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SUMMIT COUNTY ENGINEER

DATE: April 29, 2014

SUBJECT: 2014 Surface Water Utility Proposal

TO: Jason Dodson, Chief of Staff
County Executive, Russ Pry

FROM: Steven C. Brunot
Director of Administration

CC: Council

Currently Council and the Executive are considering how or whether to move forward with \$100,000 in general fund capital appropriations for storm water activities. This office has been requested to submit a list of projects that may be funded should this \$100,000 be approved for surface water uses in 2014. Some discussion has suggested that input be sought from the townships as to those projects that should receive funding. Over the past several years the townships have brought to this office's attention a number of needs, the total of which far exceed the \$100,000 that may be available in 2014. Many of these needs have resulted in the suggestion that a ditch petition be submitted as a method of finding a solution to the problems, however we find reluctance on behalf of townships to initiate the petition process not knowing the magnitude of the problem and the costs that property owners may be expected to realize. Thus a list of immediate needs must include funds to develop very preliminary analysis of these problem areas and the development of preliminary estimates of cost. The attached list of needs for 2014 reflects the need for such studies as well as various ongoing maintenance needs required to mitigate beaver dams and other ditch blockages that would otherwise cause more severe flooding if not attended to in a timely fashion. In the meantime, our office has been alerted to various minor needs like debris removal from county ditches, beaver dam removal and beaver relocation.

Proposed Chapter 942 has been carefully crafted to provide direction and oversight of surface water monies. Even though surface water issues in Summit County are currently being funded solely by general fund appropriations, the organizational structure and oversight that would be provided by the adoption of Chapter 942 would be very useful in determining how to best utilize the limited funds available and in providing oversight to insure the wise and efficient use of these funds. While it is understood that the \$100,000 proposed for funding storm water activities in 2014 is insufficient to handle the annual costs estimated at \$17 million for a full countywide regional program to \$3.5 million for a program that only affects the townships, we feel that the utility's board is a body that can best determine how whatever funds are available should be allocated toward prioritized needs. At some point the future the Surface Water Committee formed

under Chapter 942 may wish to recommend the imposition of a utility fee as Chapter 942 may permit, however should Chapter 942 be initially adopted with an initial fee of \$0.00 per ERU the committee would simply work with whatever general funds may be appropriated.

Going forward, the board would then be responsible for identifying the needs in the member communities (initially townships only), identifying costs and perhaps recommending a utility fee required to fund those projects. The primary benefit is that we would create a forum for action on the surface water issues affecting our county.

This proposal would provide a method for prioritizing surface water projects with township input. If the county approved an alternative source of funding (ie. the sales tax increase, general fund capital fund, or assessments) the fee could remain at \$0.00 per ERU while still giving the county a vehicle to maximize community input into regional surface water decisions. It would also provide a method for creating budget priorities to be financed by a combination of funding sources if so desired.

Please give this recommendation for adoption of Chapter 942 with an ERU of \$0.00 and initial funding from the general fund in the amount of \$100,000 your careful consideration.

Attachments:

2014 Storm Water funding proposal

2014 Storm Water Funding Detail