

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: September 14, 2023, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present: Lou Larson, Lisa Rasmussen, Gary Gisselman, Doug Diny (Chad Henke was excused)

Also Present: Allen Wesolowski, TJ Niksich, Jill Kurtzhals, Andrew Lynch, 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. Chair Larson called the meeting to order.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve minutes of the August 10, 2023 meeting**
 - B. Action on easement with Wisconsin Public Service at 201 Washington Street**
 - C. Action on easement with Wisconsin Public Service at 209 Washington Street**
 - D. Action on easement with Wisconsin Public Service at 215 Washington Street**
 - E. Action on easement with Graphic Packing Corp for the construction of a multi-use trail at 200 Central Bridge Street**
 - F. Action on Final Resolution to levy special assessments for 2023 Street Construction Projects**
-

Rasmussen moved to approve the consent agenda items. Diny seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Public Comment: Rerouting of STH 52 and Business Hwy 51 in the City of Wausau

No one appeared to offer public comment. Wesolowski indicated a notice of this meeting was published three times in the paper.

Discussion and possible action on parking restrictions on South 5th Avenue between Garfield Avenue and Stewart Avenue

Wesolowski was contacted by the principal of Trinity School. There are issues during school and events. Parked vehicles make it difficult for student pickup and narrows the street. The principal feels there is plenty of parking across the street and in the parking lot. The request is to restrict parking on the west side north of 536 South 5th Ave to Stewart Ave. Trinity owns the property at 536 South 5th Avenue. Posting parking restrictions just north of this property gives that resident the opportunity to park in front of the house. Trinity owns all the property where parking restrictions are proposed. Staff does not see issues, particularly because Trinity owns all the property.

Diny moved to approve the proposed parking restrictions on South 5th Avenue between Garfield Avenue and Stewart Avenue. Seconded by Rasmussen and the motion passed 4-0.

Discussion and possible action on establishing assessment rates for 2024 construction projects

Wesolowski explained that every year assessment rates are set for the following year. Last year the rate for street construction was raised from \$42 per foot to \$55 per foot for 2023 projects. Construction prices are stable from last year. Staff recommends keeping the rate at \$55 per foot for 2024 projects.

Rasmussen believes this is fair since we are not seeing a lot of fluctuation in the bids. Sometimes special assessments are difficult enough for people to pay.

Rasmussen moved to keep the assessment rates the same as they were for 2023 for 2024. Seconded by Diny and the motion passed 4-0.

Presentation on CIP Project Summary submitted for 2024 Budget

Wesolowski noted that this was brought to committee before. One change is that Short Street from 2nd to 3rd Street will fall under TID 3. This lowers the cost to the general fund. Last time this was presented Alder Larson

requested an overall summary of where we are on streets and what it would take to get all streets rated 5 or higher. Road ratings were just completed, which consists of driving every street. Any street rated lower than a 4 is considered a reconstruction project. We have 68.9 miles of roadway that needs to be reconstructed. Based on 2023 prices, it would take \$127 to \$145 million to reconstruct all streets that need it. This estimate does not include sanitary sewer or watermain.

Rasmussen stated that rebuilding streets also incurs borrowing in the Water and Sewer Utility. The last two years we've used ARPA funding for utility replacement. Going forward with more than a few projects at a time would create havoc for the Utility on the debt side. Per Wesolowski there is a complication with all the lead laterals that will be replaced. There are 7,000 laterals to be replaced. We have not been overlaying streets where there are lead laterals. We do not want to put asphalt down and then rip it up to replace laterals. However, some streets, such as 4th Avenue and Crescent Drive, are basically down to gravel. He feels we will have to start putting more money into asphalt overlay even though laterals may be getting replaced. There are some streets that are so bad we cannot wait any longer. Wesolowski is asking to increase the asphalt overlay budget from \$350,000 to \$400,000. He would like to see \$1 million but that would be tough on the budget. Rasmussen noted that the last couple of years we have gotten through the budget without cutting any streets and hopes all go through this year. Wesolowski stated that next year will be a big year with Stewart Avenue being reconstructed. It is a \$6 million project and will be one of our biggest years as far as street reconstruction. He wanted to bring this forward to make the committee aware of where we are at.

Rasmussen asked if we could get funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and if we have any projects shovel ready enough to apply for these funds. Wesolowski explained we do get STP Urban Funding. This year we received extra funding for 18th Street. We put that project through in 6 months. He had a meeting with the County on LRIP funding, which we receive \$100,000 every year. We will be applying for discretionary and supplemental funds. \$100 million in supplemental funds became available the last 2 years. This is a competitive grant through the entire state. Last year we received \$400,000 for 17th Avenue. We will be applying for more supplemental LRIP money and are looking for funding opportunities.

Diny asked if the committee could get previous WISLR ratings as he is curious of the trend analysis. Wesolowski can put together the road miles from the previous rating 2 years ago to see how we are trending. Wesolowski was surprised the number of roads rated a 2. This has gone up but it does not take long for a road to go from a 3 to a 2. We may have to look at overlaying these streets to keep them together. Diny asked if the top of Forest Street is considered a 2. Wesolowski confirmed and stated 4th Avenue and Crescent are also probably rated 2.

