

**Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Government Services Center**  
**April 2, 2024**

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 10:00 AM at the Vergas Government Services Center. Present was Bruce Albright and Paul Pinke, Vergas City Council; Julie Lammers, City Clerk; and Mike DuFrane, Utility Superintendent. Albright called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM.

2.) Agenda Additions/Deletions. Lammers wanted to add snow plowing policy and quote for slope dressing along Scharf Avenue (AVE) and Dianne AVE. Approved.

3.) Minutes for the 11/13/23 SSYW Committee meeting was presented. **Motion** by Pinke to approve, **seconded** by Albright, **approved**.

4.) Street Lighting. Lori Moxness, Otter Tail Power (OTP) attended the Community Club meeting last night to talk about street lighting options for Main Street (ST). She also delivered the street and area lighting proposal for Dianne AVE, Eva ST, and East (E) Scharf AVE. Both areas call for the esplanade option, with 30' poles. Shady Oaks Subdivision would require 3 lights, and Scharf AVE from Main ST to the end of the city limits, would require 13 poles. The estimated monthly costs for all poles (16) is \$1,768.96. Currently, there are 57 poles in town, with an estimated monthly estimated cost of \$500. In 2024, the City budgeted \$9,000 for lighting. The new light options (3) range in cost from about \$85 to \$110/month each. Albright said if we were to update a majority of the lights in town, all of a sudden we'd have a yearly cost of \$40,000 - \$50,000 for street lighting. That is partially why OTP broke Main ST into 3 segments. As new houses and businesses are built, and the tax base increases, and we can maybe afford some of the newer amenities. Lammers said many cities have a special assessment for street lighting and some build it into the costs for new subdivisions, etc. For Keilley Shores, Phase III, 3 lights are proposed. OTP will be installing their services this spring, and the SSYW Committee with recommend to the Council (like we did for Lawrence Lake Acres) to have them install the pedestals and wiring for the 3 lights at the same time they install the electrical service.

5.) Streets. For West (W) Lake ST, the 2023 Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) did not fund our application. They will keep our application on file until the 2024 Legislative session ends. If additional LRIP funds become available, they may be able to reconsider our application. Lammers said there is a meeting tomorrow with Krysten Foster, County Engineer, Otter Tail County about the railroad crossing. Hopefully, at the time we can also discuss our LRIP application, and possible next steps. DuFrane said there was no brushing done along W Lake ST last fall due to the size of the trees, terrain, and rocks. Albright thought the brushing done along Townline Road (RD) looked good. Another issue for W Lake ST is finishing the right-of-way (R/W) analysis. Both subdivisions have designated 33' of R/W with their plats. So that leaves the section on Michael Maneval's property to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 17. DuFrane questioned if it might be cheaper to relocate this end of the road along Cliff Moe's lots (about 1/4 mile) north out to CSAH No. 17? Albright thought it wouldn't be cheap to build 1/4 mile of new road. He can check check with Josh Hanson, the developer of the Lawrence Lake Acres to see what the Glenn ST extension cost him. We'd also have to acquire R/W from Moe.

Albright questioned where Widesth was at with the storm sewer mapping? They were waiting for information from the OtterTail County Highway Department for their county roads. The City has a 2024 budget for engineering of \$30,000. Lammers thought we could check with Foster

at tomorrow's meeting about the storm sewers. Lammers will also get committee members the log in information for the Field Maps website.

For E Lake ST and North (N) Railway AVE, the R/W was staked by Widseth around Christmas time. The R/W encroached on Franklin Fence Company's chainlink fence, so they were asked to move the R/W from their fenced in area. They did that, and revised their drawings accordingly. The R/W acquisition also requires some new R/W along N Railway AVE. At the time this R/W was staked, the owner of Railway Property Holdings LLC (Troy Teigen) contacted DuFrane, and said with his future plans, he really couldn't afford to sell any property. Albright and DuFrane were going to meet with him, but that didn't happen. Lammers wasn't sure if Tom Winters, City Attorney, had prepared the actual easements. Once prepared, Albright thought that the final documents should be reviewed by the City before being distributed to the landowners for signature. She will check with him. Albright said that typically, there are two parts to any easement agreement, an exhibit (prepared by the engineer) and the word document (prepared by the attorney). Albright questioned if grinding the hump out of the intersection at N Railway Ave and Elm ST last fall helped anything? DuFrane said there has been no complaints about the work.

