

Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes
Government Services Center
June 17, 2024

1.) A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Monday, June 17, 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. Attending via Zoom was Blaine Green, Widseth. Albright called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. .

2.) Agenda Additions/Deletions. Albright wanted to add complaints about Glenn Street (ST) erosion and brush removal along Townline Road (RD). **Approved.**

3.) Minutes for the 04/29/24 SSYW Committee meeting was presented. **Motion** by Pinke to approve, **seconded** by Albright, **approved.**

4.). Streets. A. - West (W) Lake ST. The 2024 Legislators did not add funding to the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP). Future applications for this funding should include letters of support. The SSYW Committee still needs to meet with Candor Township on this proposed road project. Albright will contact them.

Considerable discussion took place regarding the use of dust guard/calcium chloride on City streets. A request has been made for W Lake ST due to the increased traffic associated with the new Lawrence Lake Acres subdivision, DuFrane did contact Fergus Power Pump, and they would be happy to do approved City streets when they do work for Candor Township. The cost is \$0.99/foot. Under DuFrane's tenure, he has never used dust control, and feels it rusts out vehicles using the road. Also, if we approve it's use in a particular areas, others may want the same. Dust control is not specifically mentioned in the City's "Special Assessment and Trunk Area Policies and Procedures for Public Improvements and Maintenance Costs". One option would be to amend this policy, making landowners who benefit from the dust control to pay for the costs. Lammers should check with area Townships to see how they fund this work? DuFrane did note that the additional traffic on Glenn ST is damaging the road. Part of the problem is the "speeding" that is occurring. Albright questioned if we need to install a 30 miles per hour (MPH) sign? He felt signs do work, and can help address a problem.

Other possible requests for the use of calcium chloride this summer include Glenn ST by Loren Menz's, and Townline RD. The City shares maintenance costs with Hobart Township on Townline RD. They do the summer maintenance, and we do the winter plowing. Costs to the City for the entire mile of road are 78.23%. For 2024, we have budgeted \$10,000 for seal coating, with no seal coated scheduled this year. The goal was to build up this fund, so when major projects are needed, there are funds available for said work. Albright thought that if we are receiving complaints, then it is our job to address those issues. Albright made a **motion** to recommend to Council that for 2024, we use up to \$2,500 from the 2024 seal coating fund for dust control on approved roads. Also, that we look at modifying our road procedures and policies to address who's responsible for the cost of this work. **Seconded** by Pinke, **approved.**

4B.) East (E) Lake ST. The City is still waiting for the draft easement documents from the Attorney. Right-of-Way (R/W) is also needed from North (N) Railway Avenue (AVE) for this project. Green said that Widseth has revised the "draft" legal documents, but they have now been returned to the attorney for some minor modifications.

Albright said on the 06/11/24 Council meeting agenda, there was a line item titled “Right-of-Way (R/W) - located by 110 W. Elm ST”. He questioned what that was about? Lammers said this pertains to the “alley” located on the west side of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 17. An alley is only 20’ wide. The homeowner at this locatiion had some questions about road maintenance.

4D.) W Sunset Strip. Basically we’re waiting for okays from Garrett Dahlgren and Heath Courynea to continue with the R/W acquisition for this roadway. Albright can talk with both of them. Since this is currently not a city street, one option would be to not maintain the road. Albright said the roadway is a mail route, and someday we may have to consider road maintenance if the Wallace’s become year round residents. Right now, they are gone for the winter months.

4E.) Glenn ST. There is some erosion occurring along the reworked portion of roadway along Loren Menz’s property. A complaint was filed with Albright. With the recent rains, Albright will look at the area after today’s meeting, and take photographs, if necessary. The information will be shared with Green. Albright thought that perhaps the Menz garage driveway needed a culvert?

4F.) Dianne and Scharf AVE Slope Repairs. DuFrane has Lloyd Feldt lined up to do the work, hopefully before July 4th, but the recent rains have delayed progress. Lammers reported that all necessary easements have been signed.

5.) Alley Paving. Widseth filed their updated report dates June 7, 2024. The Preliminary Engineers’ Estimate includes item descriptions, unit quantities and estimated unit prices, and estimated project costs for the City, Hanson’s Plumbing and Heating, and Paul Bruhn. Total estimated costs are \$181,557.50. According to the City’s Road Policies and Procedures, a project of this nature would be 50% assessed to benefited landowners (Section 10, A.5.). Assessments can be based on a “per lot basis”, a linear “adjusted front footage”, or a “area” method of assessment. The City owns 3 of the 8 benefited parcels. Green went over the proposed plan in detail. The project includes lowering the storm sewer by the post office. Work of this nature would be assessed over 20 years. Green felt that the Bruhn and Hanson portions of the project would be paid for by them. Also, the project could be done without their involvement.