Larson said his street is not on the list and doesn't even have curb and gutter. Wesolowski explained the ratings are based on the condition of the asphalt.

Gisselman asked what it would take if the City of Wausau declares they want everything rated a 5 or better and if that could be achieved in 5 years. Wesolowski referred to the proposed budget of \$4.3 million from the general fund. That number would have to be closer to \$25 million per year for 5 years. It bothers Gisselman that this is where we are. He asked what the committee should be lobbying for to make a little bit of a dent. The citizens are seeing it and this committee, as well as the Council, should start to have a serious talk about this.

Rasmussen spoke of the short construction season and that there are only so many contractors that can do the work. We could want to do more projects, but sometimes we are lucky to have our projects done on time. She asked what capacity we have to even take on more projects. Even if we had the money we may be capped at the capacity of the construction force. Wesolowski indicated we have been getting projects out early and feels we would get bids on projects we put out. With more money available, it is chasing the same contractors. He believes we would get the biggest bang for the buck with more money in asphalt overlay. There were years that budget was \$1 million. It was dwindled down over the years and hurt us.

Gisselman asked about the plan for Eau Claire Boulevard and if the boulevards would remain. Wesolowski indicated the plan is to put the street back the way it is with the boulevards staying in place. They would like to save as many of the crab apple trees in the median as they can. Gisselman said there is quite a canopy on the boulevard and would hate to lose that.

Diny asked if we would be putting more focus on 5, 6 and 7 rated streets to prevent them from slipping down. He feels by doing this we could gain ground as asphalt overlay has been reliable to prevent further erosion. Wesolowski said the practice in the last several years was to not overlay streets beyond a 2 or 3. We have been trying to overlay streets that have good curb and gutter, good drainage, and good underlying utilities. For example, Merrill Avenue had some rutting and cracking. We wanted to preserve it. It was 15 years old and if let go the rating would go down. It is now back to an 8. If we are not willing to put \$10 to \$20 million a year to correct 2's and 3's, he does not know where they will end up in a couple of years. He thinks will we have to do overlays on some 2 and 3 rated streets.

Diny asked what the cost of asphalt overlay runs. Wesolowski said it depends on the width of the street. There is a big savings because we are not redoing the storm sewer, the curb, or sidewalk. It is probably a quarter the cost of street reconstruction. Rasmussen added that another good part of asphalt overlay is that the property owners do not get assessed for it. We try to avoid overlaying streets with underground utility issues. Her street has had several utility breaks and is probably considered a rebuild street. It is also such a short and smaller street; there are others that are just as bad and more heavily traveled. She questioned the difference between overlay and skin patch. Wesolowski explained that a typical overlay would consist of milling the top off and placing asphalt. Skin patch is a last-ditch effort to try and keep it together until reconstructed. He would not recommend skin patching on too many streets. Rasmussen asked if we get 5 to 10 years with an overlay and Wesolowski responded it is typically 15 years. Preservation technics are used to keep 9, 8, and 7 rated streets at a 9, 8 or 7. A 5 or 6 rated street would be a mill and overlay to try to get it back to an 8. We are falling behind; there are streets that are not on the 5-year list that are rated 2.

Rasmussen asked how far \$400,000 would go. Wesolowski noted that DPW also has an asphalt budget. This year we milled and overlayed on Merrill Avenue and a little stretch on Burek. We also milled some streets for DPW to overlay as they do not have a mill machine. This year we took some money out of Engineer's overlay budget to mill some streets DPW overlayed. If we did have more money, we would work with DPW. Discussion followed on budget asks.

Diny supports asking for \$600,000. We are not treading water now and have to bite the bullet. Rasmussen said the public feels it and there is a need to start with a gradual ramp up. We are getting behind the 8 ball like we did with replacing park equipment. We wouldn't replace a playground in the budget and then all of a sudden we needed to replace 10. We had to slowly claw our way out. We could try to add a big bite this year and then see how next year's budget looks.

Gisselman asked if this would apply to lead pipe areas. Per Wesolowski, staff will have to plan around that. There are plenty of areas to use the money. Rasmussen would like to attack the 2's and 3's to get them to 4's and 5's. Diny said there is not a lot of base on a 2 to work with. Wesolowski explained if a road is that far down, we would probably have to do a complete mill, add some base, and then pave. If the street is that bad, Larson said the utilities are probably bad. That is Wesolowski's dilemma; this is an old city. Rasmussen feels if the underground utilities can hold their own for as long as the patch lasts, maybe both would be ready for replacement at the same time. For the last several years, staff has been targeting streets with the most utility issues. The Sewer Utility does line pipes using a non-dig technology. We are solving a lot of underground utility defects other than lead service laterals. If the committee is comfortable asking for more money, Wesolowski will put in the request but will need support as the budget moves forward.

Adjourn

Diny moved to adjourn the meeting. Gisselman seconded and the motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:50 p.m.