

Date of Meeting: April 10, 2025, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Lou Larson, Michael Martens, Tom Neal, Sarah Watson (Chad Henke was excused)

Also Present: Mayor Diny, Eric Lindman, Allen Wesolowski, TJ Niksich, Dustin Kraege, Andrew Lynch, Jeremy Kopp, Randy Fifrick, Lori Wunsch

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and received by the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Noting the presence of a quorum, at approximately 5:15 p.m. Vice Chair Larson called the meeting to order.

### **Approval of minutes of the March 13, 2025 meeting**

Watson moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Martens seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

### **Reconsideration of parking restrictions on Hamilton Street between 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street**

Wes Ebert, 1201 North 12<sup>th</sup> St, asked if his neighbor's (Josh Holland) email was received and Larson confirmed. Ebert reinforced what Holland said about parking on both sides of the street calming down traffic. Another concern for Ebert is his side of the street is rarely plowed to the curb and his driveway grows by 5'. If there are cars parked across the street from him, he will have a hard time getting out of his driveway in the winter. He has lived in this house for 20 years. There has never been an issue at his end of the street. After the last letters went out, the next storm came and he noticed there wasn't a problem. Cars were not parked on the street. The neighbors realized there was something to be dealt with and they did not park on the street at that point. He asked if the simple solution of talking to the neighbors was considered. He does not see a need to put up signs and restrict parking.

Wesolowski explained that the original request came from Public Works due to plowing. Pictures were provided showing how parking prevented plowing of the street. The last action taken was to restrict parking on the south and east sides, which was asked to be brought back for reconsideration. Engineering has received 3 emails. One from 1009 Hamilton which said to stick with the no parking restrictions that were passed at the last meeting. 1106 Highland Park also said to stick with the parking restrictions year-round. 1108 Hamilton, Josh Holland, does not want any parking restrictions. He was the resident that appeared at the last meeting and requested the restrictions be in place only during the winter months. Now he is requesting to leave it as is with no parking restrictions. Engineering also received a call from 1020 Hamilton who wants to uphold no parking as was passed.

Neal said the plow photo is definitive of the winter problem. A few years ago there was a fire on that block that required response. Had there been parking on both sides of the street it would have impeded access for emergency vehicles. On his block he sees people parking overnight on both sides of the street. They just do not seem to get the alternate side parking down. He feels there is a need to have one side parking on this stretch to eliminate the bottleneck for emergency vehicles and plowing. He would support this for year-round. Concerns were expressed about traffic using these blocks and speeding; however, this is not a throughfare. You rarely see anyone driving through there unless they live there.

Martens referred to the comment made about parking being used as a method of traffic calming. This concerns him as parking is not a method used for traffic calming. If speed or traffic is an issue, maybe Engineering should do a study to see what kind of traffic is happening on the street and determine if other approved methods of traffic calming are necessary. He is in favor of keeping the parking as decided last month.

Neal moved to maintain the restrictions as passed previously and deny the reconsideration. Watson seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

### **Reconsideration of parking restrictions on 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Hamilton Street and Steuben Street**

Neal moved to maintain the restrictions as passed previously and deny the reconsideration.

Ebert lives on 12<sup>th</sup> Street and there has never been an issue with parking or obstruction. He does not see why there is an issue to worry about.

Watson seconded the motion and the motion passed 4-0.

**Discussion and possible action on initial resolution to set a public hearing to vacate Pine Ridge Boulevard from North 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Westhill Drive**

Wesolowski stated a letter was received from Aspirus regarding a proposed expansion for which they would request the proposed vacation. This is for the initial resolution to hold the public hearing.

Tom Radenz, REI, 4080 North 28<sup>th</sup> Ave, appeared with Paul David, Barbara Burnette, and Rene Gorski of Aspirus. They are interested in expanding the parking field for the hospital parking lot for a future building addition. They are requesting a portion of Pine Ridge Boulevard get vacated to accommodate the project. They can do a full presentation during the public hearing to show the plans and bigger picture.

