

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND STREET MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: December 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

Also Present: Eric Lindman, Allen Wesolowski, TJ Niksich, Anne Jacobson, Tara Alfonso, Jill Kurtzhals, Andrew Lynch, Dustin Kraege, Solomon King, 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.

Presentation by Barrientos on Fleet Maintenance Facility

Neil Bierwirth, Project Architect, and Patrick Wesley, Project Manager, presented the 100% preliminary design package on the proposed DPW Fleet Maintenance Facility. The entire presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLABq4fLOUs>.

Gisselman asked what kind of payback could be expected with solar panels. He would encourage the City to include solar panels but would need to know the payback. He feels the City would take a good step forward with solar panels on that facility. Bierwirth said if solar panels are included everywhere, when that power is generated it needs to be used right away. It might generate too much power which would go back to the grid and the City would receive a credit. If 65% to 70% of the facility's usage is generated, it would be used in the facility right away. The number provided is the all-in number but he sees the number going down if we shoot for 65% to 70% generation.

Gisselman asked why a chair lift is proposed as he thought there was talk about an elevator. An elevator would provide a better customer experience opposed to a chair lift. Larson asked what the cost difference is between a chair lift and an elevator. Bierwirth stated a chair lift is estimated at \$39,000 while an elevator is estimated between \$300,000 and \$400,000. Diny questioned the elevation. Bierwirth said there would be 3 stops. It would go 4' down to the crew section and 4' up to the admin section.

Rasmussen is inspired by the addition of solar to the building. If we would be able to generate enough current through solar to reduce the cost of powering the building and be able to sell the rest back, it is a win. Public feedback was received that people wanted solar on Fire Station 2. We were so late in the design that we were not able to add them. If we add them here on the front end we would be miles ahead. Even with the overall cost, the forward-looking nature of adding green power would be palatable in the community. If we are going to spend upwards of \$26 million on a facility, we should put in forward thinking features. Electric vehicle charging and solar panels are key. It makes sense to invest in something that would reduce the ongoing cost of running the place. Larson agrees and feels we should do it right from the start.

Diny agrees with Gisselman and would like to see the potential payback. It appears the panel could be south facing and close to optimal. If we were in a cost cutting mode, he asked if we could provide the structure for those to be added and plan for retrofit. Bierwirth confirmed.

Henke is on the Solar Array Task Force and would love to give numbers but we are not quite there yet. This would be roughly a fifth of the size that we are looking at for the Water Plant.

Lindman said this finalizes the preliminary design. The project is on hold until we confirm the site. Hopefully we will have more information on the property over the next month or two.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve minutes of the October 12, 2023 meeting**
- B. Action on Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with Wausau School District at 1200 West Wausau Avenue**
- C. Action on Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with Green Bay Packaging Inc. at 6845 Packer Drive**

Henke moved to approve the consent agenda items. Rasmussen seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

2024 Street Reconstruction Projects: Discuss public hearing results and make recommendation

Larson stated an email was received from Alder Lukens and asked what comments were received at the public hearing.

Wesolowski explained that Eau Claire Boulevard from Grand Avenue to the west termini is proposed for reconstruction in 2024. There is existing sidewalk on both sides of Eau Claire Boulevard from Grand Avenue to Zimmerman Street. The last block from Zimmerman to the cul-de-sac only has sidewalk around the cul-de-sac. There is a missing link where one cannot get from the cul-de-sac to Zimmerman Street. Staff proposed to install sidewalk to connect the walk around the end of the cul-de-sac to Zimmerman Street. The other option would be to remove the sidewalk around the cul-de-sac and not have any sidewalk on the last block. Staff feels it would not pay to replace sidewalk in the cul-de-sac and not connect it to Zimmerman. Larson asked what the input was from the public and asked if they would have to pay for the sidewalk. Wesolowski stated new sidewalk is assessed, which is estimated at \$17 per lineal foot. Two comments against the sidewalk were received at the public hearing. Niksich received one letter and three emails from residents who like it the way it is. They do not feel there is a need for the sidewalk and do not want the extra pedestrian traffic in the cul-de-sac.

Rasmussen said the goal always has been to make neighborhoods as safe and walkable as possible. There is a grade school in the vicinity that people walk to. The position of this committee has historically been to reconstruct sidewalk where it exists. We have received mixed results in putting in new sidewalk; most neighborhoods get new sidewalk when proposed. It has been a terrible struggle to get new sidewalk added in Riverview. Politically it has been a non-starter even though the neighborhood is walkable. This neighborhood is walkable too and densely populated. She could see not putting in this new section because it dead ends, but she does not want to remove the existing sidewalk in the cul-de-sac. She struggles with taking sidewalk out where it exists as the goal is to maintain walkability. Sidewalk creates a barrier between homes, driveways, and the street. She feels what is already in place should be rebuilt the same way.

