



OFFICIAL MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Infrastructure & Facilities Committee
DATE/TIME: Thursday, July 9, 2026, at 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall — Council Chambers
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Bruce Trueblood (C) Matt
Andrew Wiskowski Hoenecke
(VC) Kristin Slonski
Michael Martens

Members Present: Bruce Trueblood, Matt Hoenecke, Michael Martens

Members Not Present:

Members Excused: Andrew Wiskowski, Kristin Slonski

Present 3, Not Present 0, Excused 2

Noting the presence of a quorum, the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 05:01 PM.

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

Chair Trueblood read the public comment statement.

James Wirig, 2408 Oakwood Blvd, here to speak about the snow plowing situation on the boulevards. Within the last couple of years, the policy has changed. He doesn't know why it changed, it was the policy for over 50 years. He has been told it was changed due to the snow plow riding on the curbs, and that there was a new driver in the area. Plowing snow onto the boulevard does cause a build up of snow on the boulevard. However, when you pull up to an intersection you expect to look both ways before entering the intersection. When snow is plowed onto the driveway side of the street, you now have all the driveways that have large piles, which creates multiple backing hazards along the block. On his block alone there are 6 driveways, so you have 6 potential accident spots as opposed to 2 spots (the intersections). The second issue with plowing to the curbside is that the storm drains get blocked, causing icing issues. Another problem is that when plowing, the plow does not clear the whole road. Last winter he measured, and it was feet from the curb to where the plow started. The boulevard is already a narrow street, and this just causes it to keep getting more narrow as the winter goes on. He thinks it's in the best interest as a collective to make sure we do the right thing for the neighborhood. The way it is being done right now doesn't seem right to him.

Karen Briggs, 154 Eau Claire Blvd, has lived in her home since 1975, and up until the past few years, snow was plowed onto the boulevard. If i worked 50 years ago, with better equipped vehicles now, why can't we do what we did before? Another concern is snow is not being plowed to the curb, which causes you not to be able to park on the street. The 100 block of Eau Claire Blvd has multiple homes with shared driveways. With the shared driveways, they can't have any service vehicles parked in the driveways because it blocks the neighbor from getting out. The service vehicles need to park on the street. Therefore, the whole street needs to be plowed out. at a previous neighborhood meeting, an employee mentioned that the department can't do custom service for individuals. She agrees, but feels in the south-east side neighborhood there are about 140 houses on a boulevard. That is not a custom service when you have that many in the neighborhood. The neighborhood is a special situation. Grand Ave is plowed differently because it's a special situation. She feels we should do what makes life better for everyone and go back to the old plowing method.

Jean Crooks, 119 Eau Claire Blvd, has lived at this address for over 30 years. Her home is the 3rd house from Grand Ave on the south side of the boulevard. She understands city policies, procedures, and budgets. However, the Eau Claire Heights historic district has its distinctive set of

challenges when it comes to safe travel during snow season. The first hundred block of Eau Claire Blvd is unique as it is the only south-east side boulevard with two center boulevard breaks, due to the longer length of the block. This year the snow was not plowed tightly to the curb, perhaps to protect newly placed storm drains. With snow not plowed the whole width of the road, it makes it hard for her SUV to pass neighbors who may be parked in the street, due to shared driveways. With larger full-size pick-up trucks, SUVs, delivery vehicles, and emergency vehicles, it's hard to get down the street when it is not plowed to the full width. She has seen vehicles going east realizing that they can't fit safely through, so they go to the other side of the boulevard, therefore traveling the wrong way. This is unsafe. There are also businesses on both the north and south corners of Eau Claire Blvd at Grand Ave, causing the block to get more traffic. With one of the two center boulevard breaks in front of their driveway area, with the new way of plowing, the additional snow gets pushed into her driveway. Their driveway is long and narrow by the street and with the extra snow that they receive in the driveway, it causes very high snowbanks causing difficulty turning into and unsafe backing out of due to not being able to see clearly. She appreciates the consideration in reevaluating the snow plowing policy and returning to plow to the center boulevards for safety in travel.

