

Briefing Document: City of Harvard Infrastructure Committee Meeting - December 3, 2025

Change Order for Well #9 Generator

The committee reviewed and approved a change order request from Powerlink Electric, the contractor for the new generator installation at Well #9.

- **Context:** During the initial electrical work, the contractor discovered that the original disconnect switch could not be accessed due to the design of the old panels in the well house.
- **Proposed Solution:** To complete the installation, a new 600A 600V non-fused NEMA 1 disconnect switch will be installed in a new panel adjacent to the current MCC panel. This solution was endorsed by the city's engineer, John Caruso of Christopher Burke Engineering.
- **Cost and Financial Impact:**
 - **Change Order Amount:** \$15,213
 - **Revised Project Total:** Approximately \$284,000
 - **Budget Status:** The project remains approximately \$120,000 under budget. The remaining ARPA funds cover the expenditure.
- **Decision:** Following a motion by Alderman Perkins and a second by Alderwoman Hatterline, the committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the change order and recommend it to the City Council.

Sludge Hauling Contract

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to discussing and approving a new sludge hauling contract, necessitated by the expiration of the current agreement and the acquisition of the previous vendor.

A. Background and Market Conditions

The city's one-year contract with Dahm Enterprises is set to expire. Dahm Enterprises was acquired by Synagro Technologies after the principal owner of Dahm passed away in an accident. This acquisition has consolidated the local market, leaving only two primary sludge haulers in the area capable of land application. The other vendor, Stewart Spreading, was contacted on October 27th but did not submit a proposal. Stewart Spreading is noted to have limited capacity, fewer trucks, and a preference for lagoon work over sludge hauling.

B. New Contract with Synagro

The committee approved a new three-year agreement with Synagro, with staff recommending it as the best available option for service continuity and budget stability.

Vendor	Synagro Central, LLC
Term	3 years (January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2028)
Service	Removal and land application of Class B biosolids from the Harvard WWTP.
Estimated Volume	Approximately 1,500 cubic yards per year.
Rate	\$28.06 per cubic yard. This represents a 15% increase from the prior rate of \$24 per cubic ton.
Annual Adjustments	Beginning January 1, 2027, the price is subject to an annual CPI-based adjustment.
Billing Structure	All loads are calculated as 27 cubic yards for billing purposes. The previous vendor billed for 34 cubic yards per load.

C. Rationale and Service Improvements

- **Budget Stability:** The three-year term enables more precise long-term budget forecasting, which was difficult under the previous year-to-year calendar-based agreements relative to the city's May 1 fiscal year.
- **Improved Service:** Synagro is described as a "much more responsive company" with better-maintained equipment compared to Dahm Enterprises. Synagro performed three haul-outs during the past summer, whereas Dahm would have likely only performed two. This increased frequency helps mitigate odors and visual blight at the storage barn.

- **Market Reality:** With Stewart Spreading not submitting a bid, Synagro represents the city's most viable option.

D. Discussion on PFAS Contamination

A discussion arose regarding the potential for Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the city's sludge.

- **Current Status:** Harvard has no PFAS in its drinking water according to all tests. The city's sludge has never been tested for PFAS.
- **Hesitancy to Test:** Staff expressed reluctance to spend the estimated \$2,000 for a PFAS test without clear federal or Illinois state regulations. A positive test result would "create a situation" without clear guidance on how to proceed. It was noted that Illinois regulations tend to follow Wisconsin's lead, but with a significant delay.
- **Regional Context:** Other states, such as Wisconsin, Michigan, and Maine, have passed restrictive rules on land application due to PFAS. In nearby Woodstock, some farm owners have become hesitant about land application after testing revealed higher PFAS levels, potentially linked to local manufacturing.
- **Contractual Safeguard:** The Synagro agreement defines "Non-Conforming Material" to include any materials with PFOA/PFAS levels that exceed federal or state guidelines, providing a contractual basis for rejection if regulations are established.

E. Decision

The committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the three-year sludge hauling contract with Synagro.

Streetscape and Surface Rejuvenation Timeline

The committee discussed the timeline for applying a rejuvenation coating to newly surfaced streets and the challenge of coordinating this with the recently completed Ayer Street streetscape project.

- **Objective:** To time the application of the rejuvenation seal coat to coincide with the maintenance needs of both the new road surfaces from the 2026 program and the slightly older streetscape surfaces.
- **Challenge:** The rejuvenation material is known to be tracked by vehicle tires onto adjacent surfaces. This poses a significant risk of staining or damaging the decorative bricks that are a key feature of the streetscape. It was noted that sanding the treated

area does not prevent this tracking.

- **Proposed Timeline:** The coating should be applied in 2-3 years, with 2027 as the latest date, to ensure the older pavement is treated when needed.
- **Action Item:** City staff will contact CAM Materials, the contractor that has previously applied the coating, to research effective methods for protecting the bricks during application. Covering the bricks with mats is a potential solution.

Strategic Vision and New Business Updates

The final agenda items covered updates on strategic initiatives and new business concerning local telecommunications infrastructure.

A. Strategic Vision Updates

- **Website:** The assistant, Lori, has completed the requested updates for the city website. The materials are pending a final review before being posted online.
- **Downtown Wi-Fi:** A strategic goal, initiated in 2017 to create a downtown public Wi-Fi network, is no longer being actively pursued. Recent quotes for the project were "pricey" and "out of reach." Furthermore, the widespread availability of 5G cellular service has diminished the perceived need for a public network.

B. Telecommunications Infrastructure

- **AT&T:**
 - **Cell Tower:** AT&T has decided not to pursue a contract to install a cell tower on the city's water tower at this time.
 - **Service Discontinuation:** AT&T will no longer provide internet service to the Senior Center after January 1st. The center, for whom AT&T was the only option, will now need to find an alternative provider such as T-Mobile or Starlink.
- **Surf Fiber Network:**
 - **Service Inquiry:** The internet service provider Surf recently inquired about using downtown electric poles to run fiber for Wi-Fi services. They were informed that ComEd, not the city, owns the poles.
 - **Network Gaps:** The committee discussed significant gaps in Surf's fiber network coverage within the city. The network stops at the library, does not extend to the

Senior Center or the Huntington subdivision, and does not reach Public Works.

- **Installation Issues:** The failure to connect Public Works was due to an inability to obtain an IDOT permit to cross under Route 173. Additionally, a fiber line intended for the wastewater treatment plant was incorrectly run to the city's salt barn instead.