

**Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes
Vergas City Office
December 3, 2021**

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Friday, December 3, 2021 at 11:00 AM at the Vergas City Office. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council; Mike DuFrane, Utility Superintendent; and Julie Lammers, City Clerk. Albright called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

2.) Townline Road, sale of the Todd Bunkowski property, and speed limits were added to the agenda.

3.) 2022 Yard Waste Permits was discussed. DuFrane has received quotes for updating our pay loader. He said he has them at the shop and forgot to bring them to today's meeting. He thought General Equipment quoted about \$60,000 to trade. Lammers will distribute the information to the Committee. The deal includes a clause that they maintain the loader (oil changes, etc.) for a 5-year period. Also the existing loader will no longer be covered by warranty, while the new one will have a 5-year warranty. Albright said there has been some chatter on social media about citizens attending our 12/14/21 Council Meeting to express concerns about City taxation rates. He also felt that if we get a new loader, we'll need to justify to the Council and taxpayers the reasons why. Councilperson Fisher questioned time allocation for the loader, and DuFrane said they are using a book to document the loaders' use. City of Vergas property owners will need a "resident" permit for dumping yard waste in 2022. The fee for non-town users was increased to \$60/year. Anyone dumping yard waste in 2022 will need to display a permit from their rear view mirror. Pinke and Albright were also going to meet with the neighboring Townships (Candor, Dora, Hobart) to discuss problems we're experiencing with the yard waste site, the deficits we've been incurring. Initially, said Townships felt their landowners wouldn't utilize said services. Lammers said the Townships also meet in the evening on the second Tuesday of the month (same time as the Council). She'll arrange time at their upcoming meetings for said reports/updates.

4.) East Lake Street Relocation. Today's agenda packet included a drawing dated 11/29/21 from KLJ Engineering, showing the existing street right-of-way (R/W), the existing road, the waterline, and neighboring buildings/lot lines. It appears we can't abandon the existing R/W, because the waterline is located there. So, we'll just be acquiring the new R/W needed (from Franklin Fence) and that line/legal description will still need to be developed by KLJ. A new legal description for Franklin Fence will need to be drafted, exempting the new road. DuFrane noted that not much is really changing, as the road has always been in the "wrong" location. Vergas Auto and Randy Schrupp have building encroachments on the existing R/W. Lammers will contact KLJ to complete the legal description for the new road R/W.

5.) Townline Road. Keith and Shelly Bunkowski have signed a "temporary" easement for the trimming of brush within the current alignment of the graveled surface. They don't want any trees cut at the base. DuFrane referenced some other current issues with the Bunkowski family on the south end of East Scharf AVE. The owner of lots 1050 and 1045 recently installed an irrigation water line to Long Lake, which encroaches on our cul-de-sac R/W. Questions were also raised if this type of a project would require a water appropriation permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Bunkowski's also had several contractors working on lots 1110 and 1120, removing rocks, tree stumps, and leveling dirt. One of the contractors drove on private property, leaving ruts, and dragging mud onto E Scharf AVE. DuFrane used the City's loader to push the mud off the road. There was also discussion

if Bunkowski has City permission to extend the water, sewer and street to lots at 1110 and 1120? Platting of the lots was approved by Planning and Zoning, but there remains questions between Bunkowski's engineer (Moore) and our engineer (KLJ), in terms of the location of a fire hydrant. Bunkowski is now talking about extending said services to the remaining lots he has for his children. Given the current weather conditions, it now appears that the utility installations will be tabled until 2022.

The 11/22/21 Planning and Zoning meeting packet included information from KLJ regarding the R/W needs to dedicate Townline Road with 33' of R/W on each side of the section line. The City's attorneys (past and present) are both under the opinion that we do not need to acquire the R/W for the current graveled portion of the road, since we've already used that for a number of years. Albright would like to see a copy of the law that the attorneys are using in said regard. Lammers will ask for the information. KLJ's memo used \$2,900 per acre for Ag Homestead and Ag Commercial, \$0.28 per square foot (sq.ft.) for Residential Non-Homestead, and \$0.45 per sq.ft., for Residential Homestead. Totals for each of the respective landowners was contained in the memo. All of this information has been forwarded to the attorney for preparation of the necessary easements from each landowner. The payment rates and procedures are consistent with past practices used by the City to acquire road R/W. DuFrane said the City will continue to work on brush removal as time and conditions allows.

