

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL  
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

**JUNE 6, 2019**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a special emergency meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2019 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Mayor John Keis called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and the following members of the City Council were present at roll call:

**CITY COUNCIL:**

Mayor	Mr. John Keis
Council Member	Mr. Christian Torkelson
Council Member	Mr. Mike McGraw
Council Member	Mr. Rick Montour

**ABSENT:**

Council Member	Mr. Tom Fischer
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**ALSO PRESENT:**

City Administrator	Mr. Chris Heineman
Finance Director	Ms. Brenda Malinowski
City Clerk	Ms. Heidi Heller
Public Works Director	Mr. Bill Dircks

Mayor Keis stated that the purpose of this morning's special meeting is to discuss potential action on the high water level in Twin Lake.

**POTENTIAL  
ACTION TO  
MITIGATE HIGH  
WATER LEVEL IN  
TWIN LAKE**

The City Administrator explained that there has been a significant public process working with the Twin Lake residents for the past six months on this issue. He explained that the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Board meeting last night provided additional information.

The Public Works Director explained that Twin Lake was at 876.1 feet on June 5, 2019 which put the lake level officially higher than the lowest home on the lake. He reported that the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Board of Directors voted last night to support a pumping operation at Twin Lake City is ready to get a pumping operation going. He explained that they went through the calculations and determined that if the pumping is done during dry

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weather and stopped during rain events, we should be able to protect the Owasso basin and North Star Estates, but there is still some risk. He noted that the primary goal with pumping would be to get the lake below the lowest home on the lake.

The Public Works Director stated that he has been working with a contractor to install a pump in the field on the south side of the railroad tracks on Frank Frattalone's property. He explained that a road will need to be built in order to get a fuel truck to the pump, and Mr. Frattalone has offered to build the road on his property and gave a price of \$6,400 for the road. He explained that the current estimate will be about \$25,000 for the first month which includes setup, and will be the most expensive month. He noted that monthly costs for employees and fuel costs are less, but there is a lot of work to get it all set up. He stated that the idea is to get ahead of the water coming in from West Vadnais in order to stop the increase in level, and then continue in order to work towards lowering the lake level. He noted that the pumps would be turned off 12-24 hours before a rain event.

The Public Works Director explained that the city applied last night for a permit from MNDOT and they agreed to fast-track the approval process, and a DNR appropriations permit is already approved. He noted that MNDOT is supportive of this pumping operation.

City administrator stated there are several options, but the City is mainly considering one of the most feasible options. He explained that the City wants to focus on protecting the house structures. He stated that sandbagging has occurred at the lowest home on the lake, which is at 876 feet. He added that the next lowest home is at 878 feet, and that property is also protected by sandbags for protection. He stated that the City could take the position that this is enough and now rely on the overflow pipe which is at 877 feet. He stated that given the history and the high rainfall already this spring, that is not a recommended option, so pumping Twin Lake is the option the City is looking at.

He explained that Council member Fischer was not able to attend the meeting today but submitted a letter that he asked to be read at the meeting.

*My apologies for not being able to attend in person, but I have a conflict. I am hosting a business meeting with international attendees.*

*Thank you to the Watershed for their unanimous support of a pumping effort to reduce the water levels on Twin Lake.*

*I also believe it is important for the City Council to act to preserve the homes surrounding Twin Lake from the rising water levels and assist in*

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*efforts to reduce the water levels. As it relates to reducing water levels, I support pumping water from Twin Lake with a few conditions:*

- 1) The City understands the downstream risks associated with this pumping.*
- 2) There is a risk management plan*
  - a. that illustrates how the pumping will be managed,*
  - b. what monitoring will be established to protect downstream properties and*
  - c. what actions are available to prevent downstream properties from damage as a result of this pumping effort.*
- 3) The not-to-exceed costs the City will incur to set up a pumping station and the estimated on-going costs to manage the pumping activity are acceptable to my peers on the Council.*

*I know, from an array of conversations over the past few days, that my conditional considerations are well understood and actively being planned.*

*Tom Fischer*

The City Administrator stated that the downstream risks were addressed well by the Watershed District last night. He reported that those areas are important to protect and will need to be carefully monitored. He stated that how the pumping is managed will be determined, along with actions to protect downstream areas. He explained that the pumping costs are an unknown, but they are already in excess of \$30,000 just on set-up. He estimated that pumping costs will be a minimum of \$5,000, potentially \$10,000 or more per month, and pumping would likely need to occur for months in order to make a difference. This will be a significant expense that could easily reach two to three percent of the city's general budget, which may result in the need for a higher levy increase for next year. The City Administrator reviewed current funding sources and options.