Jean & Michael Rolnecki, 146 Eau Claire Blvd, have been in their home for 5 years. The first 3 years had no problems. The last 2 years have been an issue with snowplowing. In addition to the points already mentioned previously, garbage pickup has been increasingly difficult with the large snowbanks in front of the sidewalks. Many times the snow has prevented getting the carts out safely. There have been times that the garbage truck has put the can down, and it falls into the street. This has only been a problem for the past two years. Another problem that they recently noticed, even though the street was repaired 2 years ago, trees on the boulevards are dying. They are wondering if it is due to the lack of snow and moisture it had been getting. They appreciate the council considering the points that have been brought up and reconsider policy changes.

Jonathan Smith, 1114 Prospect Ave, He would like to encourage development of preliminary plans for the Wausau center urban design and master plan. As someone who bikes and a commuter downtown, often on a bike, the improvements that are being considered would not only improve the area for bicyclists and pedestrians, but it would improve the safety for all users of the road. When this project was initiated originally, it got him interested and made him realize this stuff can make a difference. The decisions made by the committee make a difference. He also would encourage approval of the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons at both locations. Especially the Thomas St location. That has been a priority since the river trail extension south of Thomas St. This is a very high priority. He sat and waited 2–3 minutes to cross at this location numerous times.

Alder Carol Lukens, who represents the Southeast side of Wausau, 725 Ethel St. Here, on behalf of the residents that live along the boulevard streets; Midway, Oakwood, Elmwood, Mount View, and Eau Claire Blvds. To ask the committee to reverse a plowing policy change and return to plowing snow toward the grass centered boulevards. These streets are not ordinary residential streets. The south-east side dates back to the 1920s and 1950s. They were built with wide center grass medians and snow has been pushed to the center for decades, keeping the narrow travel lanes and the driveway aprons clear. The citizens are not asking for a new service, they are asking to restore the practices that have been ongoing for decades. A few years ago, practices were changed citywide in the name of efficiency and consistency. While the goal is understood, the result has been a safety problem. Over 40 residents have signed a petition asking the committee to consider reversing the policy, stating that it creates unsafe backing blind into the street around snow piles that block sight lines. Like others have already mentioned, she has also had calls about snow not being cleared to the curb, and residents having to shovel the several feet into the street to allow for parking space in the winter. They have heard the city's reasons and want to direct them directly. Yes, plowing to the outside of a street is more efficient for a standard street, but the boulevard streets are not standard, they already require different handling because of the center median. The efficiency argument that applies to a typical local street doesn't map cleanly on to a street that was engineered differently from day one. On cost, public works rental figures show plow attachments run \$100 a month and skid steers are \$200 an hour, which is a modest fraction of the overall public works budget. On the concern of more snow collection at boulevard crossings, that is a solvable operational detail, not a reason to shift risk onto residents' driveways for an entire winter.

Sarah Watson, Alder for district 8, 412 N 5th Ave. here on behalf of a citizen who was not able to

be here but sent a letter for her to read to the committee. Dear Infrastructure and Facilities Committee,

I am writing to respectfully request that the City evaluate the installation of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Stevens Drive and Golden Meadow Street.

As a resident of the neighborhood, this intersection has become a growing safety concern. My daughter and I have personally experienced two separate close calls while attempting to cross Stevens Drive, with drivers either traveling too fast or failing to notice pedestrians in the crosswalk until the last moment. This appears to be a well-known traffic enforcement area, as I frequently see police monitoring speeds at this location. While enforcement is certainly helpful, it also suggests that speeding has been an ongoing concern. The geometry of the intersection presents an additional challenge. Vehicles are navigating a long curve on Stevens Drive, which can limit sight lines and reduce the amount of time drivers have to recognize pedestrians entering the crosswalk. Combined with vehicle speeds, this creates a situation where even attentive drivers may not see pedestrians soon enough. This is a school zone and a heavily traveled residential area with many families, children, and pedestrians using the sidewalks and crossing Stevens Drive daily. An RRFB system would significantly improve the visibility of pedestrians and encourage drivers to yield, making the crossing much safer for everyone who lives in the neighborhood. I respectfully ask that the Committee consider reviewing this location for an RRFB installation or other pedestrian safety improvements. I would be happy to meet onsite or provide any additional information that would be helpful during your evaluation. Thank you for your time, your service to our community, and your consideration of this request. Sincerely, Eric Lokemoen
1409 Golden Meadow Street

