



## AGENDA SUMMARY EUREKA CITY COUNCIL

**TITLE:** Emergency Digester Cleaning

**DEPARTMENT:** Public Works

**PREPARED BY:** Kelly Allen, Director of Public Works

**PRESENTED FOR:** Action  Information only  Discussion

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Pursuant to Public Contract Code § 200.320(c)(3) and the City's Procurement policy, determine that there is an emergency in regards the Elk River Wastewater Treatment Plan sludge digesters; and
2. Authorize the Public Works Director to negotiate and execute an agreement in the amount not to exceed \$310,000 with Synagro for biosolids cleaning services.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

No Fiscal Impact  Included in Budget  Additional Appropriation

### **COUNCIL GOALS/STRATEGIC VISION**

- Financially Sound City Providing Effective Services

### **DISCUSSION**

At the Wastewater Treatment Plant we have two digesters (6100 and 6200) that process the solid biosolid sludge. On 2/22/2024, the 6200 Digester stopped allowing sludge to be withdrawn. Preliminary checks showed a plug in the lines leading out of the digester. Collections worked for multiple days, rodding and using all the tools available to them to try to deal with the clog. Despite removing a significant amount of fine sand from the lines, continuous flow was not restored. We began using the circulation valve, which is at a higher elevation in the digester, to withdraw solids to the Facultative Sludge Lagoons (FSLs). On 4/20/2024, the 6100 Digester stopped allowing sludge withdrawal. Again, the Collections team came out and attempted to rod the lines, but were unsuccessful in restoring flow to the impacted lines. Which like digester 6200 we began using the circulation valve to withdraw solids to the Facultative Sludge Lagoons (FSLs).

Digesters have historically been cleaned every ten years and the last cleaning was performed eight years ago. We believe the wet winters as well as the sewer collection system cleaning project that is being performed by an outside contractor has pushed an unprecedented amount of solids to the treatment plant during the last two years. Operations staff have continued to do everything possible to keep the digesters working, but they are not operating “normally”. By using higher discharge points on the digesters to remove sludge, we are actually accelerating the deposit of solids in the lower depths due to the lack of movement and circulation. In early February this year, the digesters started having temperature issues indicating that grit is reaching the low circulation inlets. Operations staff believe that this has been and continues to be an emergency. We do not have any backup options for dealing with solids when we have a catastrophic failure, and we are seeing many signs that make us believe this failure could be imminent.

No additional funding is needed but staff believes this work is an emergency that will not permit a delay resulting from providing public notice to complete solicitation. The work associated with the project is exempt under CEQA guideline 15269(b). Therefore, staff recommends that Council declare the emergency cleaning of the sludge digesters and authorize the Public Works Director to negotiate and execute an agreement with Synagro.