



OFFICIAL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Infrastructure & Facilities Committee
DATE/TIME: Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 5:15 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall – Council Chambers
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Chad Henke (C) Lou Larson (VC)
Tom Neal Sarah Watson
Michael Martens

Members Present: Chad Henke, Lou Larson, Tom Neal, Michael Martens, Sarah Watson
Members Not Present:
Members Excused:
Present 5, Not Present 0, Excused 0

Noting the presence of a quorum, the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 05:15 PM.

1 Public comment on agenda items and reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.

No one appeared for public comment.

2 Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).

October 9, 2025 Regular Infrastructure and Facilities Minutes.

Motion by Alderperson Watson, seconded by Alderperson Neal, to Approve. Motion Passed 5-0.

3 Discussion and possible action.

a. 2026 Street Reconstruction Projects public hearing results and Authorization to Let Bids for 2026 Construction Projects.

Wesolowski noted that at the public hearing one person spoke in opposition to the assessments and project. Wesolowski recommends moving ahead with the special assessments on the street projects and moving ahead with the construction projects.

Motion by Alderperson Neal, seconded by Alderperson Larson, to Approve. Motion Passed 5-0.

b. Easement with Wausau Hospitals Inc. for sidewalk at 333 Pine Ridge Boulevard.

Wesolowski explained that with the vacation of Pine Ridge Boulevard, the hospital will be creating a parking lot and an addition. The Development Agreement included that the sidewalk was to remain public. Aspirus will construct the sidewalk and the public will have access to it.

Motion by Alderperson Watson, seconded by Alderperson Neal, to Approve. Motion Passed 5-0.

c. Final Resolution to levy special assessments for 2025 Alley Paving Project.

This project was completed. This would give authority to send out special assessment bills.

Motion by Alderperson Watson, seconded by Alderperson Larson, to Approve. Motion Passed 5-0.

d. Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with Marathon County Historical Society at 1009

North 3rd Street.

Niksich stated this is the standard maintenance agreement to make sure the developer maintains their stormwater facilities on their site and allows us to inspect them on a biannual basis.

Motion by Alderperson Neal, seconded by Alderperson Watson, to Approve. Motion Passed 5-0.

- e. Parking restrictions on 4th Street between Grant Street and McIndoe Street, on Franklin Street between 4th Street and 5th Street, and on McIndoe Street between 3rd Street and 4th Street.

Larson had this placed on the agenda and explained it is for the new parking spots that the City created, and the YMCA paid for a portion. The problem is the 2-hour parking restriction. We are encouraging seniors to use The Landing and 2 hours is not enough time. These spots were basically made for The Landing since the foundation that provided funding would not expand without additional parking. On Wednesdays Larson goes to the YMCA, has lunch around 11:30 and plays cards until 3:00. He was issued a ticket for being parked for over 2 hours. Larson talked with Lindman and the Police Chief. The Chief said they have been issuing about 3 tickets a day. A lot of the programs The Landing offers last more than 2 hours. Larson talked with Lindman about having 4 hours, but then we would have two different ordinances. He asked about having no parking restrictions, but then people living downtown could park there all day. They talked about having no parking from midnight to 6:00 am. Larson stated a lot of the spots are where the new entrance will be and are not being used yet. When the new entrance opens, the spots will get used. Larson does not feel 2 hours is enough. The Landing is there to get seniors out of the house and be social.

Wesolowski said the 2-hour limit is in place because the area is part of the downtown parking district. The cost to change the signs or take them down would be minimal.

Neal said the YMCA wants these spaces for overflow, not only for The Landing but for general use. The concern was that the spots are convenient and if unregulated, people could park there all day. He feels the restriction is needed to ensure the spaces do not become convenient for long-term parking. Rather than changing an ordinance, Neal suggested asking the parking utility to adjust their rounds and not go around every 2 hours to hand out tickets. They could go every 3rd or 4th hour to catch those abusing it. Neal believes this is an enforcement issue that can be addressed by PD altering the timing of the route. If we really want to do this for people at The Landing, Neal suggested getting them rear window decals noting The Landing and then the parking utility can see a "permit". Neal feels creative enforcement is a way to go about this. He does not want to see open parking. The spaces were not put there to provide all-day parking.