Wesolowski stated Short Street from 1st Street to 3rd Street has sidewalk on the north side, but not on the south side. The south side has been developed by Blenker. Staff is proposing to install sidewalk on the south side so there is walk along both sides of the street. No objections have been received. Blenker does know that sidewalk is proposed.

Gisselman agrees with staff. He is in favor of sidewalks and does not see a reason not to connect the sidewalk in the cul-de-sac with the rest of Eau Claire Boulevard. Without sidewalk it forces people to walk in the street to get to Zimmerman Street. He feels this is a safety issue. We always have issues with people walking in the streets, the postman has to walk in the street, and there is over sanding to provide safety for people walking in the street. Sidewalks provide a means of getting people where they want to go safely. He is a strong supporter of connecting the cul-de-sac sidewalk to Zimmerman Street.

Gisselman has talked Rasmussen into this. She also has been a proponent of sidewalks. She has heard concerns when pedestrians are forced to be out in the street. There are complaints about lack of sanding, and they want the road sanded from curb to curb. Where we have connecting sidewalk, it makes sense to connect point A to point B. While she could live without the sidewalk, she would not oppose if the majority is leaning towards completing the sidewalk.

Diny stated Gisselman brought up good points. At the last CISM meeting we discussed putting more sand on streets that do not have sidewalks. This adds to our expense, plus the added inconvenience of forcing people into

the street. He read the public input that people do not want it, but asked if there was any logical justification. Niksich said if the sidewalk was not installed, it would save three mature trees. On the entire project, over 100 trees will be removed due to utility installation and grade changes. One resident had stated he has lived there for 55 years and has gotten along without the sidewalk. They do not want the additional pedestrian traffic in the cul-de-sac.

Diny asked if the removal of trees is evaluated based upon the type of tree. Niksich has worked with the City Forester on tree removal. He noted that if the sidewalk is not added, we would be able to save three trees. Gisselman wants careful consideration of the trees.

Larson agrees with Gisselman. He lives on a street without sidewalk and has watched the postman struggle on icy streets. He hates to see trees removed but we remove trees every year during construction projects and we can always plant new trees in their place.

Rasmussen stated the key is to replace old trees with new trees. She knows it can take a long time for a neighborhood to develop a mature tree canopy. Sometimes light increase in the neighborhood because the shine from the streetlights goes further when there is not a full heavy tree canopy, which then can enhance the perception of safety when walking at night. Staff tries to save trees when they can. She used the example of Burek Avenue north of Marathon Electric where the sidewalk takes an odd jog. It was done this way to save a large tree. A year and a half later, the tree was cut down and now there is a weird sidewalk and no tree. Planting healthy new trees is also less invasive to sidewalks in terms of the root system. We are removing 100 trees on this project and saving 3 is not enough gain for what we would sacrifice if we did not do the project properly.

Rasmussen moved to approve the 2024 Street Reconstruction Projects as proposed by staff. Gisselman seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Wesolowski mentioned that the City Forester received a call from a Tech Ed teacher at Wausau West. They have a portable mill and will take some of the logs from Eau Claire Boulevard to mill at Wausau West and offer the lumber back to the residents.

Discussion and possible action on approving the WisDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant application to create a section of the Business Campus Trail system between 84th Avenue and Innovation Way

This item and the next are resolutions in support of the application to WisDOT for two sections of the Business Campus Trail system we have been working to get implemented for a while. The section from 84th Avenue to Innovation Way would connect 84th to Innovation Way to get to County Highway O. A resolution in support is required by the application.

Gisselman moved to approve. Rasmussen seconded.

Diny asked if there was a potential economic impact. Lynch stated the TAP grant is 80/20 split; 80% federal, 20% local. The staff report indicates what the local cost would be for each section. Diny questioned if that includes future maintenance and Lynch replied no. Diny does not oppose applying for this but would like to consider maintenance costs as we move forward so we know how much debt will be added.

Henke asked if we received a grant for the section built this year. Lynch confirmed and explained that every section in the Business Campus has been funded or will be funded by a TAP grant. The new section along 72nd Avenue was funded by a TAP grant. The next agenda item regarding the section south from Stewart Avenue to Sunnyvale Park was originally part of that project but had to be removed due to cost. The section from Innovation Way to 84th was also originally a part of the previous application. The section that will be built from 72nd to 84th will be built in 2026.