Danielle Fischer, 1212 Highland Park Blvd, her neighbor Lydia, was not able to attend, but she brought her mailbox on her behalf as a representative of that household, which is also one of the casualties of the new plowing policy. The neighborhood is required by the USPS to have front-facing mailboxes that are accessible from the curb. So the carrier does not have to leave the vehicle to deliver the mail. When a mailbox gets knocked over in winter, it is impossible to pour a base set up to get anything set up in a timely fashion to restore a receptacle, which means residents are not getting mail or are having to go to the post office to collect their mail. They also have to pay for the repair and damages incurred. She sent pictures of the boulevards to Kody and Rachel for reference, so you know what the boulevards look like, you will notice the sidewalk is in the middle of the boulevard for the neighborhood. The snow used to be plowed there. Now, as others have said, there are mounds of snow in more locations. Since the city is not cleaning off the sidewalk in the boulevard, we are still not able to use it, and we are also having issues with the piles of snow at the ends of driveways, in front of mailboxes, and fire hydrants, etc. This creates a hazard on the curved and steep hilly roads when it is icy and there is low visibility due to snow being piled up at many locations verses the boulevard where it had been placed for many years. There is a petition that was signed by every household in the Highland Park Blvd neighborhood asking the committee to consider reverting to the previous plowing policy. For fiscal and safety reasons, any of the money being saved is not the same case for the residents. It's costing more money in damages and time for the residents that live up there, in addition to safety concerns. Asking for the committee's consideration in reverting to the previous plowing policy.

Felix Gallo, 1206 Highland Park Blvd, the committee has seen and heard from many people about how they would like the committee to revert this ill-thought policy of plowing into the driveways when the medians are free. When discussion on this issue originally started, the Director, Kraege and Gallo had long email discussions. In which the ideas for why this was happening were constantly shifting. Originally it was that the plows could not plow to the other side. It was the drains were placed in such a way that the ice would flow across the road if you plowed to that side. Perhaps the snow was going to cause damage to the median. There were endless excuses as to why this policy would be put into place. In his confusion, he reached out to Kraege to work on getting all the facts. When, in fact, the drains are on both sides of the boulevards, in fact the plows can plow to both sides and have been doing it for over 70 years. He wanted to visually show Kraege some of the geometrical problems of how the snow had to end up in the median. There is no way for a plow to sometimes clear a multiple-way intersection anywhere, but in the medians, there is nowhere else to go with the snow. He stated that Kraege came out on site and met with him, and they had a great conversation. He stated that Kraege acknowledged that the snow does need to go to the medians, at least the end points of the medians for sure. This would be a tremendous problem if plowing snow away from the median, then the sidewalk would have to be cleared in accordance with the municipal code. He stated that Kraege acknowledged the

department is overstretched, and they would not be able to plow the sidewalks without getting additional funds. He stated that Kraege was very candid, and told him that there was no study done, and had one been done you would have found it in the packet. He stated that Kraege acknowledged that the plows can plow to the other side of the road. He stated that Kraege acknowledged it is not about money. The problem was that there are many possible cases of exception throughout the city. There are people who want snow plowed into a nearby field, or here or there. Kraege couldn't make heads or tails of it, so he wanted the committee to make that decision for him. That's the fundamental problem here. Gallo stated that, personally, as someone who is a longtime manager, that makes him a little mad. This is attributed to a goal-orientated metrics chase. Where Kraege has been told to do something, he is doing whatever he can, without considering what Wausau needs out of a public works superintendent. Which would be to consider the needs of the citizens, and include them in decision-making. That would have meant knowing the geometry, facilities, and what the medians are like, how they look, the size and shape, the size of the streets and how things have been done. It would have included going to the neighborhood and talking to the residents, getting input and learning more. Chair Trueblood enforced Gallo's 3 minutes.

