

**Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes  
Vergas Event Center  
September 7-8, 2021**

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at 10:00 AM at the Vergas Event Center. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council, and Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent. The meeting was continued on Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 10:00 AM, which started as a field meeting with DuFrane, Pinke and Albright, meeting with Cristi Field, Otter Tail County Highway Department, which was later moved to the Event Center (DuFrane, Lammers, Pinke, and Albright attending), to continue discussion of the SSYW budget. Albright called the Tuesday meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

2.) Parking was added to the agenda.

3.) DuFrane is working with Lammers to get a copy of the 2021 highways, streets, roadways and sidewalk budget (includes both summer and winter maintenance). For now, this item will be skipped until the information arrives.

4.) DuFrane is working with Dennis at Driveway Service (DS) on the fall blading and graveling of city streets. DuFrane estimated the billing for grading all the roads will be about \$800. He graded the roads, earlier this spring. Need is based on rainfall, and with spring/summer being extremely dry, he has not bladed since. Use of local contractors (Sonnenberg/Soland), has just not worked out. DuFrane also said gravel is needed on East Lake Street (ST).

Hobart Township takes care of the gravel and blading of Townline Road. The City handles the snow removal. Discussions went to the recent road dedication, and the need for right-of-way (R/W) acquisition. Since the south half mile was already dedicated by Hobart Township, where they showed the 33' of R/W on each side of the section line, the City should only have to deal with R/W acquisition on the north half mile (one acre of R/W per 40 acre parcel, for a total of 4 acres). DuFrane felt it was very important to get the R/W work done as soon as possible, so the City can get the brushing done before snow removal is needed. At the road dedication hearing, landowners felt that Townline Road should have magnesium chloride placed on the road surface for dust control from gravel trucks. Trucks using the road end up on Scharf Avenue (AVE), which is not a designated truck route, and said traffic is causing damage to that road. At the dedication hearing, the Council felt we needed to meet with Hobart Township regarding this road. The Township has now been invited to the next Planning and Zoning Committee meeting (September 27th), where these issues can be more thoroughly discussed. DuFrane said "Truck Route" signs have been posted, enforcement is another matter. Farmers have exemptions. 4 ton limit signs were also installed, but later removed due to complaints.

There was discussion about possible gravel being removed from the ball diamond parking lot for the pickleball courts. DuFrane felt the material would be unsuitable for salvage. The contractor intends to use the removed material for Memorial Park.

5.) DuFrane is getting bids from DS for pavement patching 2-3 spots on Scharff AVE. Long-range funding for all roads in the City was discussed, including a manual (could be on the computer), showing maintenance records for the various roads under our jurisdiction. A map also showing the "city owned" sidewalks would be beneficial for maintenance budgeting. Example, the City is not currently budgeting for a future possible mill and overlay project on Scharf AVE. The City's "Special Assessment and Trunk Area Policies and Procedures for

Public Improvements and Maintenance Costs” was discussed. This document is dated 10/03/11. Committee members should familiarize themselves with the document.

6.) DuFrane said at 10:00 AM tomorrow morning, there is a meeting with Cristi Field, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Otter Tail County Highway Department. They will meet by Cheryl Lynn’s. Discussion will be about 2021-2022 winter snow removal. When Summers builds on his railroad property, the City will lose a spot to pile snow. Other snow disposal spots include the parking lot at the ball diamond (depending on pickleball court status), the recycling center along County Road (C.R.) No.17, and the former Todd Bunkowski property referred to as the “farm”. DuFrane doesn’t like to haul to the farm, as the road is hazardous. Carl Hoffman, used to allow snow piling by his shed behind the Fellowship Church, but has asked the City to stop. In the past, DuFrane was able to just move the snow with the loader to the Summer’s site, no trucking involved, and only one person required. When Summers utilizes the site, snow from East Main AVE will need to be hauled to one of the aforementioned locations. This is going to take much longer, involving manpower and time. Right now, one of the delays for the Summer’s building is where the water and sewer lines are for this lot. They are not shown on the as-built drawings, and the old elevator on the property may have gotten their water from a connection with the service for Cheryl Lynn’s building. The old elevator didn’t have a sewer line.

The Committee suggested that DuFrane prep the recycling site this fall (cleanup brush and grass) to make room for snow. When C.R. No. 60 was under the State’s jurisdiction (T.H. No. 228), they would allow the City to pile the snow from East Main AVE in the center of the street, to be removed as time and manpower allowed. The County didn’t want the snow piled there, so they push it to the curb, which then requires the business owners to shovel it off the sidewalks, back onto the roadway. The City tries to clean snow from East Main AVE before the County arrives. The City sometimes starts at 2:00 AM. The City of Vergas has no “emergency” snow removal routes, nor do they have a wintertime parking policy. The city workers get paid time and a half for “night hours”, between 10:00 PM - 6:00 AM.