Larson had asked the Chief to place a moratorium on ticketing the area until this is figured out, and the Chief agreed. Larson does not know if creative patrolling is the answer. With the YMCA being where it is, he does not see where people would park there all day as there are not any close businesses. Neal said it is downtown and there are businesses all over. A one or two block walk to a business is convenient. There is a lot of competition for parking downtown, and he thinks a creative solution is doable.

Martens feels eliminating the parking restriction completely will probably attract people who figure it out. He does not think selective enforcement is the issue as we had the same type of parking issue downtown before no re-parking was put in place. Everyone that worked downtown would park on the streets, and they knew some days the parking utility would come through. He doesn't think selective enforcement is the solution. If the restrictions are removed, the spaces may get filled, but he feels we should try it. If the spaces do get filled and The Landing users cannot park there, we can look at something else.

Larson asked if we should try no parking from midnight to 6 am and give it a six-month trial. Martens feels it should be 6 to 9 months. He has a feeling we might fall victim of unintended consequences, but he would like to try it and see what happens.

Neal said before the stalls were created there was on-street parking. The YMCA requested an increase in parking, and they invested in it. He does not think the YMCA's intent was to have someone park there from 8:00 to 4:00 pm. They wanted this for YMCA visitors. If we remove the restriction, it will go against the very reason why the parking project was undertaken. He wants to hear what is wrong with the idea of permits on car windows. People using the YMCA would be safe from ticketing and those abusing it would not. We should keep an eye on the ball of why the project was done; it was a YMCA-related project.

Larson moved to post these areas as no parking from midnight to 6:00 am for a 6-month trial period and then revisit. Seconded by Martens.

Martens gets the idea that this was a project forwarded by the YMCA, but this is public parking. Anyone can park there. We cannot say YMCA parking only because it is a public street. If we take the restriction off, and it gets utilized by more than YMCA users, we will have to look at something else. Before this was done, it was 2-hour parking, and people were ticketed all the time.

Watson asked if it could be increased to 4 hours. Lindman said that would cause confusion downtown with one street being 4-hour parking and other streets 2-hour parking. If we want people to park throughout the day, we would eliminate the 2-hour parking and have the default of no parking overnight. Watson asked where the edge of the downtown parking district is and Lindman responded McIndoe Street. Watson asked if this area could be made a new parking district.

Larson suggested instructing the parking control to see if they can pick out vehicles that are abusing the parking and come back with data in 6 months. Lindman stated that everything we restrict we have to sign. If we just remove the signs, there would be no 2-hour restriction. Discussion followed on overnight parking.

Henke noted the parking ramps are pretty empty and are one to two blocks from most downtown businesses. He does not foresee this becoming a big issue, but if the YMCA users run out of spots, we will be the first to hear about it. The YMCA came to us with an issue and this is a solution to the issue. If it creates a different problem, we can revisit it.

Wesolowski asked if Larson was still proposing no overnight parking from midnight to 6:00 am or if he wanted to amend the motion to remove the 2-hour parking restriction. Larson amended the motion by removing no parking from midnight to 6:00 am and Martens agreed.

There being a motion and a second, motion to remove the 2-hour parking restriction passed 4-1 with Neal the dissenting vote.

- f. Wausau MPO's cost sharing proposal for the STP Urban application for 17th Avenue from Stewart Avenue to Pardee Street.

Wesolowski explained that Engineering applied for STP Urban funding for 17th Avenue from Stewart Avenue to Pardee Street, and it scored the highest. One issue is the MPO only got \$1.8 million and that restricts the funding. If 17th Ave is funded at 70% would take \$1.54 million of the \$1.8 million. The MPO TAC committee recommended 60% to fund the project and Grossman Drive in Schofield would also get 60%. Staff feels 60% is not enough to make the STP funding where we want it. He recommends going back to the MPO and request a minimum of 70% but ask for 80% funding.

Aaron Anklam explained they were not allocated as much as they have been in previous cycles and with the costs of projects it is tough to divide the funding. He added that they are not allowed to fund projects below 50%. Funding Stewart Ave at 70% leaves 36% for Grossman Drive, which would not be eligible for funding. The last thing the MPO wants to do is leave money on the table. There are other avenues we can take if requesting 70% to 80%.