Larson added that this is needed as there are no sidewalks and people have to walk in the street or on the grass. Rasmussen feels the trail is essential in the Business Campus because it reduces the conflict between pedestrians,

bicycles, and trucks. This is one way to make the area safe and enhance walkability. It is important to note the City's match portion for a lot of the trail sections in the Business Campus have been secured with tax increment financing without taking on additional debt.

Diny feels 80/20 generally isn't a bad deal but we still have to fund it. He asked if we had some foundation support on other trails rather than using bonds or TIDs. Lynch stated the foundation support was for the River Edge Trail extensions. TAP money was not a good fit for the River Edge Trail. Lynch does not know if this would be a good application for the foundations because there are alternative grants we can apply for. The section of the River Edge Trail south of Thomas Street is not in a TID or within a ½ mile of one. Its funding options are very limited so it was a good case for foundation support. Lynch explained the timing of this funding; applications are in now, it is decided in 2024, and then it is about 2 years before we can touch the money due to approval and design that needs to be done. We are still a couple years away from needing to budget for this.

Diny assumes there is support from the businesses in the area. Lynch stated a Business Campus Trail Plan was done in 2018-2019, which was in response to the business's desire to have safe walking places for their employees. Additionally, as the residential area increases, this will provide access to Sunnyvale Park. Eventually when Stewart Avenue is redone, one will be able to go from 48th Avenue to County Highway O on the trail.

Diny asked if the trail would be plowed in the winter. Lynch indicated it is a requirement of TAP funding to have the trail open year-round. The boardwalk on 72nd Avenue is being maintained by the Park Department.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve carried 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on approving the WisDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant application to create a section of the Business Campus Trail system on 72nd Avenue between Stewart Avenue and Packer Drive

Rasmussen moved to approve. Henke seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on revised Winter Street Maintenance Policy

Kraege had reached out to see about updating the Winter Street Maintenance Policy as it has been a long time since it was looked at and the current policy is outdated. The proposed policy is what the department currently does for winter street maintenance. If changes are wanted, we would have to deal with what that means for the department and budgeting. His goal is to get a current policy in place so everyone understands what services are currently provided. He recommends approving the proposed policy as is because that is what they are currently doing and what they are budgeted for. If we want to change the policy in the future, staff can look at how to make adjustments.

Larson said the policy looks good and DPW does a fantastic job. He does hope for better street maintenance on side streets, especially those without sidewalks. He knows his street is not always plowed within 24 hours and would like to see that tackled more aggressively.

Rasmussen feels the policy we are currently budgeted for is the way we should go. There can be hiccups depending on the timing of the storm and whether it comes with ice. She thanked Kraege for chasing down proposed cost and time impacts for the concept of curb-to-curb sanding. In a perfect world, that would be great, but when you look at the time to run a route and the cost of extra material it does not seem sustainable. If we were to have a heavy ice event, she asked if it would be possible to sand more robustly and increase the salt mix for that particular application so we get a better eat through with the sun comes out. Once we have one of those events, we are pretty much doomed the rest of the winter as it keeps snowing on top of ice. The environmental impact with the application of too much sand or salt would be mitigated because we are not doing it every time.

DPW can adjust for specific events, but Kraege cautioned against adding too much salt to the sand as it defeats the purpose of the sand. Sand is meant to add traction. When we add more salt, it liquefies everything and starts to melt it. If it is not scraped off before it refreezes, the sand is at the bottom leaving no traction on top. The best

option for sand is not to add any salt so there is no melting and the sand stays on top for traction. Mechanical removal is the best option. We try to get out early and get ahead of it so there is not as much ice pack. In the future he may bring forward a piece of equipment called ice breaker. Minnesota has been having some success with it. It is a roller on the front of a machine. In areas with ice pack, you run over it with the roller, it breaks it up and you can scrape the snow down to bare pavement without using any material. Rasmussen is interested in this and said if the opportunity comes to acquire one, it should be brought to committee.