Watson moved to set the public hearing. Neal seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

**Discussion and possible action on design options for the reconstruction of 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Westhill Drive to West Wausau Avenue**

Larson looked at the options and the response from the public through the whole scenario is Option 1. He feels if the public wants Option 1, we should give them Option 1.

Wesolowski laid out the options and preliminary costs. He cautioned that the estimates do not include sanitary sewer and water costs; it is strictly for the roadway portion.

Frank Stefl, 2801 West Wausau Ave, thought to keep 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue open and resurface it would roughly be \$1 million plus without water drainage. Installing cul-de-sacs and eliminating the throughfare was talked about. He feels it is working the way it is. He asked why we would invest \$1 million plus to refurbish the street not knowing if it will stay good. The plow drivers do not like going down the hill. It is not feasible to pay over a million without taking care of the water runoff. In his opinion, the cul-de-sacs should be put in and the roadway kept the way it is now.

Karen Singsheim, 5177 North 28<sup>th</sup> Ave, has a friend who lives on Maple Creek between 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. From what she can tell, he will be blocked off 3 ways to get out of his house. Wesolowski clarified that Option 1 is to reconstruct 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue the way it is now.

Wesolowski showed the 4 options. Option 1 is to reconstruct as is. Option 2 is similar to the way it is set up now with bringing traffic up Madonna and adding a cul-de-sac at Maple Creek. Option 3 would take traffic up Maple Creek with a cul-de-sac at Mary Ann Lane. Option 4 is the original plan proposed by the County.

George Mosher, 710 North 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave, said Option 1 is the best there can be. The traffic using 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue can be crazy at times. He has talked with other people that live in the area. They have kids that cross 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Leaving 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave as a main artery is not an option because it is a residential area.

Barbara Burnette and Paul David both appeared from Aspirus. They do support the throughfare to continue in its current configuration. Some of the reports heard from other people about drivers doing crazy things stems from the fact that this is a historical throughfare for the City. There are people that use it and rely upon it. Aspirus is developing much of a campus in that area and hopes to continue to do so with the belief there was going to be a throughfare in this area. It is an effective and important lane of travel for many reasons. They voiced strong support for the first option.

Bret Lichtenwald, 3007 Ridgewood Drive, would prefer Option 1. The overwhelming majority has always been to reconstruct 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He has witnessed some dangerous situations with kids at bus stops and impatient

drivers. Detours have been moved so he thinks we have done as much as we can at this point. Opening 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue would solve the rest of the problems they still have.

Mary Hallgren, 819 North 27<sup>th</sup> Ave, feels bad for the people that live on 32<sup>nd</sup>. There is a single mom on 30<sup>th</sup> who has 5 children that are outside playing all the time. Half the time Hallgren walks her dogs in the ditch on West Wausau Ave due to people coming up 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. People still try to go down 28<sup>th</sup> Ave, then head over on Mary Ann and come up 27<sup>th</sup> fast because they are not happy. She feels if 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue is reconstructed correctly, we should not have problems with it washing away. It really is a throughfare and she does not think it is fair to reroute traffic through residential neighborhoods.

Stefl said everyone talks about speeding on 30<sup>th</sup> and around. Everyone speeds in Wausau. Come summer, they are just as fast if not faster with that street open. He thinks traffic is slower with the way it is blocked off. With Aspirus wanting to build, he thinks we would want traffic using Westwood where there is a stop light.

This is a difficult one for Neal. He tends to put a lot of weight in what staff recommends. He is very concerned about the winter situation. If we were to go with Option 1, he believes the addition of gates for snow/ice emergencies would have to be done as part of the reconstruction. He does not like the idea of traffic through neighborhoods from people who are hell bent on getting somewhere like they used to. He is in favor of Option 1 with the caveat of looking at protecting it in the winter and looking at impacts for our snowplow operators.

