



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
April 7, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner (telephonic); Council: Tom Skjaret (telephonic), Jahn Dyvik (telephonic), Michelle Jerde (telephonic), and Deirdre Kvale (telephonic)

Staff Present: City Administrator: Scott Weske (in person); Public Works Director: Sean Diercks (telephonic); and City Engineer: Alex Miller (telephonic)

Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Skjaret, seconded by Dyvik, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all by roll call.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

No one was in attendance to address the City Council during Open Correspondence.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Discussion of Franchise Fee and 2021 Street Improvement Project Options

City Engineer Miller stated that because of the current economic uncertainty, staff is suggesting that the Council pause discussion about the franchise fees. She stated that she would, however, like the Council to continue to have discussion regarding franchise fees in order for the City to have it as a tool to use when they are ready to pull it back out again and implement it.

City Engineer Miller noted that she had put together a possible project schedule for street improvements for 2021 or 2022 and explained the rough timeline needed to pursue some of the projects. She indicated that she has proposed two possible project scopes, one larger, one smaller. She added that she is narrowing in on the smaller project because it may be more palatable at this point in time. The area of Grand Avenue focused on in the smaller project scope has had a series of water main breaks which have cost the city around \$200,000 to repair and have also caused damage to the roadway. She suggested that the Council discuss possible street improvements projects and where they would like the next project to be located.

Council member Kvale stated that she agrees with City Engineer's recommendation to move forward with a smaller project in light of the economic uncertainty but asked if the City could do project that would cost somewhere between the two presented and complete all of Grand Avenue.

The Council contemplated completing all of Grand Avenue in 2021 and including information about the cost of the watermain breaks in communications to the public.

Mayor Miner stated that he would be in favor of doing all of Grand Avenue. He noted that the City is already so far behind after taking a three or four year hiatus on road projects and asked for input from City Administrator Weske on this idea.

City Administrator Weske stated that his biggest concern is always how the City will pay for the project. He gave examples of ways to capture back some of the City's expenses related to staff time, rates, and low user situations.

Council member Skjaret asked how much the City currently has in bond debt.

Weske responded that there are one or two bonds getting closer to being paid off that could potentially be paid off early.

Council member Skjaret asked if taking on another \$3 million in bond debt would be bad.

Weske stated that it would be detrimental if the City doesn't do some creative moving of expectations.

The Council discussed the current total bond debt and the ability of the tax base to carry the debt.

Council member Skjaret stated that he would like to find an affordable in-between project that can be paid for between the franchise fees and a change in the levy. He stated that he likes the idea of looking into completing all of Grand Avenue.

Weske noted that the estimated prices included in the presented projects were worst case scenarios so there may be some ways to bring down the costs.

City Engineer Miller offered suggestions for ways to bring down some of the costs of the street projects.

Public Works Director Diercks stated that he agrees that the City should look at the whole length of Grand Avenue in conjunction with the trenchless technology. He stated that he would like to see a revised cost projection for doing all of Grand Avenue.

Council member Skjaret stated that he thinks there should also be discussion about the sidewalk along Grand Avenue. He stated that he wasn't sure if the City had ever looked at property lines and that would need to happen in order to put in a sidewalk along the street.

Council member Dyvik suggested that the City consider narrowing the road, which would help bring down the speed as well as make room for a sidewalk.

There was a consensus of the Council 2021 to focus on Grand Avenue in its entirety for 2021.

Council member Dyvik stated that he would like the City to come up with a Pavement Management Plan to be able to show the residents so they know which projects are coming up in the schedule. He asked if the City would somehow follow the color-coded chart that showed the condition of the streets.

City Engineer Miller stated that there are a few different versions of a Pavement Management Plan in the works and noted that she thinks a big piece of this will be coming up with a funding mechanism.

The Council discussed the importance of getting a street improvement project going for 2021 because of how long it has been since the City had done one; and discussed the possible economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how that may affect the timeline of upcoming projects.

City Engineer Miller noted that if things stay basically the same, feasibility studies are good for a longer period of time, but the City will have to be careful with the assessment if the project timeline changes. She noted that she can work with the City Attorney to determine when the most strategic time would be to hold the hearing assessment if the project looks like it may be pushed out another year.

Council member Skjaret suggested publishing the Pavement Management Plan to the City's website so the public can more easily access it.

City Engineer Miller stated that she can compile information from the most recently adopted Pavement Management Table Plan and include the other projects that the Council has talked about.

Council member Skjaret stated that he thinks it would also be good to show the road ratings.

The Council discussed the feedback the City would get if the projects didn't go in order from worst to best, because Grand Avenue does not have the worst rating. They discussed making sure to include the information regarding watermain breaks and how things like this are factored into the decision regarding priority.

City Engineer Miller stated that she can include an explanation on how things like road ratings and watermain breaks are factored into the decisions.

Mayor Miner stated that he would also like the Council to discuss what they will do about roads that don't need to be completely reconstructed and what options may be available for improvements.

Public Works Director Diercks stated that they are considering doing some spray patching on some minor, shallow portions. He reviewed areas where he felt the franchise fees could cover a good portion of the mill and overlay costs each season.

The Council discussed specific roads throughout the City as well as budget and repair options for roadways and drainage issues.

Council member Dyvik stated that the Pavement Management Plan should include which roads will get full reconstruction or mill and overlay and when is it scheduled.

Council member Jerde stated that she thinks it should also include why the projects will be done the way the City is proposing.

City Engineer Miller stated that the trickiest part will be to come up with a way to fund these projects that is sustainable. She indicated that she will work with City Administrator Weske on ways to move Grand Avenue to the forefront and then work on a larger 10-year plan that will almost be like a CIP program for the pavement management.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Miner asked the Council to spend a little time talking about goose management. He asked Council member Jerde if she had any updates or information regarding her call to Rochester.

Council member Jerde stated that she had spoken with Rochester and they definitely do not kill the geese. She stated that she would be glad to look into contacting other cities to see what others have done that have been successful.

Public Works Director Diercks explained that the City usually harvests the geese around the first of July.

Mayor Miner asked if there was a contract for the harvesting or when the Council would need to make a decision.

Public Works Director Diercks stated that he has already been contacted by the contractor wanting to schedule for this year. He noted that he has not gotten back to them yet since he knew the Council wanted to discuss this item.

Council member Dyvik stated that he went to the Canadian Goose Management website and read that they gather them up, take them to a poultry processing plant, and then the processed geese are donated to food shelves. He added that he feels this is becoming a big deal about nothing and the geese are consumable just like chicken or turkeys. He explained that there are about 20 geese that are destroying the main park so people cannot use it.

Council member Kvale stated that in some ways it is a public health issue.

Council member Dyvik agreed and noted that he appreciates Council member Jerde's concern about killing the geese, but feels the harvesting needs to be done.

Council member Jerde stated that she would like the opportunity to research some other ways to take care of the geese without the City having the reputation of just killing them. She stated that she thinks there are other ways to do it and get the same outcome, without killing them. She suggested that she be given some time to research it and bring back additional information to the Council.

Mayor Miner asked Council member Jerde to bring information back to the Council on alternative methods of controlling the goose population by the next meeting.

ADJOURN

Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske
City Administrator