



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 08/22/2023

REQUESTER: Chris Mattingly, Utilities Director

PRESENTER: Chris Mattingly, Utilities Director

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONTRACT K-2324-62: BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORMAN/NORMAN UTILITIES AUTHORITY AND THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.

BACKGROUND:

The Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) recently completed a pilot project that investigated treatment technologies to advance-treat Norman's wastewater to a quality that could be possibly recycled one day to Lake Thunderbird as an augmentation source. The pilot was very successful and our consultant is finalizing the report findings. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) funded \$700,000 of this project and are very interested in this pilot project since it is for one of the inland states that doesn't have the luxury such as coastal states that use reverse osmosis with the ability to discharge waste brine water to the ocean.

Additionally, the Bureau of Reclamation began working with the City of Norman to research the potential for constructed wetlands to be used in Norman to benefit Lake Thunderbird. They realize Lake Thunderbird is impaired from nutrients being washed in via stormwater. They also see how constructed wetlands could possibly play a role in treating wastewater as part of the desire to recycle water. Through their Science and Technology funding, they have compiled a partnership and research team between federal, state, and local agencies as well as our local university that are investigating how constructed wetlands could be implemented to achieve dual water supply and stormwater treatment benefits for the City of Norman and Lake Thunderbird.

The City of Norman owns land south of the WRF that is in the river alluvium and is being looked at to possibly install a miniature wetlands to perform treatment research. It is strategically located along the stream where the WRF currently discharges into the Canadian River. The University of Oklahoma has had one of their capstone classes perform preliminary soil sampling and water sampling and designed some potential miniature wetland layouts.

NUA staff is excited that all of this research is happening for free which only benefits our community with very valuable information that we can use to make educated decisions on the plans to recycle water and reduce nutrients entering our lake.

DISCUSSION:

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been participating with the BOR wetlands project and now has offered to perform research on the site where miniature wetlands might be installed. They propose to install up to ten (10) shallow monitoring wells to coordinate with the overall BOR effort. They also will install up to ten (10) mini piezometers and want to collect surface water, groundwater, and soil samples on a quarterly to monthly basis.

This is all proposed at no cost to the City of Norman. The EPA has worked with our legal team and constructed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and an Access Agreement that this work will operate under. Staff is in full support of this MOU and looks forward to the future data that will be collected.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the NUA enter into this Memorandum of Understanding and the companion Access Agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.