

**Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Vergas Event Center**  
**July 20, 2023**

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Thursday, July 20, 2023 at 9:00 AM at the Vergas Event Center. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council; Julie Lammers, City Clerk, Mike DuFrane, Utility Superintendent; and Lori Moxness, Senior Commercial and Industrial Representative, Otter Tail Power (OTP). Albright called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

4.) Street Lighting. In February, Moxness met with Sherrie Hanson, Vergas Community Club (CC). The CC is interested in updating the lighting on Main Street (ST). OTP has indicated that they no longer want decorations on their old wood poles. Recently, Albright met with Hanson and picked up all the materials that Moxness had left. Said materials were distributed: including a sheet showing the estimated costs for 15 poles based on four different designs; a factsheet discussing decorative and efficient LED lighting; and copies of a PowerPoint presentation about street and area lighting. There are four types of lighting installed by OTP at this time: Holophane Arlington LED, 14' pole, \$87.77/month; Holophane Granville II LED, 14' pole, \$86.11/month; Holophane Esplanade LED Pendant, 30' pole, \$110.56/month. They also install the standard Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) LED lighting, 30' pole, \$28.20/month. The monthly fee goes on as long as the lighting exists, but covers the cost of the pole, light, up to 200' of underground lead, maintenance, etc. For example, if a car were to hit one of the poles, you just call OTP, and it's replaced at no cost. Moxness said the shorter poles (Arlington/Granville) cover less of an area from a lighting perspective. The OTP materials also included an ArcGIS map showing all of the pole and light locations in Vergas.

Lammers questioned if the loons currently being displayed around town could be installed on the new poles? Moxness said OTP would recommend that they not be installed on the lights. OTP recommends that any decorations be less than 2 square feet (sq.ft.). Moxness said one option would be to have Border States look at design options for certain areas in Vergas. This is a cost borne by OTP. Moxness said decorative lighting is usually installed in a zig-zag pattern. Lammers said the CC is very interesting in lighting options for Main ST. The developer for Lawrence Lake Acres, Josh Hanson, is also interested in the City's lighting requirements for his new subdivision. Darrin Allmaris, OTP, said the time to install the required lights is when they are placing the new underground electrical cables for the subdivision. We should also probably look at lighting requirements for the Keilley Shores Subdivision, Phases I, II, and III. Lammers said the City currently pays \$780/month for street lighting.

Albright questioned if there may be grants available for street lighting assistance? Moxness said Minnesota has the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERT). Lammers should check with agencies such as the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) or West Central Initiative (WCI) on possible grant opportunities. Lammers said she would also check with Widseth. Street lighting is already included in the City's budget, and for 2023, \$9,000 was budgeted. Lammers thought this amount should be increased for 2024, if we're thinking about decorative lighting, or adding lights for the two noted subdivisions. Besides the general budget, the Committee discussed options for raising funds for street lighting. Some cities assess each property on a monthly basis, like \$3 - \$5. This would require the creation of a special taxing district. Moxness thought the "Granville" provided a "cleaner" look. The Committee recommended that the noted areas be studied by OTP and Border States. Lammers will furnish the subdivision information to Moxness for the noted studies.

2.) Agenda Additions or Deletions. DuFrane wanted to add yard waste issues. **Approved.**

3.) Minutes for the 04/18/23 SSW meeting were attached to the agenda. Albright is still working on the 06/28/23 minutes. **Motion** by Pinke, **seconded** by Albright to approve the noted minutes. **Approved.**

5.) Budgets-Goal Setting. Lammers distributed copies of the 2022, 2023, and proposed 2024 budgets for this Committee. For the City Shop (43000), improvements was lowered from \$5,000 in 2022 to \$2,500 in 2023. To date, only \$1 of the 2023 budget has been spent. The Committee talked about a possible new City shop, and the possible need for a new heating system for the existing building. The Committee felt that any 2023 carryover should be reserved for future shop improvements. The General Fund/Special Revenue Money Market Account currently has \$\$8,056.04 for the City Shop.

