

Street/Sidewalks/Yard Waste Committee Meeting Minutes
Government Services Center
October 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM.

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bruce Albright, Council Liaison	N/A	P	N/A	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P		
Paul Pinke, Council Liaison	N/A	P	N/A	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P		
Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent	N/A	P	N/A	P	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P		
Julie Lammers, Clerk Treasurer	N/A	P	N/A	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P		

P: Present. A: Absent N/A: No meeting

A meeting of the Vergas Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste (SSYW) Committee was held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM at the Vergas Government Services Center. Also present; Engineer Blaine Green.

Lammers called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

1.) Agenda Additions/Deletions. The committee agreed to add "Trail" to the agenda.

2.) Minutes for May 29, 2025 SSYW Committee meeting were presented. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

3.) Alley/parking lot/drainage

Green reported that the project is essentially complete with only striping, possibly a sign or two, and a few punch list items remaining. He noted that there was some overrun on quantities due to the irregular corners and shapes in the parking lot area, as well as additions made by Hanson's for their property. Green stated he would verify measurements and check numbers to ensure proper billing, particularly regarding the concrete work that Hanson's will pay for directly.

The committee discussed concerns about the property line issue where concrete was poured approximately two feet short of where it should have been. Employees expressed frustration that despite being very vocal about wanting the concrete to go all the way to the property line to create a clear division, the line was off by about two feet. The neighbor plans to stripe a line from his property to his property line to mark the boundary, with the stripe to be placed on his property.

Dufrane noted that survey pins were removed during construction. Green explained he would work on getting those reset, particularly noting that one pin was necessarily removed due to its location next to a catch basin. DuFrane and Lammers were concerned that the pins had been in place and should have been observed during construction.

The committee discussed striping plans including:

- The need to have survey points restored first.
- Bruhn's request to have his property perimeter striped on three sides at his expense.

- Confirmation that the stripers will do Bruhn's striping as part of the overall project and charge it to his portion.
- Decision to change the parking stalls along the fence from angled to perpendicular to maximize parking spaces.
- Inclusion of a handicap parking space in the back of the liquor store parking lot (last spot closest to 1st Avenue).
- Need for a handicap sign in addition to the painted symbol.
- Agreement to have limited-hour parking with signs stating "No Parking After 10 PM" to prevent overnight parking.
- The committee also noted concrete splatter on the side of the building that will need to be addressed, and Green said he would look into having that cleaned up.

4.) Yard Waste

The committee discussed recent issues with the yard waste site, including someone dumping large tree stumps at the site. Lammers showed a picture from the surveillance camera of an individual who had dumped stumps, noting that he tied ropes to the stumps and pulled them off using concrete barricades. The individual's license plate was not visible in the footage.

Albright volunteered to write an article for the November newsletter about the incident, explaining why dumping large items is prohibited at the site. The article would include the image of the dumped stumps.

The committee discussed potential improvements for the yard waste site:

- DuFrane suggested investigating the purchase of a grapple attachment for the tractor or loader to help manage large logs and stumps.
- The committee discussed the fire hazard posed by large stumps smoldering under ash.
- Consideration of hiring someone to haul away large items.
- Discussion about limited hours for the site versus keeping it accessible at all times.
- Noting that they sold approximately 275 permits this year.
- Consideration of updating the camera policy to allow using footage for enforcement.
- For next year's permits, the committee agreed to use yellow as the permit color and maintain the current rules, including the 6-inch diameter limit for materials.

5.) Street Inventory

The committee discussed creating a database of streets to track maintenance history. Green recommended using the GIS system rather than a spreadsheet, explaining that it would be more visual and easier for future committees to use. Green noted that clicking on a street segment in the GIS system would allow them to enter maintenance information such as "crack seal 2025."

Green mentioned that he started this process and would send the information once completed. The committee agreed that the GIS approach would be better than a spreadsheet.

DuFrane reported that crack sealing had been done on several streets including Second Avenue, Third Avenue, and portions of Main Street, with plans to continue to Altona.

Regarding the comprehensive street condition survey, Green suggested waiting another year or two before conducting a new survey, noting that the data from the 2022 survey was still relatively solid.

