

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: PHASE 1 ASH POND REHABILITATION – PRELIMINARY PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

**BACKGROUND:**

On December 22, 2008, an ash pond dike at Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) Kingston Power Plant failed, spilling 5.4 million cubic yards of ash material into the Emory and Clinch Rivers, ultimately requiring seven years and costing TVA \$1.2 billion to cleanup and repair the damage. This failure was the impetus for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to launch an effort to assess the structural integrity of ash impoundment and landfill dikes at power plants nationwide.

In August of 2012, an engineering consulting firm, Dewberry Consultants, LLC of Fairfax, Virginia, working on behalf of EPA performed an on-site inspection and assessment of the impoundment dikes at the City's ash and lime pond system. A final report of the assessment was issued by EPA in April of 2014, which included recommendations that EPA expected the City to undertake. The report's recommendations included engineering analyses and studies to assess specific risks, and physical enhancements to the dikes and embankments to reduce the risk of failure.

**This request for approval of plans and specifications by the Ames City Council, is for Phase 1 of the project for the purpose of bidding and hiring a contractor to furnish labor, materials, and equipment to clear and grub trees and brush from the internal ash pond embankments, and to reshape the embankment slopes.**

**Phase 2, would be to provide erosion protection of the interior embankment slopes.** This phase, however, may be affected by the Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR) regulation, which was recently promulgated by EPA. City staff is currently assessing this new regulation and its impact upon plant operations, and consulting with legal and engineering experts regarding the best operating and compliance strategies. If Phase 2 is necessary, staff will seek approval at a future City Council meeting.

The engineer's estimate of this project (Phase 1) is \$75,000.

Funding for Phase 1 is available from the approved FY2014/15 Power Plant operating budget in the Unit #8 Ash system account. This account contains \$134,000 and will be carried over to the FY 2015/16 budget.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the preliminary plans and specifications for Phase 1 Ash Pond Rehabilitation and set August 13, 2015, as the bid due date and August 25, 2015, as the date of public hearing and award of contract.

2. Delay the approval of plans and specifications for Phase 1 Ash Pond Rehabilitation.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

This work is part of an action plan the City committed to with EPA following their 2012 inspection and assessment of the ash and lime pond dikes, and the recommendations contained in the final report issued in 2014. The City needs to follow through on these commitments. Delay or failure to follow through would over time erode the trust it needs to have with the regulatory agencies, and could result in further action being taken by EPA to force the City to comply with the recommendations contained in the inspection report. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as stated above.