Larson agrees as it worked for years. He feels the City and the County have let the neighborhood down over the years by keeping it in limbo to a point where it is unusable. As much as it is going to cost the City to reconstruct it, he believes it is the necessary thing to do.

Watson said Option 1 is ideal, but she asked if we would be back here in another 10 years with washouts. Wesolowski explained it would not be a 10-year road. Storm sewer would be installed. Currently there are a lot of washouts because there is no storm sewer. We would either put a better ditch down the east side of 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue or more likely add storm sewer all the way down the hill. The estimates for the options do not include sanitary sewer or watermain. No matter what option is chosen, sanitary sewer and water will be done. The cost of reconstructing the road changes depending on the option.

Watson was looking at Options 1 and 4 and spoke of the grades. Wesolowski stated Option 4 was the original County design, which would have continued north across West Wausau Avenue through the Village of Maine. The Village has expressed no interest in extending the road. If we were to build Option 4, it would be a T intersection at West Wausau Ave.

The biggest concern for Martens is the 18% grade. Recommended grades do not go beyond 12%. He asked for an example between a 12% grade and an 18% grade. Townline Road would be closer to a 12% grade. Wesolowski explained the 12% is a federally funded mandate. For local roads, federal standards do not have to be followed. There is not much that can be done with the grade of 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Martens noted that the cost of Option 1 is approximately three-quarters of a million more than Option 2. This will be three-quarters of a million of additional debt the City will have to carry. Staff will continue to refine the estimate once an option is chosen.

Watson moved to pursue Option 1. Seconded by Neal and the motion passed 4-0.

### **Discussion and possible action on proposed 2026 Street Reconstruction Projects and 5 Year Plan**

Wesolowski stated that next year construction would include Stark Street from 5<sup>th</sup> Street to 12<sup>th</sup> Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Westhill Drive to West Wausau Avenue, North 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Spruce Street to Bridge Street, and West Wausau Avenue from 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Stevens Drive. North 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue would use TID funding. West Wausau Avenue is a STP Urban project so the DOT would be paying 80% of the costs. Proposed streets for the year 2030 have been added to the 5-year plan.

Neal said 2026 may have to be looked at due to 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Neal has seen clear cutting of trees on streets where projects will take place. Years ago, there were extensive discussions on managing street trees, their value to the City, and value to real estate. They are a resource we cannot take for granted. Every tree on Grant Street was cut down and replaced with little trees. Trees have to have priority and protected when possible. We have seen where tree roots have been cut for sidewalk replacement and subsequently the tree is blown over in a stiff breeze because half of the root structure has been severed. Neal wants to see street projects tree plans brought before the Park & Rec Committee for review and comments. He cannot keep seeing our canopy disappear because engineers figure it is ok and it makes their job easier. For any given tree, he wants to know the reason for the removal. Lindman said there are trees that have to come down due to utilities. We rely on the City Forester for trees that need to come down due to disease or condition. Neal said even a couple trees on any given block will help to keep the element of beauty on that block. Larson suggested putting this on the agenda for next month.

Neal moved to accept the 2026 Street Reconstruction Projects and 5 Year Plan as presented with the caveat that 2026 may have to be looked at in terms of budget and impact of 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Seconded by Watson and the motion passed 4-0.

### **Discussion and possible action on City property proposals for fire training tower**

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Kopp has looked at four properties that for the most part are owned by the City. He would like to get to a point where one property could be picked to move forward with.

Larson asked if there is a cost estimate for the tower. Kopp has a few options as well as costs. Right now he feels it is necessary to show the partnership that we are willing to have an area to do this. The size of the training tower can differ, which will change the cost. Some training towers are made from cargo containers, which saves money. Costs will come forward, but it is such a variable depending on what tower we go with. The cheapest and most simple structure that would still qualify for our ratings starts at about \$260,000. There are towers that go all the way up to \$1.5 million. NTC will get back to Kopp on the cost of the training tower they put up in Merrill.