Lindman stated that when we work with State and DOT projects, there are considerably more expenses than when we do them in-house. We have to hire real estate consultants and the timeline for projects is typically 5 years. We estimate costs the best we can not knowing what costs will be in 5 years. Taking less money than 70% will commit the City to more financial

obligation. Lindman supports Wesolowski's recommendation to ask for 80% but take no less than 70%.

Motion by Alderperson Neal, seconded by Alderperson Watson, to go back to the MPO and ask for 80% with a minimum of 70%. Motion Passed 5-0.

Wesolowski noted that if this is awarded, a State/Municipal Agreement that includes the funding levels would come back to committee.

- g.** Approving a site location and determining the process for purchase of property for the proposed DPW Fleet Maintenance Facility.

Lindman reminded the committee that we are looking at 3 properties for the fleet facility. A request was received from Wausau Engine to purchase their property. If the committee wants to pursue purchasing properties near DPW, it is estimated that we will need to acquire 12 properties to have enough space for the facility. The Wausau Engine property would be one of the twelve properties. He explained the options of pursuing purchasing 1 property at a time, look at purchasing all 12 properties at the same time, focus on other properties like the MBX property, take no action, and continue conversations with the County.

Larson is opposed to purchasing 12 properties in that neighborhood and is not in favor of tearing down a neighborhood. We could look at the MBX property as Ramussen's neighborhood is not opposed to having the facility there. The existing county highway site is a great spot, but there are no guarantees from the County. Watson agrees with Larson. She does not like the idea of buying 12 properties. She is not a big fan of compelling the sale of the parking lot by the MBX site. The existing County site is her favorite, although it does not appear to be in the near future.

Martens asked if the Cherry Street property was still for sale and Lindman confirmed. Martens has a concern with eminent domain. We have come to an impasse with the owner of that property, and Martens does not feel there is a solution any time soon. He feels purchasing 12 properties near DPW will be expensive. We already have a \$14 million price tag, and we would add to that to acquire property. Regarding West Street, he does not feel we will get an answer out of the County. Unless we can wait for the County, he is leaning towards the MBX property.

Neal asked for clarification on the staff memo regarding working with the County. Lindman explained the County has a lot of vacant properties within the City. Lindman and the Mayor talked with the County Administrator about the potential of the City assisting with redeveloping their vacant properties since the City has a Community Development Department. Lindman is hopeful the County Administrator will talk to the board and come up with an agreement, so their properties do not sit vacant.

Neal asked about the County Highway site and having a shared facility with the County. Lindman stated the County has purchased property in Kronenwetter and will be relocating their facility. Knowing that, Neal feels the West Street site is the most logical choice. Larson asked if there were any other County-owned properties that would fit the fleet facility, but Lindman has not come across any yet. Henke said this has been talked about ever since he has been on the council. He is leaning towards the West Street option. Lindman will continue to talk with the County and keep tabs on the MBX property.

- h.** Petition to the State of Wisconsin, Office of Commissioner of Railroads ("OCR"), to establish a public bicycle/pedestrian crossing, across the railroad tracks at the south end of Gilbert Park

Lenz is looking for support on petitioning the OCR for a new at-grade trail crossing. Currently, the trail dead ends at Winton Street. The trail would continue along the river through the former County Material property, across the track into the park, create a trail head and complete that portion of the trail. Staff talked with the railroad company and shared preliminary plans. The official process to get the crossing approved is through the OCR by filing a petition with a supporting resolution.

Neal said it can be dicey trying to work with the railroad and noted when the Trolley Quarter Flats crossing was denied. He asked if we knew why that was denied. Lenz said the sight lines were the main reason. The OCR is from the State of Wisconsin and is an oversight commission. At that time, we were dealing with a different railroad company. Staff met on site with the railroad and had productive discussions about the plan. The OCR is still the oversight body and Lenz cannot say how this crossing will differ from Trolley Quarter Flats. This is a separate petition and hopefully, with cooperation from the railroad company, this petition will go better than the last. Neal asked if it would be possible to revisit the Trolley Quarter Flats crossing. Lenz said potentially and that it is an unofficial crossing at this point. This particular crossing was looked at by the Bike and Ped Committee as a high priority as it opens up a lot to the north. The other crossing was petitioned for only a few years back and he cannot say whether it would have a chance or not. Lenz feels this crossing would have a better chance. Neal asked what it would do to the trail extension if this crossing is not allowed. Lenz stated they have talked about dead ending the trail. Wesolowski said when the last crossing was petitioned for, the railroad was owned by CN and they contested the crossing. A lot will depend on whether Foxy contests the crossing or not. If contested, staff will have to provide a lot of data as far as sight distances.

