

City working on bulk water deal

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An issue between the City of Douglas and a local developer involving large quantities of city water is moving forward, but with a few unknowns.

Back in November a company called Wyoming Contract Transportation LLC came before the city council to discuss options for additional water for a dust suppressant operation. According to the city, the company has a deal for over 20 million gallons over a period of two years, but they would like another 50 million.

“What I ask is they have to demonstrate (to the city council) and prove to me there’s a legitimate basis for this massive amount of additional water, “ City Administrator Steve Henning said. “We’ve never given anybody else that much water. If they can present to me a redacted, or copy of the contract that they say they have in place to supply this much dust suppression to the mines (it will go before the city council).

In the mean time the city has given the company a list of city violations to be corrected in order for operations to continue in Douglas. Requirements include detailed descriptions of the dust suppression operation, time frames, site plan revisions and other requirements, which need to be met by Feb. 10.

“Well they’re are up and going,” Henning said. “They’re not 100 percent right now, but they are not legitimate, they still have code violations, but I given them until Feb. 10 to clear those violations. They’ve got a septic tank, they’ve got to remove and then they have to put in an additional tap over there for their irrigation, then they have to address the plumbing and sewer system.”

Todd Van Rensselaer declined to comment about the company’s request for additional water until the deal is complete. But he did say the company is working to fix the violations. However, Van Rensselaer in November expressed frustrations with city staff.

The company currently has a 3 inch city water tap, and pays an industrial rate for water, which is around \$2.50 per 1,000 gallons, city documents state.

In November, city staff told the council they were concerned about a possible fill station at the company’s site in Douglas near the Forest Service office on Richards Street.

City attorney Peg Trent told the council in November that in order for the company to sell city water directly from a fill station, it would require a temporary use agreement with the state engineer.

However, Henning said he is concerned if the city gives 70 million gallons to one customer, other customers might demand similar amounts.

“Right now they are approved for two years up to 20 million over two years,” Henning said. “They are in writing and in record they actually want 70 million over two years. That would way exceed anything we have previously agreed to including Chesapeake and they are only 20 million.”