

Committee of the Whole
September 28, 2022

The Fergus Falls City Council held a Committee of the Whole meeting on Wednesday September 28, 2022 at 7:00 am in the City Council Chambers. Council members in attendance were Arneson, Gustafson, Hicks, Fish, Hagberg, Kvamme, and Thompson. Rufer and Mayor Schierer were absent.

Otter Cove Update

Katie Ganoë of the Otter Cove Children's Museum updated the council on their organization's mission, success and future growth plans. They celebrated their 2nd birthday this month and have had 44,270 visitors since opening their doors. A recent study showed their organization brought in over \$2 million in economic value to the community last year through revenue collection, spending, salaries, and local taxes. In addition to their play and learning space, they have become active members at community events. They are quickly outgrowing their space and considering purchasing their building so they can expand to another level. Otter Cove is looking forward to the continued development of family-oriented amenities and activities in the downtown area and the council was thanked for their support of the Otter Cove Children's Museum.

Bicycle Playground

Wayne Hurley, representing Pedal Fergus Falls, asked the council to consider the development of a bicycle playground, a permanent hard surface where children can practice their bicycle skills. They proposed the project to the Park Board who recommended this project be established at Broadway Park. An 80' x 80' concrete surface would need to be poured and the area would be fenced off from other traffic. Hurley estimated the project to cost \$10,000, but that does not include the pouring of the cement slab. The paint and design fees would be grant eligible, but the concrete and fencing would not qualify. Pedal Fergus Falls received a \$2,500 grant from West Central Initiative for the project and are seeking authorization to apply for a MnDOT Boost Grant for additional funding. Finance Director Bill Sonmor said he would like to see a total cost estimate for the project prior to committing to the grant application being submitted. It was suggested other locations with an existing concrete base be considered as a more economical project. The grant deadline is November 30 and the council advised Pedal Fergus Falls to investigate other grant opportunities or sponsorships to cover more of the construction costs and requested the Park Board consider other locations. The matter will be brought back to a future committee meeting once this information has been obtained.

MnDOT Bridge Project

MnDOT is planning a replacement of the bridge over Highway 210 and I-94 in 2028. The project includes a shared use path on the north side of the bridge and a sidewalk on the south side. Pedal Fergus Falls and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee asked MnDOT to consider shared use paths on both sides of the bridge. MnDOT indicated their willingness to build shared use paths on both sides of the bridge if they city were to pay for the cost of the upgrade from a sidewalk to shared use path and agree to perform the maintenance of clearing both sides of the path of snow and ice. Patrick Hollister and Wayne Hurley asked the council to commit their willingness to this upgrade and suggested the city apply for federal transportation alternatives grant to help with the cost. Sonmor asked if matching funds would be required for the federal grant and Hurley confirmed the city would be asked to provide 20% of the construction costs and design fees. It was suggested the City Engineer and Public Works Director comment on these requests at future meeting after they obtain more clarity from MnDOT about the proposal, the city's maintenance requirements and costs.

PI 9348, Airport Fuel System Replacement

Bids were opened for PI 9348, the airport fuel system replacement. Two bids were received, and the lowest apparent bidder is MN Petroleum Services Inc in the amount of \$687,450. The initial bidding documents were amended to add more options due to current market pricing. The project includes the replacement of the existing 100LL fuel tank and associated equipment with a new underground fuel tank. It also includes the replacement and relocation of the 100LL dispense from the middle of the apron to the edge, near the existing Jet-A fuel dispenser and the removal of the third fuel tank abandoned in 2016. Alternates recommended in the project include a card reader shelter, gallons fueled sign, fuel price sign and Avgas sump recovery unit. Now that all project costs have been obtained, staff and the consultants will prepare a state grant application. The final grant offer will be approved by the council once it is received. No federal funds would be used in this project which is estimated to cost \$808,050. The city would provide 30% of the funding, \$242,415 while the state would cover 70% of the cost, \$565,635. Staff recommended the project be funded by the equipment internal service fund and sufficient funds exist to cover the city's share. The project would be completed in 2023. A motion and second were made by Hicks and Fish to recommend the council award the construction services contract to MN Petroleum Services Inc. in the amount of \$687,450, contingent upon the receipt of a state grant offer; accept SEH's professional services proposal for construction administration in the amount of \$54,300 and authorization to submit a state grant offer for PI 9348 and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 am

Lynne Olson