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(Neb.)-Debate, Discussion Regarding Chadron's Storm Water Project [Listen](#)

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 04/11/2012 01:49 PM

(CHADRON)-There are decisions to be made regarding the city of Chadron storm water project, and many variables that are playing into those decisions. Mayor Karin Fischer says she is glad the council held the special meeting on Tuesday in order to better weigh every segment of the project and to provide an opportunity for public input. She says new aspects were also brought to light.

The preliminary phase includes the collection of technical information, meetings with city staff, property owners, and the general public, a topographic survey of Chadron streets and pipes, and a preliminary engineering design based on what is discovered. This phase of the project will cost nearly \$190,000, so Fischer says the council wants to make sure they are going to continue on the future with at least a portion of the project in order to not spend needless money.

Mayor Fischer says many of the city's pipes are at least 80 years old. There were a few upgrades done in the 70s, but Fischer says there is a slight uncertainty that maybe the city has been lucky up to this point and that the pipes are reaching the end of their lifetime. City zoning/building official Janet Johnson says much of the city's water removal hinges on the First Street and Pine Street areas.

Funding for the project is still a little hazy, but Fischer says the initial phase of the project brings with it additional possibilities of state funding and grants and, with time, federal funding as well. There is also the state's incentive to upgrade Third Street/Highway 20 through town, replete with new a storm water system, concrete street, and five-foot-sidewalks, if Chadron upgrades their storm water system on Main Street or an adjacent street, such as Morehead. If the city does not decide to upgrade, the state will not upgrade either and will instead overlay Third Street/Highway 20 with asphalt. For additional funding, Fischer said the council is also currently leaning more toward the possibility of continuing the 10-year ½ cent sales tax that was implemented for the new hospital and other projects in 2004, rather than considering a bond levy.

The storm water project has many variables. Fischer said the more input and more questions asked by members of the community during this time, the better as they attempt to make the best overall decision for Chadron and its residents.

Several business owners and residents provided input and asked questions at the special council meeting. Resident Andy Curd asked what will happen if the city doesn't move forward with the project and stated the city should not be persuaded to do upgrades because of the state. He also said as a taxpayer, he is tired of seeing taxes going up.

A couple of business owners wanted to know how long they could expect Main Street and the parking spaces in front of their businesses to be torn up if that is the street that is replaced. Al Hottovy with the Leo A. Daly engineering firm, which would be overseeing the project, said that the entire project would be done over the span of approximately six months and

that each business would see their area torn up for about 2-3 weeks. Building/zoning official Johnson said the sidewalks are relatively new and would still be accessible during construction. Hottovy also said at least one side of Main Street will be open for traffic during the entire project.

Other residents and business owners expressed that construction is often painful and never fun, but that the results are generally worth it.

Council members will be making their final decision on whether or not to proceed into the initial phase of the project at Monday night's regular city council meeting. They each encourage the public to call and visit with them about any concerns or questions a person might have.

(Questions? Comments? E-mail roxie@chadrad.com.)

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