For Highways, Streets, and Roadways (43100), for sealcoating, the 2022 and 2023 budgets have been \$7,500. The reserve fund has \$31,328.19. Lammers noted that in 2024, Local Government Aid for Vergas will be increased by \$5,937.00, however, the Council has not designated those funds at this time. The Legislature restored for 2024 the Small Cities Assistance Program (SCAP), and Vergas should receive \$17,861.00, which can only be used for roads, and can be carried over, year to year. The Committee felt that if we are follow Widseth's Comprehensive Streets Condition Survey (CSCS), we will need to be doing more sealcoating on our better roads to maintain them. The \$25,000 in the 2023 Improvements budget goes away for the purchase of the new pickup. The truck will cost \$42,979.52 and the extra equipment (snow plow, lift gate, lights, etc.) from Bert's Truck Equipment is estimated to cost \$15,101.50. With right-of-way (R/W) work planned for Sunset Strip, West (W) Lake ST, and East (E) Lake ST; brushing of R/W planned for W Lake ST and Townline Road (RD); and possible improvements for W Lake ST, the Committee thought that next year's (2024) improvement budget should be raised to \$50,000. We also need to start thinking about road maintenance in accordance with Widseth's CSCS. Scharf AVE is one of those roadways that will need major work, when improved. The reserve fund has \$41,438.77. The budget for 2024 sealcoating should be set at \$10,000.

The 2022 budget for street lighting was \$8,750. For 2023, \$9,000. The Committee felt if we are going to start looking at decorative lighting, the budget for 2024 should be \$30,000.

For the recycling center, this year for out of town permits, we've issued 199, at \$65/permit. Albright felt this helps with the center's operation costs. A rate increase for 2024 was not proposed. The City must adopt the proposed 2024 budget by September 15, and final budgets by December 31. The final budget cannot exceed the preliminary budget, but it may be lowered.

6.) Comprehensive Plan Review. The Mayor has assembled a 2023 Progress Review form for the various committees to fill out for their applicable sections. Sections applicable to the SSW was Transportation. The goal is "make Vergas accessible for all modes of transportation and for people of all abilities". The Committee felt that they had made progress on a number of the action items, including: acquisition of the County garage for additional parking; the new diagonal parking on S 1ST AVE; working with Otter Tail County on a "Complete Streets" policy; and working with the Otter Tail County Highway Department on a number of issues. Another goal is to increase connectivity tween Vergas and regional trails. The Committee discussed the recent work with PartnerSHIP 4 Health, completed by Widseth, that looks at connecting Vergas with The Heartland Trail and the Heart to Lakes Trail.

7.) City Vehicles. DuFrane has a bid of \$1,000 for the 1990 Ford snow plow from Lucken Corp, Winger, MN. They will come and pick it up for that price. The Committee recommended that it

be sold to them for that amount. The truck doesn't run. Once the new pickup arrives, the Committee recommended that the 2005 Chevrolet pickup be placed for sale on the City's website, with a sealed bid process.

8.) Yard Waste. To date, JH Signs has not had time to install the new yard waste sign at the recycling site. As noted earlier, for 2023 the City has sold 199 permits to out of town users.

9.) Feasibility Reports for W Lake ST. Landowners along this roadway are invited to the discuss possible projects for this roadway at the 08/08/23 Council meeting. One of the next steps will be to authorize Widseth to complete the R/W study. DuFrane will also get bids for brushing along the roadway. Lammers said the Lake Runners Snowmobile Club will need a new access through this area, as one landowner who has granted easements in the past to the Club, has changed his mind, and no longer wants snowmobiles on his property. Lammers has reached out to Josh Hanson about crossing Lawrence Lake Acres.

Albright has talked with Terry Bennett about his proposal to cross the recycling property to access a lot he has off County Road (CR) No. 17. Bennett said the property in question has been sold to Cliff Moe. The City asked their attorney, Tom Winters, to check into the possibility of granting an easement across said property. It is possible to do so. The Committee discussed that there would be no costs to the City, and that the lot owner would be responsible for all costs, including surveying, easement preparation, construction, and all future maintenance. In addition, the City could request a payment in an amount of like \$5,000. DuFrane said he would be opposed to said easement sale. Albright felt that because of the proposed easement location, the land really couldn't be used for anything else.