Diny moved to approve the Winter Street Maintenance Policy. Henke seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on why the CISM committee has been excluded from its civic duties

Over the last few months, Larson can think of three occasions where CISM was bypassed; the closing of the McClellan Ramp, the proposed sale of Marathon Box, and the purchase of land for the Fire Department. This committee has gone step by step with the Fleet Maintenance facility, but when it comes to the Fire Department, the committee was brushed off. That land was purchased for \$805,000 when it was assessed at \$378,000. He realizes the assessed value and what you pay is different, but why would one pay double. He read the duties of the committee as listed on the website, which includes the recommendation of the purchase, sale, or leasing of real estate by the city and recommend the use or disposition of vacant or city-owned real estate. He noted that the CISM agenda comes from Lindman's office and asked why CISM is being excluded from the process and what can be done so it does not happen again.

Lindman said Council needs to set a specific policy. There is a policy in ordinance to sell city property; it goes through committees and eventually on to Council. If there is something that Council wants to change, they should direct us on the policy and steps, and staff will follow. Larson said the duties are specific on the website. Lindman explained it is not in ordinance and not an established policy by City Council.

Rasmussen believes there is a gap in understanding the function of CIP. CISM has been working on the DPW Facility and site selection because there was a question on where to put it and the needs of the department. CISM manages the function of DPW as part of its core work. This committee is more familiar with the work, function and needs of those departments than any other committee. When it comes to street maintenance, motorpool, and fleet maintenance, it happens here. It made sense that this committee is involved in picking out the design and size of the facility based on its needs. Historically CISM has not been involved with all land acquisition. CISM is involved in all land sales. When you have city-owned land, most of the time they are remnants. They come to CISM to try to figure out how to get rid of them so DPW is not tasked with maintaining them. On pieces that are developable for taxable purpose, Economic Development will RFP or put up for sale. For remnants and pieces that are not developable, CISM sets a price to offer for sale. Other committees are managing land acquisition for things like the River Edge Trail and the former County Materials site, especially when it involves borrowing and expense. The CIP Committee comes into play because the process includes a rating and scoring matrix. Part of the rating and scoring matrix includes a score for the taxpayer's awareness of need, and the perceived support for whatever the solution is. The committee includes citizen members and is intentional by design. The current CIP committee includes Martens from HR, Gisselman from CISM, Rasmussen as Finance chair, and two citizen members. When a department has a need that exceeds \$25,000, they are forced through CIP so it can be scored and prioritized. That happens before anything goes to Finance. That piece of land for the Fire Department was vetted in CIP in 2022 and in 2023. It did not get funded based on other priorities for 2022. When that did not happen, the department made an ARPA request. We did not feel that was an effective use of ARPA and it was not funded with ARPA. After two funding cycles, the land was still for sale. The department still wanted it and brought it back to CIP for 2023. It happens all the time when projects do not get funded, they show up the following year until eventually they work their way to the top. This project did score high enough for funding this year and was recommended for placement in the 2024 budget. There were two closed session meetings in Finance. In closed session the City Assessor indicated the offering price was a fair market price based on his analysis of arm's length transactions in the area. There were three members of CISM present in the closed sessions. When the Assessor said it was a fair price, the Finance Committee authorized the money because of the fair price. At no point did anyone say this should be pushed back to CISM to decide if we even want land for a Fire Department. Historically CISM does not manage the activities of public health and safety. If Police or Fire felt like they wanted to talk about their individual needs, other than staffing and equipment, they would take those

needs to Public Health and Safety. Departments go to the committee that most closely manages the department in question. DPW is here as we work closer with them than anybody. Land acquisition for Fire Station 2 went through Finance. It is not that CISM had been excluded, it is just that historically the process has flowed differently depending upon which department it is coming from. She does not feel it was anyone's intention to bypass CISM. Even though the website focus is capital improvements, the only part of the capital process at this committee is to select the street and road projects. This committee has never exercised any authority to review or approve all land purchases. All purchases that use public money flow through Finance as Finance manages the city's money and debt. If we want a different process, we need to articulate what that process is. She is confused as to why people feel this committee is not doing their job.

Larson feels CISM is being excluded. The description of the Finance Committee on the website has nothing to do with land acquisitions. A recommendation was made at Council that the land purchase be brought back to CISM. The duties of the committee are clear and cannot be disputed. When you look at the Finance Committee description, it does not say the acquisition of land. We need to make a policy that committees adhere to their duties and not overstep. Diny believes there is a disconnect with what is on the website, what is in ordinance, and Council rules. It is a fair statement that there is a cross section of Council members on committees; however, Engineering staff not involved in some of the analysis. It should have an engineering pass through. The Finance Committee is not necessarily thinking of the same things as the Engineering Department would be. Maybe there is an opportunity to have the Committee of the Whole review. There are others not just CISM that have been affected. There are cases to streamline things, but when we get into that habit something may be missed.

