

Committee of the Whole Meeting  
September 29, 2021

The Fergus Falls City Council met as a Committee of the Whole on Wednesday September 29, 2021 at 7:00 am in the City Council Chambers. Mayor Schierer called the meeting to order and the following members were present: Gustafson, Hicks, Fish, Hagberg, Kvamme, Rufer and Thompson. Arneson was absent.

**West Central Initiative**

Samantha VanWechel-Meyer provided an update on the programs and activities at West Central Initiative. Their partnership with the city allowed them to be responsive through the pandemic by providing loans and grants for numerous businesses, non-profits and organizations. West Central Initiative is working on a comprehensive economic strategy in nine areas that will guide their work over the next four years. The organization was thanked for their efforts to strengthen our region and VanWechel-Meyer said they are eager to continue their partnership with the city.

**725 W Maple Street**

The city purchased the house located at 725 W Maple Street due to stormwater issues on the property. In June of 2021 the council authorized putting this home on the market with proper disclosures of the previous owner's problems. An offer in the amount of \$145,000 has been received. The buyer is putting \$2,000 in earnest money on the property with the contingency of an inspection and financing. The city feels this is a fair offer as they have \$126,000 invested in the property and the estimated proceeds are \$136,000. An inspection has been completed and there are some issues the city needs to address for the sale to proceed. A closing date for the property would be on or before October 22. City Administrator Andrew Bremseth believes these issues can be completed with the city still being profitable. A final price will be brought to the council at their October 4 meeting for discussion. City Code requires a land sale be introduced at one meeting with final action taking place at least ten days later. A motion and second were made by Fish and Hagberg recommending the council introduce a property sale at 725 W Maple Street and the motion carried.

**Downtown Riverfront State Bonding Resolution**

The city was awarded \$1,750,000 in state bonds for the downtown riverfront project during the 2020 legislative session. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) requires a resolution be submitted stating the city is the legal sponsor and lead on the project. The city is required to provide a match for the state bond funds and has achieved the \$1,750,000 in matching funds through private fundraising, city funds and the General Obligation bonds sold by the Port Authority. A motion and second were made by Rufer and Thompson recommending the council approve a resolution to accompany the documentation to receive state bonding funds and the motion carried.

**PI 5314**

The city has programmed Public Improvement 5314, a street improvement project in the 2022 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The project will include a bituminous mill and overlay, base patching and ADA improvements along Union Avenue: Fir Avenue to Lincoln Avenue and Lincoln Avenue: Union Avenue to Friberg Avenue, approximately 1.45 miles. The project will also address the existing pedestrian ramps that consist of paver bricks and are not ADA compliant. City staff are recommending replacing the pavers with concrete and casting the concrete with color

dye to enhance the new surface. The total project cost estimate is \$1,020,000 and would be 80% funded by federal funds and 20% through state funds. Moore Engineering submitted a professional services agreement for final design and construction administration in the amount of \$170,900. A motion and second were made by Hicks and Gustafson recommending the council accept the professional services agreement for final design of PI 5314 and the motion carried.

**Airport Rescue Grant Program**

The Fergus Falls Airport is eligible for a \$32,000 grant through the Airport Rescue Grant Program. The funds can be used for costs related to operations, personnel, cleaning, sanitization, janitorial services to combat the spread of pathogens. Staff is considering applying for the grant to make improvements to the restrooms at the airport. The grant is 100% federally funded and would end September 30, 2024. A motion and second were made by Rufer and Hicks recommending the council authorize city staff to submit an Airport Rescue Grant Program application and the motion carried.

The City Engineer informed the council the downtown riverfront project will be progressing to Phase II next week. There will be no parking allowed in the west parking lot so crews can remove the pavement and complete the utility work. This phase is expected to last three weeks and alley access will be maintained for affected businesses.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 am

*Lynne Olson*