W Sunset Strip. DuFrane said this winter, he never had to plow the road. For other similar areas where he did plow, the new pickup works much better than the large snowplow. When the proposed R/W was staked by Widseth last fall, Albright took several calls from the Dahlgren family about the stakes, losing part of their yard, etc. Albright has not met with Garrett Dahlgren. At the meeting we held with the road landowners, they favored the cul-de-sac option. Harley Wallace, who doesn't currently use his property in the winter, someday may, and we have to consider how we service his property. He has an easement from the Dahlgren family to get from his property to W Sunset Strip.

6.) Paving. DuFrane has two bids for paving the new parking lot where the old county garage used to be, the alley between South (S) 1ST AVE and S Railway AVE, and the area behind the liquor store. The bids are from Driveway Service, Detroit Lakes and Performance Paving and Sealcoating, LLC, Deer Creek. DuFrane wanted both bids to have 4" of asphalt. Driveway Service was \$63,400 for the parking lot and alley, \$20,500 for the liquor store parking lot, and \$3,500 for the basketball court behind the event center. Performance Paving was \$45,381 for the parking lot/alley, \$22,536 for the liquor store, and \$2,570 for the basketball court. Lammers was also checking if Mark Sand and Gravel was going to be operating their hot mix plant in Vergas this summer, and if so, they may furnish the asphalt at a lower price. Driveway Service does their smaller jobs. She has not received a reply.

Some feel that until the old county garage lot is actually paved, striped for parking, and advertised as such, people are reluctant to use the area. Because there were no specifications for Sonnenberg's work last fall to tear down the county building, the utilities were not properly capped and abandoned, and we don't know if there was compaction to fill in where the building was located. DuFrane thought the old asphalt north of the county building should also be removed before paving the area. Albright thought if the old asphalt was holding up, it might provide a good base. Lammers said the new fencing should be going up this spring between the parking lot and Vergas Ford. She is also getting a bid from Loren Menz for the fencing. The SSW Committee tabled action on a south fence late last fall, as DuFrane felt chainlink fencing could get damaged with snow removal, etc. Albright agreed that until the new parking lot is properly marked and signed, people probably won't use it.

Discussions then focused on whether the drainage problems should be corrected behind the liquor store and post office before paving the area. For example, which way does the new parking lot drain? Lammers can get an estimate from Widseth for designing a plan for the area. Albright has a level, and he and DuFrane could take a series of basic elevation readings for a

preliminary analysis of the area. If paving the area could cost between \$70,000 - \$80,000, by the time you add in engineering, removal of the old asphalt, regrading of the area to correct the drainage problems, bringing in new sub base (Class V gravel) and compacting it, total costs could be near \$125,000-\$150,000. The City does not have that funding available. DuFrane referenced past problems with the catch basin behind the post office, and most springs, it is froze up and doesn't work properly. The Committee felt it probably made sense to do the entire project correctly. Lammers said the liquor store would be billed for their share of the costs. She also said there is \$10,000 left for the parking lot work from last year's grant. We could sell bonds for the project, which could include special assessments for benefitted properties. Albright questioned if it might make sense to combine the bond sale for example with work on W Lake Drive?

Paving for the basketball court was recommended by the Park Committee. DuFrane said a tree root damaged the paving. Recently, some homeowners removed the basketball hoop and repainted it. It has been reinstalled. The Park Committee also questioned if a second hoop should be installed? Albright doubted if the paving companies would come to town for this one small job for the prices quoted.

7.) Ordinance Updates. Planning and Zoning is looking at updating their basic code ordinances in accordance with the 2024 State of Minnesota recommendations. Albright agreed to look at those sections pertaining to streets, sidewalks, and yard waste.