Courtney Olson, 1206 Highland Park Blvd, would like to focus on the mission statement and vision of the city is to provide respect, integrity, and accountability. She walked door to door with her neighbor and every single house in this very polarized environment was completely unified, every single neighbor. Everyone agreed that plowing the snow to the middle was beneficial. The way that things have changed does not serve any on the neighborhood. So she asks, in terms of integrity, accountability, respect, and professionalism, that you consider the needs of the citizens. This benefits everyone, and we would like you to consistently change it back. There was no one here today that spoke out in favor of the way it is currently being done.

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

May 14, 2026 Regular Infrastructure and Facilities Minutes

Motion by Alderperson Hoenecke, seconded by Alderperson Martens, to approve **May 14, 2026 Regular Infrastructure and Facilities Minutes**. Motion Passed 3-0.

3 Discussion and possible action.

a. Snow plowing policy

Martens stated when the committee originally took this item up, they were not ready to make a decision and needed more information and public engagement. We have gotten public engagement and that helps with working through a decision. His concern is about the options we have. The plows can not run counterflow, they have to go in the direction of travel, which would require multiple passes or reconfiguring a piece of equipment to push snow to the median. Or is there some other method in which they could get the snow to the median? Kraege stated current equipment is designed with right side wings, sending snow to the right side of the street. There is equipment, like the county has, as someone mentioned, that has wings on both sides. In order to do it in one pass like we do now, we would need to put a left wing on the loaders that plow those routes. This won't change the efficiency of the intersection by placing the snow banks in the middle. The wing plows are what pushes the snow to the curb or the median. Borelli gave an example, stating that if the first 3 storms, we get 4 inches per storm, then we can make it in 2 rounds. Mid-year and a couple of 8-inch storms, the boulevards take 3-4 passes to get the snow up high enough. When the snow gets high enough, and gets pushed against the light poles and glass bollards have fallen off, or the snow rolls back down off the bank and then there are frozen chunks in the street. Which requires crews to come back the next day and do it again. Borelli mentioned that in the route he did with a loader, plow and wing set up, going to the driveway side saved him 2 hours on his route. When looking at overtime hours, 2hrs on one route for one 2-3 inch snowfall may not seem like much, but in a 8-10 inch snowfall you're looking at 4-6 hours on that route. Multiplying that by 2-3 routes, results in more work hours and equipment hours. Just like a normal winter in Wisconsin, everyone has snow to clean up at the end of their driveway.

