

Committee of the Whole Minutes
September 1, 2021

The Fergus Falls City Council held a Committee of the Whole meeting on Wednesday September 1, 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: Rufer, Arneson, Gustafson, Hagberg and Kvamme. Thompson, Hicks and Fish were absent.

Billing Policy Amendment

Last year, staff recommended a change to the billing policy for utility disconnections by request (ex. snowbirds). When utilities are voluntarily shut off, flat charges, tree management and stormwater services continue to be charged. For consistency purposes, staff would like to implement the same procedure for utility accounts are shut off for non-payment. These houses still have access to water and sewer access and connections and continue using garbage and recycling, stormwater and tree management services. Typically, disconnected services are off for a short period of time as people need their water turned back on. Staff tries to collect from those who incur the bills, but if a property is sold with outstanding charges, the bills stay with the property. A motion and second were made by Arneson and Gustafson to recommend the council continue billing flat rates for utilities when a property is disconnected for delinquency of payment and the motion carried.

PI 9771, Closed Landfill

Earlier this year, Houston Engineering Inc. provided the council with a presentation on the closed landfill and associated contamination monitoring concerns. After reviewing the sampling information and work plan, the MPCA requested two additional nested monitoring wells be installed. The new wells would provide additional sampling points to confirm contamination has not expanded beyond the current points. The proposed well locations, FF 22 and 23, are located on private property and the property owners have consented to the wells being installed on their property. Staff would initiate ingress/egress negotiations with the property owners. Houston Engineering's professional services proposal of \$72,011 includes physical well installations and analytic testing. Kvamme asked if the conditions are changing into a threat and if they are not, could the city seek a delay on the installation of the wells from the MPCA so the funds don't have to be expended at this time. He is in favor of accepting the report, but asked if the report can be accepted without agreeing to the installation of the wells. City Engineer Brian Yavarow said there is no evidence of extended contamination at this time, but the additional well monitoring is a continuation of the work plan and the MPCA would need to consent to a request to delay. Finance Director Bill Sonmor explained the funding source is the city's Post Closure Assurance Fund, which has over \$3.1 million and was designated for these types of expenditures. A motion and second were made by Hagberg and Rufer to recommend the council accept Houston Engineering's professional services proposal in the amount of \$72,011 and to authorize staff to initiate ingress/egress negotiations with the property owner. The motion was called to a vote and carried with Kvamme voting in opposition.

PI 5344, Randolph and Friberg Avenue

The city is planning for PI 5344, a street improvement project on Randolph Avenue and Friberg Avenue. After a field site visit, a number of additional projects are being considered in conjunction with this work including additional soil borings to verify the level of pavement distress near Friberg Avenue, and the redesign of the pedestrian crossing locations to achieve ADA compliance. They are looking at the construction of a sidewalk on the south side of Randolph Avenue for student safety and

improvements to additional street segments on Cavour: Cascade to Friberg and Whitford: Cavour to Summit as well as a bike lane analysis. Staff is hoping to bid the project this year and begin construction after the school year has concluded. The cost of the project would be funded by the city's MSAS funds. A motion and second were made by Rufer and Kvamme to recommend the council accept Interstate Engineering's professional services proposal amendment for design in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 and to increase the scope of work to add Cavour Avenue: Cascade Street to Friberg Avenue and Whitford Avenue from Cavour Avenue to Summit Avenue and the motion carried.

PI 5333, Union Avenue

PI 5333, the Union Avenue street and pedestrian improvement project from Junius Avenue to Lincoln Avenue was awarded earlier this year to Central Specialties. Work was scheduled to begin after Labor Day in live traffic conditions with substantial completion later this year. Bolton and Menk submitted a professional services agreement for construction administration and testing services as required by state aid construction rules in the amount of \$98,000. Today the city received communication from Bolton and Menk who stated Central Specialties reported materials are estimated to be another 6-8 weeks out due to production shortages in the marketplace and hurricanes in the manufacturing areas. Central Specialties is requesting construction on the project be delayed until spring of 2022. They would purchase the material as it becomes available and start construction after road restrictions are lifted with a project completion goal of July 31, 2022. Bolton and Menk and the City Engineer agree the project should be delayed as they fear waiting for materials and starting the project too late would create traffic and snow removal problems if it is not done by the time winter hits. Yavarow suggested the city accept a change order to the scheduled timeframe. If the city were to push the project until 2022, it could be done in conjunction with the other planned work on Union Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. Necessary components like epoxy paint, castings, PVC pipe are more likely to be readily available later this year and the 2021 pricing would still be honored.

Mayor Schierer was concerned about doing the project during the summer months and preferred holding off until fall of next year. Kvamme inquired if postponing the project would adversely affect the use of the downtown market structure. He asked if the materials were to become available in the next few weeks and the contractor were available, would the city reconsider the timeline. Yavarow said the hurricanes in the south are too unpredictable to know when manufacturing orders would be taken again. Arneson was in favor of granting a change order to delay the work until next year and incorporate the work with the other Union Avenue street work. He felt it would be better to handle the disruption in one year rather than over two years. A motion and second were made by Arneson and Gustafson to recommend the council accept a change order for PI 5333, to bring back a revised project timeline to the council and to accept Bolton and Menk's professional services agreement for construction administration in the amount of \$98,000 and the motion carried.

Equipment Purchase

The Public Works Department is seeking authorization to purchase a WILKENS walking floor trailer. In 2020, the city made 92 trips to Gwinner to haul soft goods in a 30 cubic yard roll off container in conjunction with another roll off container pulled on a pup trailer. A 125 cubic yard trailer would reduce the frequency and number of loads for the 6 hour round trip. This would translate into significant fuel savings and approximately 250 more man hours working in town. The "walking trailer" technology utilizes hydraulic slats that will help move equipment to the back of the trailer were it will be easier to dispose. The total trailer cost is \$89,973.11 and would be paid from the Equipment

Fund budget. This expenditure would put the purchase over the city's budget. However, the budget for the equipment fund is lower than normal due to the expected LGA cuts that did not come to fruition. A motion and second were made by Hagberg and Rufer to recommend the council approve the purchase of a WILKENS Industries Model 50125AOT 125 cubic yard "walking floor" trailer and the motion carried.

Ordinance 13

When the city recodified the City Code a number of items were inadvertently omitted. Staff has been reviewing ordinances and has made a number of recommended changes to Chapter 90, Public Nuisances. The most significant addition would be exempting city crews from performing necessary work such as water main repairs and snow removal during overnight hours. A motion and second were made by Rufer and Gustafson to recommend the council hold a first reading of the amended ordinance language at the September 7 council meeting and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 am

Lynne Olson