6.) Comprehensive Street Condition Survey

Dianne Avenue

Lammers explained that the EDA has a lot (parcel 82000990245000) at 419 Diana Avenue that cannot be accessed because the road ends before reaching the parcel.

The committee discussed options:

- Extending Dianne Avenue to provide access to the parcel
- Need to ensure emergency vehicle access
- Challenges with the steep slope to the property
- Possibility of taking dirt from the high spots of the area to create access

Albright and DuFrane agreed to visit the site before the next council meeting to develop a recommendation.

W Lake Street/Glenn Street

Lammers noted that the grant application for the W Lake Street project is due December 1st, and the city had previously just missed qualifying for funding. She suggested using the same grant application from last time with updated numbers and new letters of support.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to resubmit the grant application for the W Lake Street project. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee discussed the dangerous curve on West Lake Street, noting it was difficult to maintain especially during snow removal. They also discussed the potential to note in the grant application that improving the road would increase the possibility of the city annexing additional land in the future, providing additional justification for the project.

Sunset Strip

No new information.

E Lake Street/Railway Avenue

Lammers reported that she was working with the new attorney regarding right-of-way issues on East Lake Street, as they had not received a copy of what the property owner signed from the previous attorney. She noted that property owner along East Lake Street had

approached the committee wanting to discuss the bollards placed on his property without prior consultation. The committee discussed possibly meeting with this property owner after determining the status of the paperwork.

Trail

The committee discussed concerns about the bike path along Highway 35, noting that the shoulders appeared to be only about 3-4 feet wide on each side instead of the recommended 6 feet. Lammers explained that while their committee had recommended 6 feet on one side, the county had opted to split it with narrower shoulders on both sides of the road.

The committee also discussed the need for bike stencils on the pavement to prevent cars from mistakenly using the shoulder as a turn lane. They noted that the mayor had witnessed a car using the trail area as a turning lane, creating a safety hazard.

They also briefly discussed the ongoing efforts to develop a trail connecting Vergas to Frazee, noting that the county was asking the cities to apply for grants with the county serving as the fiscal agent.

7.) Budget-Goal Setting

5-Year Budget

Lammers reported that the 2025 budget for capital outlay improvements of streets had been reduced from \$32,000 to \$15,000. She explained that the liquor store was not performing well this year and would not be able to make the expected \$30,000 contribution to the city budget. Consequently, the council will need to decide which projects to defer, as there will not be sufficient funding to move all budgeted amounts to savings accounts as typically done.

2026 Budget Proposal

The committee discussed the need to plan for infrastructure replacement, particularly for lift stations and pumps that are now 33 years old. Albright noted the importance of proactively budgeting for these replacements rather than waiting for emergency situations.

Lammers mentioned that an infrastructure study would be beneficial to get on the state funding list, but noted that the state had cut funding this year and was not adding any new projects to their list.

The committee agreed to schedule a water and sewer meeting to discuss these issues and set rates for the coming year before the November council meeting.

Adjournment

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke, to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Council Recommendations

- Discuss extension of Dianne Ave
- Approve applying for Local Road Improvement Program grant for Glenn Street and West Lake Street.

Follow Up Actions

- Green to verify measurements and costs for the alley parking lot drainage project to ensure proper billing.
 - Green to coordinate with the contractor to clean up concrete splatter on the building from the parking lot project.
 - Green to check with the contractor about reinstalling the roof drain that was removed during construction.
 - Green to coordinate with surveyors to reset property pins that were removed during construction.
 - Green to arrange for striping of the parking lot including Paul's property lines and the south side of the city parking lot.
 - Green to ensure a handicap sign is installed at the designated handicap parking spot.
 - Lammers to work with Attorney regarding right-of-way paperwork for East Lake Street.
 - Albright and Dufrane to look at lot #419 on Diane Avenue before the next Council meeting to determine how to provide access to the parcel.
 - Lammers to contact Otter Tail County about the crosswalks installation status and ask about the bike path project.
 - Lammers to update and resubmit the Westlake Street grant application by December 1st.
 - Lammers to update the camera policy for the next street meeting.
 - Albright to write an article for the November newsletter about yard waste site rules.
 - DuFrane to bring quotes for a grapple for the loader and tractor to the next meeting.
 - DuFrane to install bike stencils on the bike path to prevent drivers from using it as a turn lane.
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