



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hailey Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements Needed Mayor schedules public discussion for April 15, 2013

(Hailey, Idaho) – Mayor Fritz Haemmerle has set an April 15 City Council meeting to address water and wastewater issues. Water service delivery and provision of a safe and sanitary sewer system are fundamental functions of city government. Decisions need to be made which may impact rates for both water and sewer services.

PROJECT SCOPE INVOLVES DOME REMOVAL AND IMPROVED BIOSOLIDS TREATMENT

Mayor Haemmerle made a recent tour of Hailey's wastewater treatment plant, and reported to the city council that the treatment facilities which were built 14 years ago are operating wonderfully. However, the wastewater sludge processes are being handled in 37 year-old tanks under the old dome, and are highly dangerous and inefficient. Removal of the unsafe and antiquated dome should occur, replacing it with new biosolids basins and dewatering equipment beneath a simple roof. The result would be a Class B sludge, which could be dried on site. Currently, Hailey hauls liquid sludge to drying beds at the Ohio Gulch landfill, an inefficient process which requires costly frequent trips with a specialized tanker truck. Eliminating or reducing hauling costs would represent operational cost savings and higher efficiencies.

Engineer reports and estimates for such a project were reviewed and discussed during March Hailey City Council meetings. A 30% conceptual design had been engineered, showing cost estimates with a wide margin for error. In order to narrow the cost margins to a range upon which the city can rely for an adequate bond measure, further engineering is needed.

The Hailey City Council's April 15 meeting will focus on a rate increase needed to commission more engineering. Alternatively, the council could prematurely take this matter to voters to have the bulk of the engineering included in a project bond. With such a wide margin of error in the project estimate, however, voters would be asked to pass a bond at the high end of the estimate, potentially setting in place bond rates higher than needed.

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