Martens agreed that by the end of winter his street it is probably 4–5 feet narrower because the snow can only be pushed so far. Would doing snow removal in the area be a solution? Kraege noted that as the winter goes on they evaluate areas and do snow removal as time allows in areas that need it. Typically starting in the downtown business areas and then moving out to residential areas. It is definitely an option to look at if we have a break in storms and have time to do snow removal. Borelli said that from DPW standpoint, if you have to go backwards in the boulevards, we don't want the staff doing that. It is against the law and if there is an accident, the employee is liable, it goes against their personal insurance, they have to pay any fines, and if points are lost it goes against their driving record. Borelli stated in his opinion it is not in the cities' best interest to put employees at risk. Martens noted that with holding a CDL the stakes are even higher. Borelli mentioned that adding a wing to the left side of a loader would not be cheap, it would be thousands of dollars. For the current set-up on the 2 loaders, you are looking at over \$70,000 a piece. Adding another wing and harness, basically redoing a set-up, sending it out to the dealer to add more parts will not be cheap. Hoenecke feels that the amount of snowfall we received this year may have exasperated things. He is finding it difficult as he looked through the packet prior to the meeting and didn't find any information on the previous snow plowing policy. Hoenecke questioned if, years prior, when we were plowing onto the boulevard, were we actively breaking the law to do that, every year? Borelli and Lindman confirmed that was the case, with drivers driving the wrong way on the street. Hoenecke has concerns about that. He feels it would be an improvement for residents in the area where the streets are narrow to have the snow go onto the boulevard, but without making equipment changes, he doesn't see how it would be possible. He definitely would not advocate for plow drivers in city equipment, putting the city at a risk of liability as well, and driving equipment in the wrong direction in order to get snow where we would like it to be. Hoenecke feels we need to have a serious discussion about how to make it happen legally. We should not drive down the wrong side of the road. However, the standard was set with the boulevard built the way it was that it was how it was originally done. The snow was pushed onto the boulevard and not the residences. There had to have been a long-standing good reason it was done and continued for 50 plus years. Hoenecke stated he has a hard time wanting to keep the policy as is, but at the same time, he sees a conundrum in the fact that we can make the change, but he is not comfortable directing staff to do something that's illegal if we don't have the equipment to do what we are tasking them with. Lindman said if that is the direction the committee wants to go, then equipment changes would be necessary. We would need to purchase equipment and get the current equipment set up to do that, so we are not breaking the law and putting the drivers at risk. Trueblood noted that both of these neighborhoods were set up privately. The city has never had any sort of agreement with the neighborhoods, there has never been any covenant to plow snow onto the boulevard. He went back as far as he could in the city records, he went to the historical society. You can actually find the ads where it was first advertised with lots for sale in boulevard neighborhoods. It is fascinating, yet means nothing. As far as we can tell, they were originally not plowed into the boulevards. However, in the 1930s there was a large movement to keep sidewalks off the neighbor's yards in Highland Park and that came to the council, and it was agreed that the sidewalk would be placed in the boulevard. Trueblood stated that when this came up he drove both these neighborhoods, and they are narrow, but we allow cars to park on the road side today and in some cases it is hard to get around those. Especially when the cars are not parked close to the curb. Is there a reason we are not plowing to the curb? Kraege noted that with more snow the piles like to fall back. He stated it could be new drivers. There is a learning curve with getting comfortable knowing where the end of the wing is. There is a learning curve regarding how close to get without doing damage to the curb or the wing. With big snow, if we push to the curb and there is already a snow pile, a lot of the snow will go over the snow pile and land on residents' sidewalks, so sometimes concessions are made and drivers start backing off a little to prevent the pile from landing on the sidewalks. Trueblood stated he heard the arguments, he understood the changes in equipment. Some of the arguments concerned him. Taxes, we all pay the same taxes, it is the same levy per \$100,000. We are all getting older. Trueblood said he has tried but is not getting younger no matter what he eats or how much kale he grows. His neighbor also likes to park right behind his drive regardless of how much snow is back there. All of these are challenges we all face. Plowing to the boulevard is something that was done in the past, but we have done a lot of things in the past that we probably shouldn't have done. Trueblood personally, as a former snow plow person, likes consistency. Being able to start and go, having it become routine. The more routine it is, the better we become at it, especially once you have learned your piece of equipment. So, whether it is practice, training, dry runs in the summer with the wing. If practice makes it better,

