

Committee of the Whole Minutes
August 28, 2024

The Fergus Falls City Council held a Committee of the Whole meeting on August 28, 2024, at 7:00 am in the City Council Chambers. Acting Mayor Hicks opened the meeting and the following council members were in attendance: Kremeier, Rachels, Hicks, Fish, Job and Kvamme. Rufer and Mayor Schierer were absent.

Bigwood Event Center Marketing

Doug Gray and Holly Lee from Leighton Media presented a revitalization plan for the Bigwood Event Center. They proposed using a mix of trade (free) strategies with a boost of Leighton Engage (paid) strategies to brand the facility as the premier indoor event space in the area. They would barter their advertising services to bring more unique events to the Bigwood including the craft beer tour, political debates, a home show, seminars and conferences. These additional events would bring more visitors to the facility and alert them of its availability for meetings, weddings and other gatherings. The second component of the proposal is a digital marketing strategy to reach targeted consumers within a 20-mile radius of the city. The ads would reach the ideal consumer through their internet browsing with these highly targeted ads for a fee of \$500 per month. Leighton Engage also would use search engine marketing or pay-per-click advertising on major search engines with potential customers at a cost of \$725 per month. Measurements that would determine success in the advertising plan include website traffic, new leads or bids and bookings. They would meet with the city every 6 weeks to review. There were questions about expanding to a larger audience and the associated costs. The Tax Levy Committee will take the proposal under advisement in the 2025 budget.

Lake Alice Grit Chambers

On May 15, 2023, the council approved the submission of an application to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council to capture sediment and pollutants such as phosphorus from entering Lake Alice. The cost to install these grit chambers is \$686,000 and the city received \$500,000 of funding from the grant. Staff proposed leveraging the additional \$186,000 from the stormwater enterprise fund. Staff will bring visuals to demonstrate how the pollutants would be mitigated before entering Lake Alice to the council meeting. A motion and second were made by Rachels and Fish to recommend the council approve the leveraged funds in the amount of \$186,000 from the stormwater enterprise fund; to authorize entering into the grant agreement and to initiate PI 7774 and the motion carried.

Landfill Compactor

The landfill compactor was purchased in 1991 and is structurally and mechanically worn out. Staff proposed a new compactor be purchased at a cost of \$58,936.90. The price could be reduced by \$2,500 if the city removes and destructs the current unit. A motion and second were made by Fish and Rachels to recommend the council purchase a new sanitary compactor for the landfill and the motion carried.

Refuse Truck

Unit 216, a rear loading refuse truck used for commercial pickups scheduled for replacement as it has nearly 10,000 hours on it. Staff proposed the purchase of a 2025 Freightliner truck. The cost of the truck is \$245,178.90 minus a trade-in value of \$45,300 for a total purchase price of \$199,878.90. A motion and second were made by Fish and Rachels to recommend the council approve the refuse truck purchase and the motion carried.

New Business

Scott Rachels followed up on a suggestion he made earlier this year to close the last gravel block of South Union that has washed out and to close the road behind the city garage on Peck Street. No residential homes would be affected by either segment being closed as they are being used as pass throughs that require time and effort by staff to maintain. A motion and second were made by Rachels and Job to recommend the council to direct staff look at the potential closures and come back with a recommendation and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 am

Lynne Olson