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CITY OF MILWAUKIE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 28, 1988

A Special Meeting of the Milwaukie City Council was called to order at 5:04 p.m. in the Council Chambers with the following Councilmembers present:

Roger A. Hall,
Mayor
Craig Lomnicki

William Fitzgerald
Chere' Sandusky
Mike Richmond

Also present:

C. Dean Smith,
City Manager Pro-Tem
Dick Bailey,
Public Works Director

Sandra Miller,
Assistant to the City Manager
Pat DuVal,
Executive Secretary

Mayor Hall opened the meeting regarding the discovery of organic chemicals in the Milwaukie water supply. He explained the purpose of the meeting was to clarify the situation and to discuss the options available to the City for providing safe drinking water.

Dick Bailey, Public Works Director, said since March of this year, cities with a population over 10,000 were required to begin testing for volatile chemicals, such as trichloroethylene (TCE), in their drinking water supplies. He said the first test in June showed no presence of this chemical. After an independent test in July showed a trace of TCE, the City had another test done. **Bailey** said the findings of the June test were shown to be incorrect. Subsequent tests by the Department of Environmental Quality also showed that levels of TCE in some City wells exceeded EPA standards. It was the consensus of various federal, state, and city representatives that the ground water supply was contaminated and it would be prudent, on an interim basis, to shut down the well system and purchase water from the City of Portland. He said that although closing all wells in the system was not required, in order to maintain the credibility of the city and the water system, it was the consensus of the group to close the system. **Bailey** said the City of Milwaukie would continue to seek long-term solutions.

James Bodston, Manager of the Health Department Drinking Water Program, commended the City for taking immediate action. He explained these chemicals had not been found earlier because the EPA standards for volatile compounds had only recently been adopted.

Dr. Leland Wright, State Health Officer, said the City had worked positively with the Health Department. He said these chemicals had been classified as probable carcinogens. **Wright** said the levels were at or below acceptable standards, but because there were alternate sources of drinking water available, it would be prudent for Milwaukie to purchase water from Portland on an interim basis. He said because there were only a few tests done over a short period of time, he was unable to determine any trends and wanted to trace the chemical content for a longer period of time.

Mayor Hall summarized by saying that tests showed these chemicals were in excess of allowable limits, and it was necessary to decide on specific steps to be taken.

Bailey asked that Council consider the short term solution of purchasing water from the City of Portland. He said after more is known about the levels of contamination, the City would consider long term solutions to providing water to residents.

Bodston said an activated carbon filtration system or aeration columns would remove the chemicals. He said the City would have to make an engineering decision because of the distances between wells. **Mayor Hall** asked if the extent of contamination in the aquifer was not known at this time. **Bodston** replied that only certain municipal wells had been tested and the extent was unknown.

Mayor Hall said that the apparent options for purchasing water would be Portland and Clackamas Water Districts. **Bailey** said staff recommended buying water from Portland because of cost. He added that Portland had a greater capability of supplying Milwaukie's water needs. **Bailey** asked Council to authorize staff to sign an agreement with the City of Portland for purchase of water.

Councilmember Richmond asked how this would impact fire suppression. **Bailey** responded if a structure fire required more water than was available from the Portland interconnect, the City would implement a mechanical backup system. Portland water would go into an additional 6 million gallon reserve which would be used for fires. **Councilmember Richmond** asked the average daily consumption, and **Bailey** responded 5 million gallons in the summer and 4 million in the winter. **Bailey** said if Council approves, the changeover would take place on Friday at 10:00 a.m.

Councilmember Richmond asked if an investigation were underway to discover the source of the contamination. **Tom Biscomb, DEQ**, said his agency had only been recently advised that an evaluation has just begun. He said that documentation was being investigated to determine who uses this chemical and any problems that had occurred in the past. **Biscomb** also said private wells would be investigated for any indication of other contamination.

Councilmember Fitzgerald asked how long this chemical had been used, and **Biscomb** replied about 50 years. **Mayor Hall** asked who would be responsible for determining the source of the contamination. **Biscomb** replied that DEQ would work closely with the City.

Councilmember Lonnicki asked how the change to Portland water would effect water pressure. **Bailey** replied Portland pressure was much higher, but pressure reducers would be used.

It was moved by **Councilmember Lonnicki** and seconded by **Councilmember Richmond** to authorize City staff to initiate the process of purchasing water from the City of Portland. **Motion passed 5 - 0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.