5.) City Long Range Road Plan/Funding. In 2010, the Minnesota Legislature enacted a "Complete Streets" Policy. The purpose of complete streets is to address the safety and accessibility needs of users of all ages and abilities. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) assesses user needs at several stages of planning, project scoping and designing, construction, operation, and maintenance. A number of neighboring communities, along with Otter Tail County, have adopted a Resolution to establish a Complete Streets Policy. Copies of said resolutions were distributed for review. These communities are waiting for Otter Tail County to actually do the Policy, so they can use it as a template for their Policy. The Committee directed Lammers to develop the Resolution for Council action at their 12/14/21 meeting. Hopes are that those communities adopting a policy may access grants and special road funds.

On November 5th, we received a response from the County on road maintenance costs. For example, 2019 County project for a mill and overlay project cost \$317,000 per mile. For seal coating, in 2021, they used \$22,700 per mile. Looking at the current City budget for road work, less December bills, Lammers thought their would be \$30,000 that could be transferred to the General Fund/Special Revenue Money Market Account for Seal Coating (\$10,000), Sidewalks (\$3,000), and Street Improvements/Equipment (\$17,000). The SSYW Committee will make this recommendation to the Council at their upcoming meeting. Future major road projects will be expensive, and it makes sense to be putting money away annually for said work, when it will be needed.

6.) Sale of Bunkowski Property. At the 12/01/21 EDA/HRA meeting, bids were opened for said property, and a bid for the minimum amount (40,000) was obtained. The EDA/HRA recommended that the Council approve said sale at their 12/14/21 meeting. DuFrane said that given the shortage of land within the City for projects (pickle ball, etc.) he questioned why the City would sell land they already own. Currently, there are two buildings left on this property, that are both being used by the City. One of the buildings needs to be torn down, but the other one has a concrete floor, but could use a new garage door. The City has also stockpiled leftover materials on the site, such as concrete, asphalt, and road sand/salt. If the property is sold, DuFrane questioned where he is supposed to store these items? Lammers said the sale of the Otter Tail County garage has already been approved to the City of Vergas, but it looks like this transfer might not actually take place until 2023. That building could be used for storage of some of the items currently stored on the Bunkowski property. Lammers said the

County currently has the Bunkowski land valued at \$38,500, and the building at \$24,000. DuFrane doubted that the City could replace the Bunkowski building for \$40,000. The SSYW Committee valued DuFrane's comments in said regard. Albright said he would like to review the City's property by the City Shop/Water tower, the Bunkowski property, and the County Shop. Keeping an acre of the Bunkowski land with the better building on it is also an option. Lammers said this action would constitute a new bid advertisement/sale process. It was noted that the Bunkowski property is zoned residential, and if the City continues to use the property for storage, it should probably be rezoned.

7.) City Speed Limits. DuFrane said that recently there have been several accidents (3), with automobiles ending up on the City's trail. Given the amount of usage of the City's trail system, he felt that it was only a matter of time before there's an accident involving the road traffic and the walking public. Last fall, following the State Law process, the City asked Otter Tail County to look at the speed limits on the east side of town, involving County Road (C.R.) Nos. 60 and 4. The County forwarded said request to MnDOT, and they were going to conduct a speed study. Lammers will contact MnDOT to check on the status of the study. There was also discussions whether or not the recent accidents involving the trail were ever reported and documented? DuFrane felt if there was a 911 call, they are reported. Last summer, the County also had two speed monitoring devices in town. Albright questioned if the City was ever given the results of those studies? Lammers will check with the County. In general, the City seems to get lots of complaints about speeding in general, and whenever the County Sheriff's Department is in town, the speeding problems quickly go away. Albright said that it seems a little odd that only MnDOT can set speed limits? Very few cars properly stop or exit at the C.R. Nos 60/4 (East Frazee Street) intersection. Lammers will report her findings to the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations

- Transfer 2021 leftover road funding (\$30,000) to Revenue Accounts as noted above.
- Adopt Resolution to Establish a Complete Streets Policy.

Follow up Actions

- Continue to evaluate new loader options/costs.
- Finish meetings with neighboring Townships regarding Yard Waste disposal site issues/concerns/costs.
- Continue to work on R/W needs for East Lake Street and Townline Road.
- SSYW Committee to continue to work on budgets, and future road funding needs.
- Continue to work with developers at 105 Main Street regarding parking needs, need to address long range parking needs in comprehensive planning process.
- Assess needs/budget for Small Cities Assistance Program funding. Lobby legislators for future funding, explain our needs to Legislators.
- Evaluate County and MnDOT speed study data regarding public safety on trail.
- Analyze City Shop future needs for storage, possible sale of Bunkowski property, and future City needs for growth. Factor in County Shop.