Neal noted that one property seems to be on the water. Kopp stated it is on Burek. The pro for this property is the location; it is near NTC's campus. The con is it is owned by the City but not in the City; it is in Maine. It would have to be developed and would be another cost. Lindman stated the Utility owns the property. The Utility has about 80 acres and it is where our wellfields are. This property is just north of the water plant. Out of the 4 properties, Kopp feels this one is the least feasible.

Kopp likes the 1300 Cleveland Ave property because of the location. The Fire Department could use the property and still respond quickly to citizens. It is also off the beaten path so there would not be many gawkers to cause accidents. The property already has a hydrant and concrete that could be used as a foundation for a structure. This property is Kopp's favorite of the four because of the location, it has a water source, there is a driveway and concrete. Neal mentioned that DPW has a training site here and asked if that would be compatible. Lindman stated the training area was set up because the property is not being used right now. Kopp feels it would be a good future goal to be able to collaborate with other City entities, such as DPW and PD, and possibly have an observation area for the community. Larson said the property has not been cleaned up and is an environmental hazard. Lindman explained the City has a remediation report with the DNR and is hoping to get something back in June/July on what work needs to be done. The Council would like the property cleaned up to non-industrial standards.

Larson is concerned with burning since this property is in a neighborhood. Kopp explained there will be a lot of different training. It is called a burn tower because you can have fire in it. There are restrictions on what you can burn in a burn/training tower. The way they are designed and discharge smoke, Kopp feels it would be nothing more than the smell of a campfire in the neighborhood. Larson's district borders this property, and he does not think they would be happy with it.

Martens agrees with Larson. Politically this would be a challenging site to use. Different uses have been proposed over the years and there has always been a significant amount of pushback. Larson does not feel it would be appropriate to do anything with this property until it has been remediated.

515 South 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is not owned by the City. This property is the old VA Clinic and is next to Fire Station 2. With the fire station connected to this property, it does give enough acreage to qualify for ISO Standards. A con for this property is it is in a neighborhood. There would be a lot of coming and going, noise, and a little smoke.

Another property is located on Enterprise Drive where the PD has a pole barn. This would allow the opportunity of collaborating with the Police Department. The property has easy access from the highway. The downside is we would have to do a lot with the property to bring it up to grade and bring in water for hydrants. Also, emergency vehicles would be further out of town. However, we would never have all units there at the same time. Two stations would be kept in quarters to cover the City properly.

When talking about neighborhoods and political concerns, the properties around Enterprise drive may be an easier sell per Neal. He is curious about the feasibility of the Enterprise sites. Neal likes the potential for collaborative efforts between DPW and the Fire Department. He asked if the Enterprise sites could be for both this facility and the Fleet facility. Lindman stated some properties near Enterprise were looked at for the Fleet facility. It is not really a great location for DPW because of the distance. Also, some of the properties thought to be big enough were restricted due to wetlands. Lindman does not believe there are any sites big enough for both DPW and the Fire Department.

When the evidence storage building was built on Enterprise Drive, Martens thought the Police Department was looking at some of the land as a potential location for their range. Martens thinks the lot next to Fire Station 2 might not be that bad of a site. It is right off the highway and is in a commercial district. He is concerned with the land off Burek Street because of the wellheads.

Kopp noted that the City has grown to the west with Great Lakes Cheese and Wausau Chemical. One day a fourth station will be needed because it is too far to go from the nearest station to achieve response times at their goal of 4 minutes or less. The Enterprise Drive location could be a future site that could grow from a training tower to a small station one day. Discussion followed.

Kopp will touch base with the realtor for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave property and try to put together a survey of the neighborhood. He will also keep looking into the pros and cons of Enterprise Drive.

#### **Discussion and possible action on easement with 700 Grand Apartments LLC for underground utilities at 700 Grand Avenue**

As part of the development agreement the City has to note an underground utility easement along the north part of the parcel. The CSM provided denotes the width of the easement. This is the area that will have the parking lot. The City needs to accept the easement that will be granted by the developer after the property is closed on.

