

Committee of the Whole Meeting  
June 16, 2021

The Fergus Falls City Council met as a Committee of the Whole on June 16, 2021 at 7:00 am in the City Council Chambers. Mayor Schierer called the meeting to order and the following council members were in attendance: Hicks, Fish, Hagberg, Kvamme, Rufer, Thompson, and Arneson. Gustafson was absent.

**State Bonding Request for Riverfront Corridor Phase Two**

The city previously secured \$1.75 million in state bonding for the downtown riverfront project. This has become a two phased project over multiple years and the city has an opportunity to seek additional state funding for Phase Two, which would be shovel ready in 2022. Phase Two would consist of the extension of the riverfront balcony, a splash pad and a bicycle/pedestrian bridge to connect the river walk on the north and south sides. City staff are seeking authorization to submit a state legislature bonding request in the amount of \$1 million for the second phase of the project. The required 50% match has already been secured and the city's financing plan would remain as presented. If the request is successful, the local taxpayer's share of the project cost would be reduced by \$1 million. Bonding requests are due by June 18 so the council was asked to provide a resolution today. Our local legislators are aware of the city's intent and have pledged to introduce the bill at the 2022 legislative session. Rufer offered **Resolution #118-2021** supporting a state bonding request in the amount of \$1 million for Phase Two of the Downtown Riverfront corridor project, which was seconded by Thompson and was adopted.

**Animal Release Fee**

Section 91.01 of the City Code deals with animals running at large and has a provision for a fee to be paid to release an animal that has been brought to the Humane Society. The fee for this release has been proposed at \$25 for the first violation and an increasing fee of \$25 each subsequent time the same animal has been brought to the Humane Society. The pet owner would be contacted when the animal is brought in and informed they need to pay the fee at City Hall prior to the animal being released. The collected fees would offset Animal Control expenses. The increasing fees were proposed to minimize the animals who are repeat running at large offenders. A motion and second were made by Arneson and Fish to recommend the council implement a release permit fee for animals boarded at the Otter Tail County Humane Society and the motion carried.

**PI 5333 Union Avenue Street and Pedestrian Project**

During the final design for PI 5333, the Union Avenue street and pedestrian improvement project, it was found there is an adequate utility easement, but inadequate legal street right of way for this project. To comply with the state aid process for this project the property owner, Kevin Bartram, was contacted and agrees to grant the city a perpetual street easement over, under and across the property (Reserve 70) to allow the city to continue proceeding with the project. The cost of the easement is proposed at \$1.00. A motion and second were made by Fish and Arneson to recommend the council authorize the City Engineer and City Attorney to execute a perpetual street easement over, under and across Reserve 70 between the City of Fergus Falls and Kevin Bartram and the motion carried.

**PI 9771 Closed Landfill Update**

Last year the city engaged the professional services of Houston Engineering to develop a working plan for the closed landfill site to satisfy the MPCA requirements. Dennis Alpine and Brad Peschongy

provided an update on their work and what they have learned through sampling the SW 184 site. The city has been monitoring groundwater, leachate and gas, treating leachate and mowing the site. Houston Engineering has been studying the level and extent of contamination and the effect on surrounding landowners. They provided a comprehensive review of their work the past year and explained the complexity of the topography of the site as it was once a glacier that pushed sand and gravel into the area. They have been working in conjunction with property owners with private wells to ensure the safety of their water source, although most of these homes have converted to city water services for their potable water supply. They have been tracing the direction of the groundwater flow and feel the bacteria and chemistry of the soils will continue to degrade the traces of chemicals that were disposed of in the landfill years ago. The team from Houston Engineering felt what they are seeing is common with sites this age, they addressed questions of the council and will continue providing updates to the city as required by the MPCA permit.

The meeting concluded at 7:40 am

*Lynne Olson*