

Committee of the Whole Meeting
May 31, 2023

The Fergus Falls City Council met as a Committee of the Whole on Wednesday May 31, 2023, at 7:00 am in the City Council Chambers. Mayor Schierer called the meeting to order and the following council members were in attendance: Rachels, Hicks, Fish, Job, Kvamme and Kremeier. Thompson and Rufer were absent.

Open Forum Policy

The council directed staff to amend the open forum policy. Proposed changes include eliminating the advance sign up and holding the open forum during the petitions and communications section of the meeting, addressing the amount of time allotted to speakers and limiting the use of city technology unless advance arrangements have been made. A motion and second were made by Hicks and Kvamme to recommend the council amend the city's open forum policy and the motion carried.

Airport Maintenance & Operations Grant

In addition to state and federal grant funds for capital projects at the Fergus Falls airport, the state also provides funding to supplement annual airport operations through a State of Minnesota Airport Maintenance and Operations Grant. The grant terms for state fiscal years 2024 and 2025 are a 75% reimbursement for eligible items not to exceed \$70,606 each fiscal year. A motion and second were made by Fish and Kvamme to recommend the council accept the State of Minnesota Airport Maintenance and Operations grant offer for state fiscal years 2024 and 2025 and the motion carried.

Airport Entitlement Funds

The Fergus Falls Municipal Airport receives \$150,000 annually in entitlement funds that can be used towards justified and eligible airport projects. The city can accrue up to four years or \$600,000 towards larger airport development projects. Funds not used within four years must be turned back to the FAA. Fergus Falls has an entitlement balance of \$141,369 they are not planning to use this year and the Red Wing Regional Airport is requesting \$75,000 of the city's entitlement funds to complete a project which they will reimburse in 2024. A motion and second were made by Hicks and Rachels to recommend the council authorize the executed FAA Form 5100-110 between the City of Fergus Falls and the Red Wing Regional Airport and the motion carried.

Oak Street Vacation Petition

The city received a vacation petition for a platted area in Oak Street right of way between Blocks 6 and 7 in the Nelson's 2nd Addition. The land to the south is not conducive to development and staff recommended approving the request. Vacation petitions require a public hearing. A motion and second were made by Fish and Kremeier to recommend the council accept the Oak Street vacation petition and set the public hearing for July 3, 2023, at 5:30 pm and the motion carried.

PI 5364 & 5365, 2023 Mill and Overlay, Seal Coat Projects

PI 5364 is the 2023 mill and overlay improvement project tentatively involving Park Street, Skogmo Blvd and other possible streets in Ward Three. The city's 2023 budget for this project is \$296,140. PI 5365 is the 2023 seal coat improvement project, and this project scope has not yet been identified. The city's budget for this work is \$156,780. A motion and second were made by Kvamme and Hicks to recommend the council initiate PI 5364 and PI 5365 and order the plans and specifications for each project and the motion carried.

PI 9504, Aquatics Center Improvements

Hicks suggested this item be tabled until Monday as the public would like to comment on the tree removal required with this project. Kvamme felt it is appropriate to discuss today's issue of accepting the professional services proposal based on the new legislation adopted by the state and it is independent of the impact on the trees. In November of 2022 local voters approved a ballot question to implement a local option sales tax for \$10.8 million to fund an aquatics center in Roosevelt Park. At that time the city had legislative authority for a \$7.8 million project with a request ready for the 2023 legislative session for an additional \$3 million to fully fund the project through a sales tax. Upon successful passage of the ballot question the city accepted a professional services proposal for PI 9504, the Aquatics Center improvement project from JLG Architects in the amount of \$681,200 or 8.7% of the total estimated project cost of \$7.8 million. The legislative request for an additional \$3 million was approved last week requiring the contract with JLG be adjusted for 8.7% of the \$10.8 million project or \$939,600. A motion and second were made by Fish and Kvamme to recommend the council accept JLG Architect's professional services proposal for design development, final design, and construction administration in the amount of \$939,600 and the motion carried.

Fire Department Mutual Aid

The Fergus Falls Fire Department has been a partner in the county-wide mutual aid agreement which expires at the end of 2023. Chief Muchow reviewed minor changes in the document as agreed by the city and other departments. A motion and second were made by Rachels and Job to recommend the council renew the Otter Tail County Fire Department's Joint Cooperative Agreement for the use of emergency operations personnel and equipment and the motion carried.

West Central Initiative

Samantha Van Wechel-Meyer thanked the city for their ongoing support in economic and community development at West Central Initiative. She reviewed their loan program, grants and initiatives. Mayor Schierer is assisting the organization with their rural democracy program and County Commissioner Kurt Mortenson commented on the direct impact the community gets from the organization.

Summit Carbon Solutions

Joe Caruso, representing Summit Carbon Solutions reviewed their project, scope and timeline to build a 2,100-mile pipeline to capture and permanently store up to 18 million tons of carbon dioxide from 34 biofuel plants across five states that will be stored at an underground site in North Dakota. He explained how the project will capture, transport, and store the materials. The project will reduce the carbon intensity of ethanol, reduce greenhouse emissions, and enhance the long-term profitability of ethanol and agriculture. On an annual basis the ethanol industry adds \$2.7 billion to the state's annual GDP contribution and 22,000 + jobs. Summit Carbon Solutions has been holding public meetings and seeking input from those who may be impacted. They will only bore into private, not public right of ways and counties with bio-fuel plants and the pipeline will see significant economic benefits from this \$4.5 billion project projected to begin in 2024. The council will continue to receive quarterly updates about the project.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 am

Lynne Olson