Neal moved to approve. Seconded by Martens and the motion passed 4-0.

#### **Discussion and possible action on dedication of land to Right of Way at 700 Grand Avenue**

When the parcel was initially designed for development, 20' along Grand Avenue was left for any future road projects. This needs to be dedicated as right-of-way. The staff memo states a 20' wide and 139' long strip remains for dedication. Lynch spoke with the contracted surveyor who suggested changing that to 398', which is what is shown on the CSM.

Martens moved to approved. Seconded by Neal and the motion passed 4-0.

#### **Update on future parking facilities for Athletic Park**

As part of the original development agreement in 2020 and the first amendment in 2022 with the Woodchucks organization, the City has an obligation to create parking facilities. Lynch provided a map showing three areas around Athletic Park. There is a current gravel parking lot that will be paved this year and provide 29 spaces.

East of the field an ADA parking lot will be created with 7 spaces. According to the development agreement, we have to provide 150 parking spaces. We will have 114 parking spaces left to create. The space in the area is limited. Lynch has talked with landowners and examined other options in the area. He has set a deadline of the middle of this year so we can get a parking lot designed and in the 2026 budget. Our deadline for completion is early 2027. We are looking at doing a large lot. The Wausau Chemical temporary gravel site is a good candidate. It would hold a large number of vehicles and when not used by Athletic Park it would be available for those using the riverfront.

Street parking around Athletic Park is not being utilized properly. Mark Macdonald, owner of the Woodchucks, would like to see more paint marking of on-street stalls. There may be areas that it would be useful, but there is consideration of the ongoing cost to maintain the paint. Lynch has considered 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, 3 to 4 blocks south of Wausau Ave and roughly the same distance north of Wausau Ave; and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street about the same distance south of Wausau Ave. Macdonald is pushing to have more of the neighborhood areas have this, specifically Park Ave and Lincoln Ave. Lynch is hesitant mostly because of the condition of the street and there are a lot of lead lines. He is also careful about setting a precedence.

Neal said that from Wausau Ave south is an area of focus for development. The area proposed for the larger lot is in the backyard of an area that we are looking at for residential development. He is leery of making that a permanent fixture. Across the street north is a little less desirable in terms of development. Lynch feels the area between Wausau Ave and Winton is the area more desirable for residential development. We are working through a process to get the Wausau Chemical site cleaned up. A parking lot is a good way to limit intrusions into the ground. Neal questioned the space across 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Lynch indicated it is owned by the Bridge Clinic, and they have plans for it.

Martens feels street markings are a great idea, especially on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. He suggested starting small to see how it works out. Larson also likes this idea so people are not parking within 4' of a driveway. Lynch offered to Macdonald for their department to monitor and evaluate parking in the area. They could try and get counts on busier days and document if they find problems such as blocking driveways. Lindman said that once we put paint on the street we have to maintain it. Every year we do a pavement marking project so that would be increased dollars every year. If we use epoxy, it is typically every three years. We do have a hard time keeping up and we have areas that are a priority. Lindman would be against doing this in residential areas. If you try to mark areas between driveways and ingress/egress areas, he feels you would lose more parking spots than you would gain.

### **Update on the proposed Fleet Maintenance Facility and possible location**

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Lindman does not have any new news at this point. He had a conversation with the Mayor about relooking at some areas, whether it is purchasing residential and commercial properties by the existing facility or to see if there are any different feelings from owners of other properties we have looked at. We are moving forward with investigations of the Cherry Street property.

Neal does not see Cherry Street as being a property he would support. The property is essentially downtown, on the river, and adjacent to the extended riverwalk. He would love to see that property maintained as a taxable plot of land. He feels it is a sellable property. A fleet facility is not compatible with his vision.

### **Adjourn**

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Neal moved to adjourn the meeting. Watson seconded and the motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.