The City has two dump trucks. Last winter, the old truck had the sander, and was just used for that purpose. DuFrane would like to recommend the purchase of a new 9” stainless steel sander for the newer truck, at a cost of about \$5,300. He thought that they could install the sander themselves (otherwise, it would need to be driven to Little Falls). The price doesn’t include the necessary hoses, which could be purchased locally at NAPA. The old truck when then be used for snow removal, as it has a plastic liner in the box, making it easier to dump.

DuFrane said with the new fence along Franklin Fence (East Lake ST), he will have to very careful there to not damage the fence, probably having to plow this road with the loader, hopefully being able to pile the snow to the east on the railroad property.

7.) Parking was discussed. Pinke was approached by Pat Shannon this morning, expressing concerns about the City’s lack of parking in general. The Mayor has also noted that we have no handicapped spots in the downtown area. The Committee discussed if diagonal parking could be added along First ST, especially if Franklin Fence were to move their shingles. DuFrane felt we might be able to work with Tyler Schmid, as they will also need parking for their apartments at the new building at the former Goodman site.

Tuesday’s meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

The SSW Committee resumed their meeting on Wednesday, with the attendees as noted. Field said the County would permit the snow on East Main ST to be piled in the center of the street. If it is still there later in the day, before dark, cones or barricades should be placed on each end of the pile, with hopes that it can be removed that night before the next business day.

The Committee thanked the County for their willingness to work with the City in this regard. Diagonal parking would have to be discussed with the County Engineer, Chuck Grotte.

At approximately 10:30 AM, the meeting was moved to the Event Center, with Lammers joining to help explain the Streets and Roadways budget, and the various line items.

The 2020 budget was \$123,424. For 2021, it is \$126,699, and for 2022 it's proposed to be \$125,190 (needs to be adopted by the Council). For reference, the City Shop budget includes expenditures at the farm. Expenditures to date (08/26/21) were reviewed in relation to their budgeted amounts. Money left over at the end of the year, does not carry over, but the SSWW Committee could recommend to the Council that they place leftover funds in the General Fund/ Special Revenue Money Market Account ("the Revenue account"). This account already includes funds, \$5,210.95, for Easements (Townline Road?); Seal Coating (\$23,844.83); Sidewalks, \$11,851.35; and Street Improvements/Equipment, \$8,457.64. Lammers explained how at the end of the year, after all accounts are balanced, extra revenues can be placed in these accounts, or new accounts can be added, for future expenses.

A part of the 2021 budget, under Other Equipment, includes \$25,000, as the City needs a new pickup. Plans are to sell the older pickup. Funding for the sand spreader could come out of this fund or Capital Outlay, which has \$5,000 budgeted in 2021, with nothing spent to date.

The "Capital Improvement Plan" dated August 2019 as prepared by KLJ, included line items for West Lake ST, East Scharf AVE, and Bennett Road, as well as a mention of Townline Road for "future" work. Sidewalks was not referenced in the plan. None of the plan recommendations including funding options.

The Small Cities Assistance Program (SCAP) was reviewed. In 2021, Vergas received \$15,385. These funds can be used for the construction and maintenance of roads located within the city. The Legislature for 2021, appropriated \$18M statewide for 705 cities eligible for the program. Annual funding is Legislative dependent. These funds have not been appropriated at this time, but the budget already includes items that qualify. If doesn't appear the funding can be used for road equipment.

The City's assessment policy was discussed. For example, if the property owners along Bennett Road wanted their road paved, this would be "new" construction, with the abutting owners assuming 80% of the costs, the City assumes the remaining 20%. Section 9 of the policy includes statements about the "service life" of utilities, such as sidewalks - 20 years. Street Improvements are also 20 years.

The Committee felt that they should meet again before the end of the month to more thoroughly examine and discuss budgets, and also to discuss budgeting needs for "future" SSWW projects.

If DuFrane has an opportunity to meet with DS, it might be good to get estimates from them for future road work, such as mill and overlay, seal coating, graveling, and grading.

Wednesday's meeting was also adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations

- Seek Council approval for the sanding equipment, estimated total costs \$5,600 (installed by City staff).
- Have Council address parking needs in Comprehensive Plan, including possible locations, and costs to acquire said locations, budget accordingly,
- Look into diagonal parking, maybe along First ST. Contact County Engineer regarding their thoughts and requirements.
- Get easement work started ASAP for Townline Road, so hopefully, easements can be acquired and brush removed before winter.
- Authorize Clerk to work on "records" manual for roads, documenting major projects, and estimating annual costs for "future" maintenance (as time allows).

Follow up Actions

- SSYW Committee to meet again in September to work on budgets, and future SSYW Committee funding needs.
- Look at brush and grass recycling program before 2022 permits are needed.