City of Biggs

Agenda Item Staff Report
For the Regular City Council Meeting:
September 10, 2013

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: City Administrator

SUBJECT: Funding for MUN Study and EIR.

Council is asked to approve funding $15,000 for the MUN study and EIR in the current fiscal year.

Background

At its meeting of June 28, 2013 Council heard this item and approved funding $15,000 for the study from the sewer operating fund by way of a $7,500 payment in the current fiscal year and a $7,500 payment in the next fiscal year. Staff has since learned that the entire $15,000 is due in the current fiscal year.

Recommendation:

Council is asked to approve funding $15,000 for the MUN study and EIR in the current fiscal year, and authorize payments to the Central Valley Salinity Coalition (aka: CV SALTS) in the amount of $15,000.

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Mark Sorensen, City Administrator

City of Biggs

Agenda Item for the
next regular City Council Meeting
July 9, 2013, 6:30pm

To: Honorable Mayor
And Members of the City Council

Date: June 28, 2013

From: Steve Speights, PE – City Engineer

Subject: MUN Study EIR Funding

Background:

Regional Water Quality Control Board (Board) study of changing the designation of the receiving waters of the treatment plant effluent from Municipal (MUN) to agriculture is at the point of beginning the environmental phase. The Board has identified four cities with expiring discharge permit dates as a study case to develop a process to de-designate their plant effluent waters from MUN. The cities are Biggs, Live Oak, Colusa, and Willows. The MUN designation was a default that erred on the side of caution without doing the necessary studies when the Board adopted the Basin Plan for the northern Sacramento valley. The MUN designation means that the receiving waters need to be protected as if the water was being used downstream for domestic purposes. The treatment requirements are much higher for discharge into a MUN designated water body. The Board has come to realize the unnecessary burden this is causing for the dischargers to ag drains with no domestic uses downstream.

CV-SALTS is an association of agencies in the central valley. The association is funded by the member agencies and represents the interest of its members on issues relating to the Board. CV-SALTS has an interest in the timely completion of the MUN study because it would benefit some of their member agencies. They have offered to fund the environmental study cost, providing that the four cities contribute a total of $60,000 over the next two years. City staff at the other three cities has agreed to an even split of $15,000 each, subject to their council approval.

At the June 11, 2013 council meeting the City Council directed staff to negotiate with the three other cities and CV-SALTS to reduce the share that would be paid by the City of Biggs. Staffs from Biggs the Board, and the other agencies met via conference call on June 19, 2013 and discussed the equal funding allocation. The others recognized the benefit to the City of Biggs may not be as great as for the other agencies. Board staff pointed out that the cost to study each MUN designated

channel was not based on quantity of discharge, but on the length and complication of the channel itself. They also said Biggs receiving waters were not the simplest to study. Their position was that if Biggs did not want to fund their share, they would leave out Biggs from the environmental study and proceed with the others. The cost to the others would not change whether Biggs was in or not. Board staff is preparing an RFP with Biggs as an additive alternate should the City decide to participate.

There is a benefit to Biggs to de-designate Lateral K and the Main Drain from MUN to Ag. De-designation will make it easier to either get permission for "occasional" discharges or forgiveness for accidental discharges in the future. There may be circumstances where discharge of stored treated effluent to Lateral K would be an option if it had an Ag designation. If the MUN designation remains, any accidental discharge, accidental or otherwise, would likely incur fines from the Board. With surface runoff quality requirements a future possibility, having an MUN designation may make the treatment requirements higher.

Attachments: None

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the City Council approve funding the $15,000 share for the environmental work for the MUN study, by voice vote. The cost to go through the de-designation process after the MUN study is complete is estimated to be $75,000 or more, all of which would be borne by the City. The de-designation will provide more options for future discharge if needed.

Fiscal Impact: An increase in sewer operations expense of $7,500 in each of the next two fiscal years. A reduction in fines for accidental discharge into an Ag designated channel rather than a MUN designated channel.