we need to practice. Drains clogging and creating ice may be something we need to look at. On his block they put in a second drain. Trueblood feels that, unfortunately, there will be a learning curve on everyone's part. If we have been doing something the same way for 50 years and all of a sudden we changed, we can't expect things to go the way they were for 50 years, because we made a change and now we have to adapt to the change, or come up with another solution. Alder Slonski submitted a statement for public comment to Trueblood that he read into the record for her. Slonski's comment: On the issue of the Highland Park Blvd snow removal question, I have great sympathy for the position of the residents. I live at the far end of a cul-de-sac myself, and it is my yard and sometimes driveway that bears the majority of the removed snow from our street. So, I recognize that it is a pain to deal with. I also hear the complaints of the Highland Park residents that their taxes are high, and they would appreciate a higher level of service accordingly. However, I think it is important for us as a council to keep in mind that the taxes paid by our residents support services for the City as a whole, and not for the individual taxpayer. With that in mind, and given the Department's very rational reasons for not wishing to deviate from best practices for any one neighborhood — those being safety, uniformity, timely removal of snow in the rest of the City, and cost, I would urge the Committee to vote to continue the Department's policy of plowing to the outside curb in all neighborhoods, even those with a center boulevard. She also made some suggestions in her email about possibilities of what could be done on the city website for handling snow. Hoenecke asked about the county trucks being able to plow to the left. Kraege stated that he believes the highway plows have those, but he was unsure. Trueblood added those do widen the footprint of the truck considerably. Borelli clarified that there would be a hanging wing on the right side, and a hanging wing on the left also, which would make the unit wider when traveling down the road, giving the option to plow to either side of the road, but to upfit the loaders will come at a cost. The difference with the county is that they are going down highways at a higher speed and the snow is thrown farther. In the city, the plows go slower and the snow piles get higher to prevent snow from filling the sidewalks. Hoenecke stated that without having the infrastructure to support what is being requested, he finds it difficult to know how we can move forward. Trueblood clarified that if no motion is made, we move forward with the current policy. Martens suggests that if snow on the narrow boulevards is the concern, then we just need to make a more concerned effort to do snow removal to keep them open wide enough. Trueblood recognizes Alder Lukens for comment. Lukens was under the understanding that either way this would go on to city council to the common council meeting. Trueblood noted that if there is no motion, it would not go on and would have to be brought up separately. Lukens stated that she really appreciates Hoenecke's questions and while she understands everyone has hardships to deal with, these are narrow streets. She asked if there is a way to work with the county to see if there are any other creative solutions they could look at. She has heard from many residents about the snow being 4 feet out from the curb, and that is making an already narrow one-way street even more narrow. The boulevards are not the same as other areas when it comes to plowing. Also, the 100 block of Eau Claire Boulevard is very long with multiple fire hydrants, so is it the residents responsibly to clear those? Trueblood noted that everywhere else in the city, the residents clear fire hydrants. Lukens is trying to advocate because it is different than everywhere else in the city, because for many, many years it was plowed onto the boulevard. Trueblood noted that without a motion this would go no further. There is a reasonable motion that could be made, however as chair he cannot make it. Hoenecke stated he is not comfortable making a motion at this time with limited members present and barely within the grounds of a quorum. He asked Lindman if we could take a look at what it would cost to outfit the trucks, and get some hard figures on that? Lindman stated he could put it together and share it with the committee. Committee members in attendance were in consensus that this item could be brought back in August. Martens made a formal motion to bring it back in August with cost estimates on outfitting 2 loaders with left and right wings, and any other possible costs or measures to keep the boulevards clean. Hoenecke seconds. Kraege asked if when it is brought back in August, if this is the route the committee wants to go, can they establish some guidelines for what the determination factors will be when he gets requests for plowing changes? He gets 100's of requests every winter from residents wanting plowing and snow clearing done differently. He would like some guiding principle. Is it age, cost? What are the metrics for when we consider making changes to the policy? Trueblood noted that we will include that in the discussion. Hoenecke stated that unless we actually put it into policy, we would not be directing public works to make adjustments based off individual requests. Hoenecke asked the committee if that is correct, we should be following city policy on all things. Trueblood stated that if we were doing that, that is why we started plowing to the outside. Martens stated that if we were going to start making

exceptions those should be based off of infrastructure and not based on personal abilities. Trueblood stated it will be part of the discussion in August.

Without objection, this item was postponed until the August 13th meeting. With the request that the Department of Public Works get estimates on what it would cost to outfit 2 end loaders with left and right wings.

b. STH 52, E Wausau Ave (N 6th Street to N 18th Street) Transportation Project Plat (TPP)
Project ID 6999-00-01

Weslowski noted this is a connecting highway project that is under design by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. After several rounds of design and community engagement meetings, the design is at roughly 70%. With that, there are some needs for right of way, there are some small takings and small easements. This transportation project plat outlines those takings and easements that are needed. From there, the real estate professional will go out and secure those easements and takings. This is the first step to approving the plat. Once approved by council, the real estate professional can approach homeowners to purchase the real estate. Staff recommends approval.

Motion by Alderperson Martens, seconded by Alderperson Hoenecke, to approve STH 52, E Wausau Ave (N 6th Street to N 18th Street) Transportation Project Plat (TPP) Project ID 6999-00-01 all items outlined below. Motion Passed, 3-0.

c. Approving a preliminary resolution to set a public hearing to vacate the alley bounded by Lake View Drive, Bertha Street, Elmwood Boulevard and Midway Boulevard.

Weslowski stated that a valid petition was received, this would set the public hearing so those bordering on or in the neighborhood could come and voice their concern, opposition or support for it. Then this body would vote on it based upon public comment. This would set that public hearing.