The next step in the project’s development, would be for the Council to approve or reject the feasibility report prepared by Widseth, and to order a public hearing on the improvements (if approved). The SSYW Committee would recommend said action. **Motion** by Pinke, **seconded** by Albright, **approved** for said action. Lammers thought that the bonding costs for a project of this nature would be about \$10,000.

Albright questioned the status of the new fencing on the west side of the county garage parking lot? Lammers said the same Company that installed the split rail fencing last year along the trail is doing the work, hopefully before July 4th.

6.) Yard Waste. Councilperson Fischer has requested that the SSWY Committee look at a “daily” permit for using the grass and branch disposal site. A yearly permit currently costs \$65. She’s had requests from landowners that they may only have one load a year, and the annual fee was too costly, given that they can dispose of their brush for free in Frazee. Issuance of a daily permit would also create more work for City staff. DuFrane feels we were currently getting too much product the way it is, and making disposal easier, would have no benefits for the City. Sooner or later, we’ll have to cleanup the site, including the debris ash from burning the brush piles. At that point, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) may shut us

down, or limit disposal to City residents only. Recently, someone brought some large stumps with the dirt root balls still attached. These are the things that smolder for weeks when the pile is burnt. DuFrane said the camera at that site does not work that well. Lammers said it is because there is no internet services on site. DuFrane said it is very difficult to use the camera system to determine who the violators area. Albright questioned if the use of a “deer” type camera might work? Creating more work for City staff would not benefit the City regarding issuance of a daily permit. **Motion** by Pinke to deny said request, **seconded** by Albright, **approved**.

DuFrane has gotten a commitment of \$1,000 for upgrading the recycling property, including more gravel from Otter Tail County. The commitment was made by Brooks Anderson, Otter Tail County Recycling Manager. Recently, DuFrane had Don Schroeder did \$900 of work at the recycling site, moving the grass and black dirt piles, and developing a new entry point for the grass clippings. DuFrane questioned if the County might pay for that work. The Committee felt it didn't hurt to ask. DuFrane also said that Mark Sand and Gravel offered the City “contaminated” rock at their pit that can't used for making asphalt. DuFrane has not found anyone at the site which know what pile of material they are talking about. He can use that material to fill some of the holes at the recycling site. DuFrane said that he has burned the branch debris once in 2024. The City continues to take complaints about the looks of the site for people entering town from the north, complaints whenever we burn the brush, due to smoke, etc., and health concerns from neighbors. DuFrane thought some options to address the issues might include having the site open on certain days with certain times, having someone man the site during the hours its open, or raising the permit rates.

7.) Ordinance Updates. Albright has finished Chapter 70, Traffic Regulations, with only one minor change. He still needs to review Chapter 72, Snowmobiles and Chapter 73, Recreational and Other Vehicles.

8.) Budget - Goal Setting. Albright thought we should get a few of the projects done that have been on our agenda for quite some time. Work has started on the 2025 budgets, so we need to get our numbers together.

9.) Railroad Crossing. On April 3, 2024, there was a meeting with the Mayor, Lammers, Albright, and Krysten Foster, County Engineer, Otter Tail County. Numerous complaints have been filed over the years about delays caused by the Railroad on the Main ST crossing. Some of these delays, lasting hours. Foster said she would try and arrange a meeting with Railroad officials. She will keep the City posted. To date, no meeting has been arranged, but the Railroad has been more willing to split the train for some of the longer delays.

10.) Albright has received a request for a pedestrian walkway on South (S) 1ST Avenue (AVE) south of W Main ST, between Altona Square and Franklin Fence. The Committee directed Lammers to contact Krysten Foster, Otter Tail County Engineer in this regard. There was also discussion about adding a walkway between the Hardware Store and Billy's across W Main ST.

11.) Townline RD. Albright received a complaint about the 2023 brush removal along this roadway from Keith Bunkowske. He felt material was pushed up onto his fence, and the area in general where the brush removal took place was left a mess. DuFrane said he was aware of one area that Bunkowske was referencing. DuFrane felt the City should have Bunkowske move his shed and fencing from the new 33' R/W.

12.) 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 for a meeting after July 9th.

13.) Adjournment. Albright adjourned the meeting at 12:05 PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by;

Bruce E. Albright, City Council Member

Council Recommendations:

- approve Phase I engineering feasibility report for alley/parking lots. Schedule hearing.
- deny request for "daily permits" at recycling center.
- authorize up to \$2,500 in 2024 for dust control as needed and approved, look at Policies and Procedures for future payment of said costs.

Follow up Actions:

- investigate pedestrian walkways with County Engineer.
- 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. Meet w/Candor Twp.
- Status of E Lake ST and N Railway AVE R/W acquisitions. Finish process.
- Meet with Garrett Dahlgren/Heath Courynea regarding W Sunset Strip R/W.
- Finish slope work on Scharf AVE and Dianne AVE.

Future Meeting Agenda Items:

- Budgets
- pedestrian walkways
- parking lot stripping