

Committee of the Whole Meeting  
September 11, 2024

The Fergus Falls City Council met as a Committee of the Whole meeting on September 11, 2024 at 7:00 am in the City Council Chambers. Mayor Schierer called the meeting to order, and the following council members were in attendance: Kremeier, Rachels, Hicks, Fish, Job, and Kvamme. Rufer was absent.

**PI 9776, Railroad Signal Replacement Project**

The railroad intersections at Friberg, Cascade Street, Mill Street and Summit Avenue require upgrades, and the city has secured a funding agreement with MnDOT for this project (PI 9776). The city received a professional services proposal from Bolton & Menk for preliminary engineering, topographic collection, public engagement, final design and construction administration services in the amount of \$275,000 for the four intersections. MnDOT has agreed these services would be covered with the agreement. Kvamme suggested a quiet zone by incorporated into the project. A motion and second were made by Rachels and Hicks to recommend the council accept the funding agreement between the City of Fergus Falls and MnDOT and to accept Bolton & Menk's professional services agreement in the amount of \$275,000 and the motion carried.

**2025 Preliminary Budget**

Finance Director Bill Sonmor presented the 2025 preliminary budget. Proposed revenues are \$55,264,191 while expenditures are \$53,623,237. The proposed tax levy is \$8,941,000 which is a \$794,000 change from 2024 and a 9.75% increase. The overall revenues are down \$14,648,814 from the previous year and the expenditures are down \$14,254,912 as the aquatics center and DeLagoon projects were within last year's budget. Sonmor reviewed the fixed cost increases of \$745,500 and reviewed each of the city's funds and enterprise funds. Proposed capital improvement street projects in 2025 include the Arlington/Sheridan area reconstruction; Cleveland: Fir to Franklin reconstruction; the Fir/Friberg roundabout; Junius: Union to Cascade and the paving of Shoreview Drive. State aid, special assessments and General Obligation Bonds are proposed funding sources for these projects. If all of these proceed, the estimated General Obligation Bond levy would be \$501,000 for 15 years, which would relate to a 6.15% increase over the 2024 total property tax levy. Rachels suggested next year's council reconsider franchise fees to pay for these necessary street improvement projects. The council will be asked to adopt the preliminary levy and budget on September 16. Public comment would be received when the final budget is presented on December 2. The Tax Levy Committee (Mayor Schierer, Council Members Job and Rachels, Bill Sonmor, Andrew Bremseth, Sandy Cunningham) welcomed input from the council if they have questions. A motion and second were made by Fish and Job to recommend the council adopt the 2025 preliminary budget and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 am

*Lynne Olson*