Motion by Alderperson Hoenecke, seconded by Alderperson Martens, to approve a preliminary resolution to set a public hearing to vacate the alley bounded by Lake View Drive, Bertha Street, Elmwood Boulevard and Midway Boulevard.. Motion Passed 3-0.

d. Approving a sculpture at the south-east corner of 3rd Street and Washington Street.

Trueblood noted that the arts committee passed item 4-1, and we are reviewing the placement of it in the right of way. Weslowski stated they would need to work with the attorney's office to get an encroachment permit, which would include insurance. Hoenecke asked if there were any concerns about it blocking views of people at that corner with the abutting street trying to see to the adjacent street. Wesolowski would recommend that engineering get final recommendation on placement. He doesn't feel it would be an obstruction. Hoenecke asked if this would incur any costs for the city, or is it being financed by the party requesting? Lindman and Wesolowski agreed that this is being funded by the requesting party, it would be 100% their cost. Trueblood noted that the requesting party would own and maintain the sculpture, we are just allowing them to place it on city property.

Motion by Alderperson Hoenecke, seconded by Alderperson Martens, to approve a sculpture at the south-east corner of 3rd Street and Washington Street. Motion Passed 3-0.

e. Renewal of the Stormwater Memorandum of Agreement with surrounding municipalities.

Niksich stated that Marathon County owns and operates storm sewer and storm water facilities in surrounding communities in Marathon County. This is a memorandum that they agree to follow the ordinances of these communities and then work together to maintain and support compliance. Staff recommends approval.

Motion by Alderperson Martens, seconded by Alderperson Hoenecke, to approve Renewal of the Stormwater Memorandum of Agreement with surrounding municipalities.. Motion Passed 3-0.

f. Approving a preliminary resolution to set a public hearing to vacate a portion of Liberty Ridge Way

Wesolowski stated that a petition was received from the owner at the end of Liberty Ridge Way. There are maps in the packet. This would vacate a small portion at the request of the owner. This would set the public hearing for the vacation. Martens questioned if the developer is not looking to develop past the area looking to be vacated. Wesolowski believes those plans changed. There is a large home going up just to the west of the section to vacate.

Motion by Alderperson Martens, seconded by Alderperson Hoenecke, to approve a preliminary resolution to set a public hearing to vacate a portion of Liberty Ridge Way. Motion Passed 3-0.

g. Developing preliminary engineering plans to implement the Wausau Center Urban Design and Transportation Master Plan

Wesolowski stated the Toole design plan was included in the packet. This was originally adopted by council. The design was developed in 2019. Since then, the city has been working with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to get the classifications of Highway 52 and Highway 51 removed from the downtown. That was finalized last year, so now we can have more flexibility about what the city wants to do with the downtown streets. Now that that important first step has been completed, we are looking for guidance towards moving ahead and adopting some of these implementations that were adopted by the council. Staff suggests that the first step be to get some 30% engineering plans considering the suggestions in the Toole design plan, which was a planning tool, not an engineering study. A lot needs to go into looking at moving First and Forest to two-way streets; there are complicated and signalized intersections, including ramps and business entrances that are currently based on a one-way. There are some pretty important considerations that need to be made. A 30% plan would help sort out some of those, and give us some better cost estimates. Martens is glad to see this plan come back. He wanted to give some context since it had been quite some time. When this plan was adopted in May 2019, the mall was still a mall, it was in receivership, the city had not purchased it yet. However, after this plan was approved, things moved quickly. In the past 7 years, we have seen a lot of change in our downtown district. Much of what this plan foretells has happened. It's good that we are to a point that we can start acting on some of these things. Wausau has had one-way streets encircling the mall for years. It would be quite a pari dime shift to change them. Martens feels we are ready for it, and it's something that we need to do. Looking at improving how we move about in our downtown district is important. He feels Forest definitely needs to be a two-way street. If it does become a two-way street, he feels that the protective bike lane would be a great addition to the community. The only problem with the bike lane that he sees is that the Toole plan has it on the south side of the street. He feels the flow for cyclists would be better if it was on the north side of the street, because then, the only cross traffic for cyclists to be concerned with would be the ramp traffic. The round-a-bout at Grand Ave he feels is a good idea for traffic flow, but would like to see some engineering plans for that, as well where River Dr would be realigned at First and Washington intersections. Hoenecke asked for clarification on what preliminary funding plans meant in terms of committed dollars. Wesolowski stated it would be proposed that money be allotted in the 2027 budget. Numbers would have to be finalized, but Wesolowski figured we would be around \$150,000 to get a 30% plan in this area. It will depend on how the RFP is put out, cost-based, where we state this is what you have, or whether you leave it more open-ended. There are options. We are just asking if we have support from this committee with going forward asking for the \$150,000 in the budget for the study. Hoenecke asked if the Toole design plan was also a paid-for service? Wesolowski stated that, yes, it was a planning tool that was paid for by the city. It is a high-level plan, it does not get into things that the 30% plan would like how to change the signals at 5th and Forest, which is one-way traffic now. The round-a-bout at Grand Ave and Forest is a pretty picture, but will it fit there? Round-a-bout designs have a lot of regulations and there is not a lot of options in what will and will not work, so Wesolowski feels getting a professional engineer who has designed some round-a-bouts to see if it will fit in the suggested footprint. With an engineer's plan, we will know if it will fit, if we have to buy property to make it work or not. With realigning River Dr. and First, there may be some other options there as well. That is a very busy intersection and if you add two-way traffic going northbound on First, it will only complicate that intersection, without realigning river drive. Getting professional traffic engineers in to look at it will help clarify what can and can't be done. Trueblood asked if the 30% included traffic studies. Wesolowski, said it will look at traffic, but not an actual study. We can ask for what we want in our proposal. It will look at existing traffic patterns and see if a round-a-bout will work. Trueblood stated that 90% of the negative comments he received about the proposal were about the round-a-bout. The area

