

Committee of the Whole Meeting  
January 10, 2024

The Fergus Falls City Council met for a Committee of the Whole Meeting on January 10, 2024, at 7:00 am in the City Council Chambers. Acting Mayor Anthony Hicks called the meeting to order, and the following council members were in attendance: Kremeier, Thompson, Rachels, Hicks, Fish, Job and Kvamme. Rufer was absent.

**Joint Powers Agreement with Otter Tail County**

A motion and second were made by Fish and Rachels recommending the council authorize signatures on a joint powers agreement with Otter Tail County for a mental health social worker position to assist law enforcement and the motion carried.

**Police Department Radios**

Last year the council authorized the purchase of 32 of the 40 portable 800 MHz needed for the police department. Staff propose using the city's allocation of State Public Safety Funds to purchase the remaining eight radios at an estimated cost of \$44,000. A motion and second were made by Thompson and Fish recommending the council approving the purchase of eight MHz radios for the police department and approving corresponding budget adjustments and the motion carried.

**Fire Department Equipment**

Fire Chief Ryan Muchow requested authorization to purchase 32 portable radios, a self-contained breathing apparatus compressor and fill station for the department as their current equipment has exceeded its useful life. The \$166,989 expenditure would be funded through the public safety funds received from the state. A motion and second were made by Kvamme and Job recommending the council authorize the purchase of 32 portable radios, a self-contained breathing apparatus and fill station and approving corresponding budget adjustments and the motion carried.

**Airport Management Agreement with Sky Crew Services**

Sky Crew Services LLC requested the city exercise the option agreement for an additional three years of service as the Fixed Base Operator of the Fergus Falls Municipal Airport. A motion and second were made by Rachels and Fish recommending the council accept the additional three-year option term between the City of Fergus Falls and Sky Crew Services LLC and the motion carried.

**Permanent Utility Easement at 226 E Lincoln**

The city approved a TIF Development Agreement with FM Bank to redevelop the site at 226 E Lincoln Avenue for a new bank building. The project's preliminary site design has been completed and the utility easement modification (release) has been determined. The existing sanitary sewer will be shortened from the S Lincoln right of way line from 143 feet to 36 feet and the new permanent utility easement will be 10 feet on each side of the sanitary sewer for a retained area of 924 square feet. A motion and second were made by Fish and Rachels recommending the council direct the City Engineer and City Attorney to execute the partial release of permanent utility easement at 226 E Lincoln Avenue and the motion carried.

**Encroachment Agreement at 1205 W Lincoln Ave**

Wayne Enterprises LLC purchased the former Sunmart building and has been repurposing the building into industrial sites for retail, light manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution sites. Suite

1205 is proposed for a medical clinic and City Code 154.190-154.204 dictates the minimum number of allowed parking spaces for patients and staff. The facility's clientele will be older patients with mobility issues and this agreement would allow them to park close to the entrance. Staff are proposing an encroachment agreement to allow parking in the city right of way along St. Andrews Street. A motion and second were made by Kvamme and Fish recommending the council approve an encroachment agreement to accommodate parking needs of the tenant at 1205 W Lincoln Avenue.

Kvamme asked for an amendment to the motion to consider the parking spaces be angled in the event the city needs the right of way for future needs. Property owner Mike Thorson said the tenant's approval would need to be obtained as their plans call for a straight on parking configuration to best meet their needs. Kremeier asked if it would be beneficial to purchase the former gas station in this area to provide additional parking. Thorson explained the need for easy access to the east side of the medical facility's entrance. He read language from the agreement stating the city as the right of way owner can terminate the agreement with 60 days' notice to the landowner and Kremeier asked the City Attorney's opinion on this issue be obtained at the next council meeting. Fish said he would not consent to changing his second on the original motion which was called to a vote and adopted unanimously.

#### **2024 Mill and Overlay and Seal Coating**

Staff are planning for 2024 mill and overlay and seal coat projects. \$324,400 has been budgeted this year for mill and overlay work and the area being improved has not been selected yet. \$173,100 is budgeted for seal coat applications in addition to \$100,000 they are carrying over from the 2023 budget. A motion and second were made by Kvamme and Fish to initiate Public Improvement 5377, the 2024 mill and overlay improvement project, to order plans and specifications for the project, to initiate Public Improvement 5372, the 2024 seal coat improvement project and order the plans and specifications for the project and the motion carried.

#### **Transportation Alternatives Application**

In November of 2023 the council authorized the City Engineer to submit a Transportation Alternatives grant letter of intent and MnDOT has approved the city's submission to the final application. The city must adopt a resolution agreeing to maintain the bicycle and pedestrian facility for its useful life. The proposed total cost was \$16-\$17 million and the city's share is \$700,000-\$750,000. The city's estimated share of the trails and walkways is \$172,600 and staff plan to apply for 80% of the grant while using MSAS funding to cover the 20% matching fund requirements. A motion and second were made by Thompson and Kvamme recommending the council agree to maintain the bicycle and pedestrian facility portion of this project for its useful life and the motion carried.

#### **Other Business**

City Administrator Andrew Bremseth spoke on the growing problem of people leaving items on the boulevard. Many times, it is with good intention for someone else to use, but often items get left out in the elements for days or weeks at a time and the city spends time and money dealing with the abatement of these items. Especially problematic are large furniture pieces and appliances. Council members spoke about the need to clean up the community, stopping illegal dumping, other ways to dispose of materials and taking pride in the community.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 am

*Lynne Olson*