8.) Budgets, Goal Setting, 5-Year Budget. Lammers said she recently attended a workshop on "financing your city". There are a number of ways cities can finance improvement projects. They can plan ahead, and incorporate obtaining the necessary funding through their annual tax levy/budgeting process by raising the levy. There is always the bond sale process. And lastly, the city can look at updating their Capital Improvement Plan. The last plan was done by KLJ Engineering in 2019. It might be good to review the plan, see if our priorities are still the same, and update costs per inflation. Albright felt it would be easier to justify an increase in the annual tax levy if there was specific projects planned.

#### Other Issues:

9.) Policy Update. The Mayor wanted the SSW Committee to look at the City's snow removal and ice control policy. It currently states "generally, gravel roads are not plowed until frozen, unless over 5 inches of snow or based on conditions impacting road passage". Recently, the City received a complaint from a homeowner on W Elm ST. This road was not plowed because the base was not frozen. The homeowner said they have a handicapped resident that needed to get out. DuFrane did use city equipment to clean up in front of their place to the best of his ability. **Motion** by Pinke to not change the City's current policy in this regard. **Seconded** by Albright, **approved**. In situations like this, the Committee encouraged city staff to work with special needs citizens.

10.) Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). There was discussion about MDH's efforts to address lead in drinking water. DuFrane said a recent water sample did not meet the State's standards in this regard, which will require us to do additional testing. MDH is doing an assessment of eliminating lead in Minnesota Drinking Water. Last fall, DuFrane said the Council authorized Widseth to work with the city in terms of this additional testing and reporting. Widseth said they are still waiting for the paperwork from MDH. Albright felt the Council should be updated in this regard. The MDH person that DuFrane has been in contact with is Mike Borland (651-201-5928).

11.) Road Slope Repairs. For over two years, the City has been trying to get bids to repair a portion of the north road slope along Scharf AVE and a small area on the north side of Dianne AVE. DuFrane has contacted numerous contractors for a bid, and has received none to date. He proposed that we hire LeRoy Feldt, Feldt Plumbing and Excavating, LLC, Detroit Lakes, to do the work. DuFrane has found his prices to be reasonable. Lammers said the affected landowners need to be contacted to work along their property. The SSYW Committee felt this was a reasonable option, and authorized the said work.

12.) Recycling Site. Let fall, Otter Tail County agreed to provide some gravel where the blue bins are located. Albright thought DuFrane should follow up with them in this regard. The 2024 permits are out, and this year they are hot pink. Citizens in Vergas are not required annually to update their “free” permits. DuFrane would be able to sell permits, as many times when he catches a violator, if he had a permit for sale, they’d buy it at that time. He wants to figure out a method for getting the money to Lammers. Lammers said permits will also be for sale on April 13th, at the open house from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the new government services offices. DuFrane said he is starting to run out of room for piling leaves and grass clippings. He’s afraid to get too close to the brush pile, as if he burns that, it could catch the compost pile on fire.

13.) Next Meeting. A date for the next SSYW Committee meeting was not scheduled at this time. Committee members should check their schedules and get back to Lammers. She felt we should meet fairly soon, as today we discussed a number of timely issues.

11.) Adjournment. Albright adjourned the meeting at 12:25 PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations:

- no changes to the Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy.
- authorize OTP to install 3 esplanade lights for Phase III of Keilley Shores Subdivision when they plow in their electrical cables this spring.
- authorize Feldt Plumbing and Excavating to repair Scharf and Dianne AVE slopes.

Follow up Actions:

- 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.
- Continue to work with the Community Club on possible lighting changes for Main ST.
- Research options for W Lake ST funding. R/W acquisition.
- Status of E Lake ST and N Railway AVE R/W acquisition. Finish process.
- Meet with Garrett Dahlgren regarding W Sunset Strip R/W.
- Finalize plans for parking lot, alley, and liquor store paving, funding options.
- Finish slope work on Scharf AVE and Dianne AVE.
- Gravel for Recycling Site lot. Work with County.
- Ordinance updates.

Future Meeting Agenda Items:

- none, at this time.