

Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes
Vergas City Offices
October 26, 2021

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Tuesday, October 26, 2021 at 10:00 AM at the Vergas Event Center. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council, Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent, and Julie Lammers, City Clerk. Albright called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

2.) Pickle ball court was added to the agenda.

3.) 2022 Yard Waste Permits was discussed again. At the 10/12/21 Council Meeting, the SSYW Committee recommended that the 2022 fee for yard waste permits be raised from \$40 per year to \$75.00/year. A motion to approve the fee increase was not approved. The SSYW Committee explained that we were just trying to break even, given review of past year costs. One of the larger annual expenditures is one third of the annual loader costs, or \$10,000. Some of the Council felt that raising the fee, could lessen the number of permits sold, actually increasing the negative balance. Typically, the City sells about 300 permits a year.

Albright said he researched a number of neighboring cities, and how they handle yard waste. Perham's site is for their residents only. Detroit Lakes offers free compost sites at two locations. One thing in common with most of the neighboring towns and the Otter Tail County site in Pelican Rapids is that they all have posted hours that they are open. Perham's site is open April - October, Tuesday and Saturday, 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM. The Committee discussed that given limited staff, it would be difficult to have set hours in Vergas. Another thing that was noted is that area residents have options for disposal of their yard waste, if they don't want to pay the increased fees in Vergas. Frazee offers free dumping for Burlington and Silverleaf Townships. Leaves and other yard waste are free at Pelican Rapids, and there is a small fee for brush up to 3" in diameter.

Albright relayed an incident he experienced on Saturday, October 23rd at the recycling site. Upon arrival, there were about 5 vehicles dumping yard waste and branches. Only one vehicle displayed a green permit, and he didn't cognize anyone as Vergas residents. Four of the vehicles had North Dakota plates. He announced to the group that in order to dump there, green permits are required. One person became somewhat irate, accusing Albright of playing the role of a cop. That person actually was a Vergas resident, that Albright didn't know. Lammers' said that this has been a problem in the past. When people with permits, see someone dumping with no permit, and question their use of the facility. The Committee discussed issuing permits (free of charge) to the owners of property in the Vergas City limits, just so that problem don't happen again in the future. That way we could also track how many Vergas owners actually use the service versus from out of town. Vergas permits could be a different color. There are 186 households in the City limits, so ordering 200 permits should be sufficient.

The SSYW Committee felt the rate for out of town permits still needed to be raised. Albright didn't feel we should offer the service at a substantial cost to Vergas taxpayers. Pinke felt incremental increases would make more sense. The Committee proposed a 2022 fee of \$60.00. Pinke said he could support that. Councilman Dahlgren supported the original fee increase. DuFrane felt we should start getting the site cleaned up for snow removal. Depending on the fall, the group talked about operating the site through November. Lammers' suggested posting a sign on site that says "No Dumping of Yard Waste Without Permit

Displayed". The Committee also discussed the need to have the Council designate a SSW spokesperson to contact the neighboring townships (Candor, Hobart, Dora) to discuss the problems were experiencing at the yard waste site, our costs, and to put them on notice that if these problems persist or get worse, we may have to consider closing the site down. DuFrane also questioned if the State could also shut us down, with the leftover ash and smoke we generate when we burn the brush pile. Pinke said when the disposal site was first discussed, the Townships were contacted to possibly help with the costs, and they basically said their landowners wouldn't use the facility.

4.) East Lake Street Relocation. The Council authorized the city attorney and engineer to start work on the road relocation. Lammers has contacted Otter Tail County GIS Department and they are preparing maps for the City that should show all areas where roads do not match the platted boundary areas.

5.) Glen Street Relocation/Reconstruction. The Council also authorized the Engineer and Attorney to start work on this project.

6.) City Long Rang Road Plan/Funding. With over 4.8 miles of roads in Vergas (gravel and asphalt), the need for a plan to deal with future maintenance is evident. Albright will send Lammers an e-mail detailing some "common" road costs. These items could include: gravel road grading (seasonal); snow plowing; asphalt mill and overlay; seal coating; and new asphalt. Lammers will contact the County Engineer to see if they have some average costs per mile for the noted items. Lammers discussed use of the Small Cities Assistance Funds (\$15,385). For 2021, we've already incurred eligible street expenditures exceeding that amount. But that should free up funds already in the City's 2021 budget for future road expenditures. Perhaps any leftover funds could be rolled into the Revenue Account. The Committee talked about meeting again in November to take a closer look at the funding.

7.) West Lake Street Improvements for Proposed Subdivision. Access to the new Lawrence Lake Subdivision will either be from Glen Street or West Lake Street, or both. We'll have to continue to work with the developer to see how he develops his plan, whether or not the subdivision will have sewer and or water. The Council did not take any action on West Lake Street, given all the other road issues currently ongoing.

8.) Pickle Ball Courts. DuFrane said an issue has arose regarding excess excavation material at the site, that the Pickle Ball Committee feels belongs to the City. At the kickoff meeting with the engineer on August 18th, Maria Shomento, Pickleball Committee said "excess dirt from the site will be hauled by the contractor to the the Memorial site". Albright commented that the parking lot could have some Class V gravel, and the City may have a use for that, she should just make sure the work is coordinated with DuFrane. The Engineer's notes reflected the same. Sonnenberg Excavating is doing the work, and they are very busy. The Pickleball Committee wants the City to haul the excess material away. Apparently, Frank Vanya, has some place close by where the excess dirt could be deposited. DuFrane said no one from the Pickle Ball Committee contacted him. Albright said the current pile of material is about 37 cubic yards of clay, excavated from the site for the pickle ball forms, rebar, and concrete. There is no "Class V" material. Also, due to timing of the two projects (pickle ball and memorial) the memorial site was finished long before the pickle ball construction began. Albright felt that getting rid of the excess material was a pickle ball issue/expense.

9.) DuFrane said the new sander placement on the truck will require some welding. Dean Haarstick has agreed to do the work. This will be an extra cost, not figured for in the original estimate.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations

- Raise yard waste fees for non Vergas property owners in 2022 to \$60/annually.
- acquire permits for Vergas property owners.
- Place sign stating "No Dumping of Yard Waste Without Permit Displayed".
- Be prepared to shut yard waste site down for snow removal.
- Authorize Council person(s) to meet with neighboring Townships as noted to discuss yard waste issues/costs.

Follow up Actions

- SSYW Committee to meet again in 2021 to work on budgets, and future SSYW Committee funding needs.
- Continue to work with developers at 105 Main Street regarding parking needs, need to address long range parking in comprehensive planning process.
- Assess new loader needs/costs.
- Assess needs/budget for Small Cities Assistance Program funding. Lobby legislators for future funding, explain our needs to Legislators.