Martens asked if this proposed crossing connects to Gilbert Park and Lenz confirmed. Per Martens, if a cul-de-sac was added with the lack of an official crossing, the trail would create an unofficial crossing. This might create more trouble than it is worth. Having an at-grade crossing would be advantageous to mitigate situations crossing the tracks.

Motion by Alderperson Martens, seconded by Alderperson Neal, to Approve. Motion Passed 5-0.

4 Discussion.

a. 2026 Street Reconstruction Projects Review.

Niksich explained that all street projects are complete reconstruction with water, sewer, curb, and road replacement. 2nd Street and Division Street are in a commercial area. 2nd Street is a 36' wide road with parking on both sides. Division Street has 32' of right-of-way, so we are going to maximize the road the best we can at 26' wide. Neither streets have trees. Stark Street is from 5th Street to 12th Street. The first block from 5th Street to 6th Street will be left at 34' wide. 6th Street to 12th Street will narrow to 32' from 35'. We are narrowing the road to try to save trees. It is not a bus route, will still allow for parking on both sides, and saves on cost. We are removing approximately 43% of the trees but far fewer than we have on previous projects. 8th Ave is from Spruce Street to Bridge Street. The road was 36' wide, but we are proposing to narrow to 35'. We will be removing about 52% of trees but far fewer than on previous projects.

Neal appreciates the effort to limit the loss of trees, but it would be great if we could do better. Stark Street will lose almost every other tree. In some instances, they are ash or damaged trees, but a bunch are in good shape with other extenuating circumstances such as water lines. He hopes we could improve the number of 43% to some degree. He supports the narrowing of Stark Street. There was an issue where we established a 4-way stop at Stark Street and 10th Street. People were barreling down the road because there were 13 or more blocks of no stop signs. Narrowing the street could help even more with speed on the street. Neal asked if the narrowing of the street consisted of 1' per side and Niksich confirmed. Neal asked if it could be reduced by 2' feet on one side. Niksich said it could possibly, but some of the trees are being saved because of the 1' on each side. Neal hopes that as the project moves forward there might be ways to save trees by using different engineering approaches. Niksich stated this is an evolving process, and we are trying to learn. John Kahon presented to the Park and Rec Committee last week on our efforts. Niksich spoke of meetings with Madison on their efforts to save trees, which include narrowing streets, narrowing sidewalks down to 4' or 3' in some cases, and they bump the curb out in some areas. Sometimes they give the homeowner an option to not replace a service if it goes under a tree. Their most common approach is having 2 to 3 full-time staff that use shovels to expose the roots and remove dirt when construction gets close to the tree so the tree is not harmed. We do not have the staff to do that. We looked at other methods and narrowing sidewalks and the curb bump outs did not come into play. Every year, we give the initial 30% plans to Kahon who reviews the trees and then Niksich and Kahon go onsite to review. We make sure the contractor is aware to take extra care around trees. Kahon is more involved during construction and pre-construction meetings, and will be more involved going forward. This

approach will be an evolving process.

Neal asked if the contractor is told what trees are targeted for removal at the beginning of the project. Nicksich stated the trees are identified on the plan set. Neal would like to have the map with the trees marked. He would be happy to walk down the street as an extra set of eyes and report back.

Wesolowski added that in Madison they save all their ash trees and treat them. On Stark Street we are cutting down 22 ash trees. Neal has an ash tree in his front yard and it is in great health. The ash bore has been an ongoing thing. He thought earlier on the talk was to deal with affected trees and not jump on healthy-looking trees. He asked if there was any chance we could direct the City Forester to take an individualized look at the ash trees on Stark to see if we could leave any healthy ones. Nicksich will reach out to Kahon and ask about reevaluating the ash trees. Henke thanked staff for bringing this back and feels a lot of issues will get better in years to come.

For the next agenda, Larson asked for an update on the railroad crossing gates on 17th Ave.

5 Adjournment.

Motion by Alderperson Neal, seconded by Alderperson Watson, to Adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.



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