Montour asked what steps have been taken to research outside resources for funding. The City Administrator stated he has reached out to state elected representatives, he noted that staff will look in to FEMA disaster assistance, but it is unlikely that this will reach the threshold to qualify for that, and staff will ask the DNR if they have funding sources. Montour stated that there are a lot of different parties involved in this. He clarified that the road and pumping location will be on Frank Frattalone's property and that Frank was supportive of this. He asked if the pipe would have to cross the railroad tracks. The Public Works Director explained that the way the lake is overflowing underneath, essentially there is another Twin Lake on the south side of the tracks, so as that area on the south side is drawn down, the whole lake will be drawn down and equalize itself

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through the pipe that runs underneath the railroad tracks. Torkelson suggested having a written agreement with Frank Frattalone.

McGraw asked if pumping could go on during the winter. The Public Works Director stated it could continue until the lake freezes. McGraw asked if freezing would stop all of the water all over from continuing to move around. Tina Carstens, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Administrator, stated it will depend on the climatic conditions and lake levels. McGraw asked if there is any modeling that shows this is a short-term event, or is this the new normal for the next three to four years. The Watershed Administrator stated that the Board discussed last night that this level may need to be the new normal. She discussed how to cut off the flow from Vadnais Lake in order to protect the areas downstream. McGraw asked if the watershed could help with funding. The Watershed Administrator stated that they provide services and technical support and engineering, and if Vadnais is cut off they would lead and do that project. McGraw asked how soon that could occur. The Watershed Administrator stated that their Board asked staff to come back in a month with options. Keis asked if something could still occur this year. The Watershed Administrator stated that if a feasible option is found, something could possibly occur by fall, and they have emergency funding available.

Keis stated that he is in favor to start pumping to protect the low home, but noted there is still a lot to do. McGraw stated he is in favor of pumping to take care of the homeowners for now, but noted the pumping cannot be pumped down to where it was. He noted that he does not want the property owners around the lake to think it will be pumped back down to where it was. He stated this is strictly being done right now as an emergency to protect the houses.

The City Administrator stated that we are initially looking at a target of approximately 875 feet. He noted that there is a sanitary sewer line on the south side of Twin Lake. Some of the manhole inverts would not be accessible at the 875 feet level, so the City may want to consider additional pumping to provide access to these inverts. He explained that it is a closed system so it is not in danger, but there are other options to gain access. Further discussions about the targeted lake level will be needed when it is better understood how much pumping is required to reach the 875-foot level.

Keis introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

***RESOLUTION NO. 2019-6-60 – DIRECT STAFF TO INITIATE PUMPING AT TWIN LAKE IN COOPERATION WITH THE RAMSEY-WASHINGTON METRO WATERSHED DISTRICT TO BRING THE LAKE LEVEL DOWN TO A SAFE LEVEL UNDER THE LOWEST HOME ELEVATION, AT A LEVEL YET TO BE DETERMINED.***

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The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Montour.  
Ayes (4).  
Nays (0). Resolution adopted.

McGraw asked if there has been any discussion about the threat of more trees falling if the water level stays high. The City Administrator stated there has been some initial discussions but the City's liability would be substantial and noted that the trees are all on private property. He stated that there could be a decision to maintain the trees along the easement area in order to protect the sanitary sewer, but the easement is also private property. He explained that the financial impact for removing trees would be very high. Keis asked how deep the sewer pipes were and would anything happen if a tree fell on them. The Public Works Director stated the pipes are six to eight feet deep, so a tree would not impact the pipes if it fell on them, but roots could do damage.

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 9:18 a.m.

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John T. Keis, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher Heineman, City Administrator