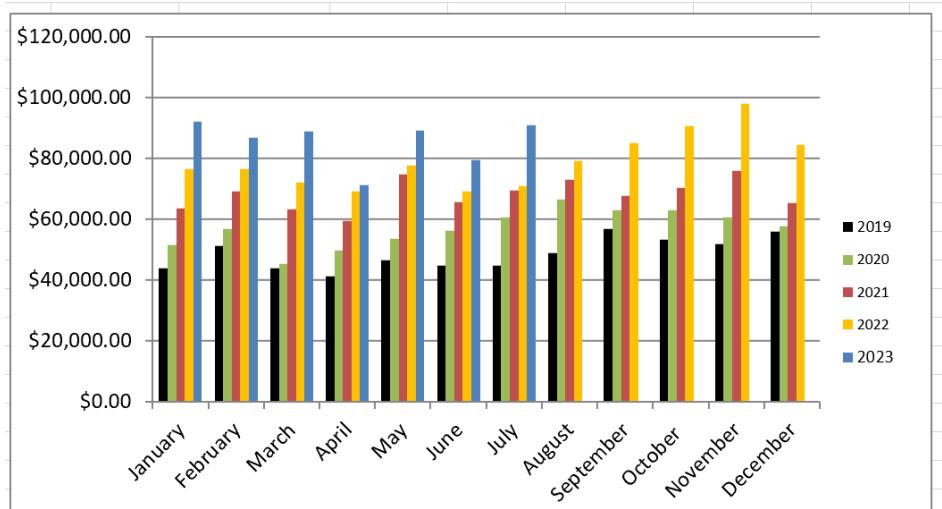
and engineers are looking at ways to include all these parts of the project and still stay within the amount of money that is available for the project.



Sales Tax Update

Sales Tax Collections had a big month, seeing a 28% increase over July of 2022. The total collections were \$249,584 compared to \$194,851 in July of last year.

Year to date, sales tax has now increased by 16.8% over last year for the same period.



Viney Grove Road Project Underway

Sweetser Construction has started construction with clearing and dirt work underway on the extension of Viney Grove Road to Buchanan Street.

The \$2.7 million dollar project should be completed by next

summer.

The road should be one more piece of the traffic puzzle getting children and parents in and out of the various school campuses along Viney Grove Road and Bush Street.



Muddy Fork Projects Completed

Contractors were hard at work beginning July 26th installing the new playground in Muddy Fork Park. The project was com-

pleted on August 2nd. The playground has been very busy since it was completed with hundreds of children already visiting the facility.



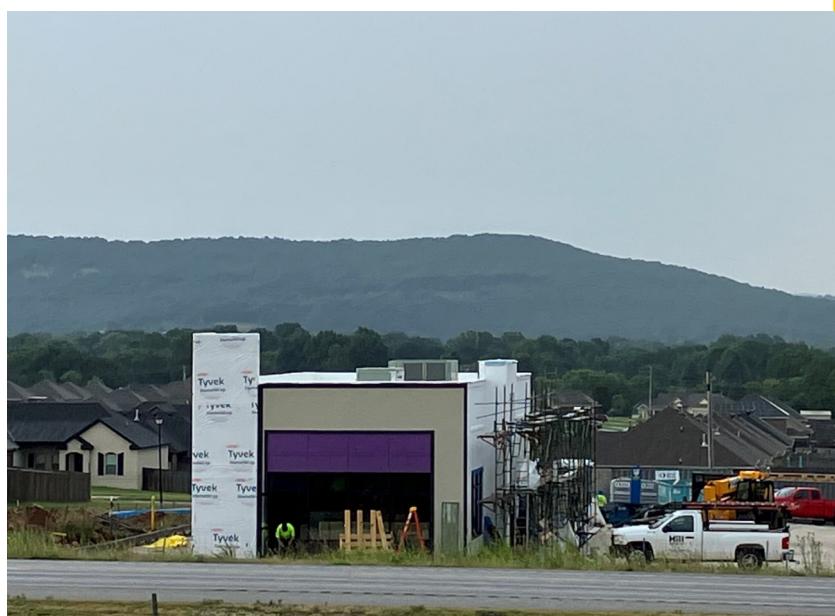
The new bathrooms, finally were opened that same week, but the City still will construct a new water line to the facility, which will help with the water pressure needed to operate the flush valves.



Building Permit Summary

For July, seven single family permits were issued ranging in size between 1544 sq.feet and 2194 square feet, bringing the total permits for new homes, for the year up to 86. In addition, there were three permits for additions/remodels, two shop permits, one deck, and one pool permit.

Based on new housing starts, the city population estimate will increase to 8272,



WWTP Progress



Progress continues at the WWTP expansion project as contractors are still focused on the main structure in the expansion, biological treatment unit #3.

The main component of the expansion, Bio unit #3 is closer and closer to

completion. Thousands of yards of concrete, and thousands of feet of steel have been installed and walls are close to be completed. Once the final concrete is poured, equipment, electrical, and instrumentation can start being installed on the new facility. Contractor, City Staff, and engineers are already discussing the procedures to fill the new structure with roughly 1 million gallons of water for testing. Once tested, the water will be “seeded” with activated biological sludge from the other two basins to start the biological pro-

cess. Each of the other two basins will also have to be drained, cleaned, then “reactivated” as part of this arduous process.

Other improvements include the new screw pump, UV equipment, and chemical feed equipment.



City of Prairie Grove



**City Offices
Will Be Closed
on September 4th
in observance of
Labor Day.
Trash and Recy-
cling Routes will
be picked up Tues-
day Sept. 5th**

Budget Prep Begins

City Staff has begin looking at 2024 budgets and held their first budget meeting on July 17th. The meeting was somewhat of a basic budget 101 class, which was a basic overview of how the budgets are routinely formatted and where specific revenue projections come from and how they are based.

City staff will continue to fine tune projections as more and more information is available but are already looking at some specific goals in staffing, wages, and infrastructure needs that are being targeted.

Salary disparity between the City and neighboring public safety and

2023 PGAP season breaks records

The 2023 season at the Prairie Grove Aquatic Park was one for the record books. Season attendance was the highest on record with 23,687 regular admissions during the summer compared to the previous high of 20,573 in 2018.

Revenue was the highest ever for the facility as well, with over \$88,000 in admissions, over \$20,000 in pool rental fees, over \$25,000 in season passes, over \$50,000 in concession sales, over \$7000 in swim lesson fees, and over \$4000 for water aerobics. Total revenue for the 10 week season was over \$195,000.



public works staff is being looked at and an effort to make wages competitive and is a focus being studied. In addition, the City has a number of new positions that will need to be looked at and addressed as the budgets are being considered. A number of large infrastructure projects, building expansion projects also complicate the 2024 budget needs.

CPI

What a difference a year makes. The City utilizes the annual Consumer Price Index releases of the federal government to gauge Cost of Living Increases for Employees. The data utilized is usually from July or August but is a 12 month average for the previous year. Last year at this time, the CPI was over 9% and the City adopted COLA's of 8% based on actual inflation. This year, the CPI has dropped to 3.2% based on the August 12th release of data.