Regarding the purchase of land for the Fire Department, Larson said this committee did not get to discuss the impact of the neighborhood or look at other pieces of property. We are looking to spend \$24 million for a DPW facility and he asked if it was necessary to spend \$805,000 on a piece of land that has been for sale forever. He agrees with Diny's point of going through engineering before passing on to Finance.

Henke questioned the ordinance for selling land. Lindman said it lays out a very specific process. Henke knows land has been bought through Economic Development that never came to CISM. We have heard how HR feels they are not getting their fair share. City staff is always changing, and Council is always changing. He feels April would be a good time with a new board to add some ordinances and suggested creating a flow chart.

Rasmussen said there is some level of anxiety created when staff does not know what committee they need to go to and in what order. There needs to be a set process. Historically when staff knows they need to go to two or three committees to get things done, it tends to start in the committee that meets first. Finance does not just manage money. The Finance Committee's description online is generic for a reason because we manage all of the financial affairs of the City. When this committee decides it wants to buy land, it is not spending a nickel unless it gets to Finance. All committees have to work together. We have to figure out who wants a piece of the process and when.

Jacobson feels there have been great suggestions and added that Council rules are fluid and can be changed at any time on a majority vote. If changed now, it is not binding the next Council. The next Council can make their own changes. Diny suggested placing a reminder on the calendar so this is not forgotten about. Henke asked if it could be given to the chairs of the committees and have a draft ordinance ready for the next Council in April. Jacobson indicated it could be done by ordinance or resolution; however, it would be clearer if in ordinance. Discussion followed.

Jacobson will look at how other communities authorize the purchase and sale of real estate, and propose a draft. Rasmussen said this should start with the pinch points of acquisition of land and hiring of staff. We need a process staff can follow to do the work. As far as articulating what the duties of the committees are, we can refine the wording. This committee's wording was refined when it took on the work of Parking and Traffic. She believes this may be a good job for the Executive Committee. All chairs would be at the table to read the description of their committee and compare it to the work that actually gets done there. The individual committees can vote to ratify the descriptions. It would be helpful to staff to know what process to follow. Rasmussen feels it should start at CISM with land acquisition. A recommendation should be passed on to the HR chair to take on a parallel item about hiring. Discussion followed.

At this time, Gisselman left the meeting.

Larson feels the best way is to go through the Executive Committee. Rasmussen suggested letting Jacobson do the research and bring it back. CISM can then make a recommendation to the Executive Committee.

Update regarding Frontier installation of fiber throughout the City in 2024

Wesolowski and Lindman met with Frontier who is upgrading all their fiber to every resident in the City. Their contractor, Mastec, has started with hanging ariel and some limited boring as excavations in the street are generally limited in the winter. Next summer Frontier will have a massive project in the City. What TDS did in three years, Frontier wants to do in one. This will put a huge strain on the Utility for marking utility locations. Staff is trying to figure out ways to limit them from overburdening the Utility. When TDS was in town, there were times the entire Water Utility was out marking locations and getting nothing else done. Frontier has indicated they are willing to work with us, but when push comes to shove they will want as many permits as they can get. Lindman added that in addition to Frontier, Charter and Bug Tussel will be working in town. When an initial locate is called in, there is a three-day window by state law for the water and sewer utility to mark their facilities. When we get 400 locates a day, they determine where we have to locate and where they don't over the three-day time frame. If the contractor does not get there within the time frame when things were marked, they call in a relocate. Then staff only has 24 hours to relocate. Through the permit process, we will try to limit the number of approved permits given at a time. There will be a push when warmer weather comes and they will want a lot more permits opened up. We are trying to balance that and figure out what authority we have to do that.

This situation sounds horrible to Rasmussen. If we have the authority to manage this by ordinance, it will behoove us to create an ordinance that limits the number of road miles or block miles that they can have at a time. They would have to show substantial completion of the first one before another is issued. TDS was nothing but complaints in her neighborhood.

Wesolowski explained that when TDS came to town, we did rewrite the ordinance so they have to be done in 30 days. TDS would make the sections small enough to complete within 30 days, but they were drawing 10 permits at a time. Staff was delaying permits to try to let the Utility catch up. We are not the only community dealing with this. Other communities have called to see how we have handled this. Charter is now also trying to catch up with upgrading. Bug Tussel wants to install fiber in the Industrial Park. We will look at other communities and learn from them.

Adjourn

Diny moved to adjourn the meeting. Rasmussen seconded and the motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.