10.) Storm Sewer Mapping. DuFrane has not had time to meet with Widseth to locate the storm sewers within the City. Earlier this spring, the Hardware Store had asked about connecting their roof drainage into our system. It first needs to be located to analyze the request.

11.) 2023 Street Maintenance. For sealcoating, DuFrane has a bid from Morris Sealcoat & Trucking, Inc. in the amount of \$63,200. Albright said the attached map still shows Scharf AVE and Main ST between 1ST and 2ND AVE. It also includes Phase II of the Keilley Shores Subdivision. These areas were not previously discussed, and are not per the CSCS. DuFrane said he will revise the map, and get new numbers from Morris. Albright said Asphalt Surface Technologies Corporation (ASTECH) is also in the area, working on a number of roads, and a bid should also be obtained from them. DuFrane will contact them.

For 2023 paving, there is still some work to be done, primarily by John Seiling's on Scharf AVE. DuFrane questioned if landowners should be responsible for repairing their sections of damaged roadways? Albright disagreed, and said if roadways are properly built, they are for "public" use, and therefore should be maintained by the same.

The 2023 graveling projects are Townline RD and Bennett RD. Albright received a call yesterday from Cody Nunn, Sonnenberg Excavating, about the amount of gravel he should place on each roadway. DuFrane told him he wanted to be contacted as soon as he reached the \$3,000 mark. Albright questioned where that number came from? Albright thought the roads should be graveled similar to how Sonnenberg does other road projects.

DuFrane has discussed brush removal along W Lake ST and Townline RD with Torey Sonnenberg. Using a backhoe, they would pull the trees and brush from within the road R/W, haul the brush away, for a rate of \$100/hour. Albright thought if the brush/trees were pulled out, it would require some leveling thereafter to be able to mow the ditches, etc. Another

option would be a mower on a backhoe to cut the brush, there would be size limitations to how thick of trees they could cut. DuFrane will get a couple bids for each option for both roadways.

12.) Glenn ST Extension. There already has been complaints about the amount of dust that traffic is causing. DuFrane doesn't like to use magnesium Chloride, as it rusts our vehicles. If Mark Sand and Gravel needs water, they get it from the hydrant by the City shop. If they come to get some water with their truck, DuFrane might try to do some trading with them if they would periodically put water on Glenn ST, especially near the Menz household.

13.) R/W Establishment for E Lake ST and N Railway AVE. We are waiting for the easement paperwork from City Attorney, Tom Winters.

14.) W Sunset Strip. Landowners attended they 07/11/23 Council meeting. They had a number of questions. Primarily, what their costs might be?

15.) Other. DuFrane said historically, we've had problems with one permit holder, that will not properly display their permit. He also felt this permit holder was a "commercial" operation, where none of that material was to be brought to our site. Recently, DuFrane questioned if they had a permit, and the person became very belligerent and obnoxious. DuFrane felt City staff should not have to tolerate that type of behavior. It states right on the permit, that if there is a violation of the rules, the permit can be revoked. Because of the violation, **motion** by Pinke to revoke the said landowner's permit for the balance of 2023. **Seconded** by Albright, **approved**.

16.) Next Meeting. A date for the next SSWW Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 9:00 AM, Event Center.

15.) Adjournment. Albright adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations:

- Authorize Widseth to complete R/W studies for W Lake ST and W Sunset Strip

Follow up Actions:

- Landowner review of Feasibility reports for W Lake Street/funding options.
- Glenn ST extension
- Finalize work on R/W needs for East Lake Street and N Railway AVE (waiting for Attorney).
- Continue to work on budgets, and future road funding needs.
- Continue to work on City parking, Work on handicap parking spots.
- Continue to work on snow removal, sidewalk, and parking ordinances/policies to address concerns. Snow emergency routes?
- Bids for 2005 Chevrolet pickup

Future Meeting Agenda Items:

- none, at this time.