that is most concerning to him is where currently we have 3 lanes on Stewart that split into 4 lanes, which go to 3 lanes on Forest. At the stoplight by the library, two lanes go north onto First St, one also allows travel to the east, and two go south onto Forest St, and one curves onto River Dr. There is a lot of traffic narrowing at that point already. With the plan, it would narrow into one lane going south, and you would be sending southbound traffic across. Is making Forest two lanes going to be sufficient, or do we need to look at four lanes? With this plan being made in 2019 and the changes that we have seen to the downtown so far and planning for future changes to the downtown district, have we considered that with this plan? Trueblood is all for reevaluating the traffic flow. The part of the plan he received the most positive feedback on was the bike lane. Everyone wants the downtown to be more bikeable, walkable. Wesolowski stated that he feels that any engineer that would look at this would want the current traffic counts. Lindman stated that typically when we get into these 30% plan documents, we provide what information is known right now and what the wants are of the city, but as we work through the plans and time goes on there are always new evolutions by the time the plans are received. Trueblood asked what the timeframe was for the 30% plan to be completed. Lindman figured it would be about 12 months to get something and then there would be some discussions in this committee next year once there is an engineer on board, and we have some ideas. Most likely 9–12 months before we have some more formal plan in place. Trueblood asked if it's possible that this could all be done, and when we get the proposal back, and it is not even feasible? Wesolowski stated there are always opportunities for grants, we can apply for STP Urban funding, and we can apply for LRIP funding. If we develop these plans, and they are feasible, Wesolowski suggests we apply for STP Urban or LRIP funding. Hoenecke stated he is very interested in seeing the long-term implementation of improvement in traffic flow in the downtown. At this time, he is not in favor of proposing that we commit funding to this. We are still in the early stages of prioritizing items for our budget, and at this time he is not sure if we have a pressing need for this, as opposed to it being more of a want in terms of implication and what he knows is coming up in budget discussions. He would be welcome to revisit it once he knows where priorities sit after the upcoming budget meeting. Martens asked if this would fall under the purview of the tax increment distinct 3 or 12? Lindman said he believes 12, Trueblood believes that 12 was established to deal with the fall out of the mall closing and the developments. Lindman emphasized this was to see if the committee would support the idea of this being put in the 2027 budget. This is a unique project from infrastructure and engineering, there has been a lot of support for this plan throughout the community as well as keeping this plan moving forward after the state highway is out of the downtown and keeping this at the forefront with proposed development that is moving forward downtown. The planning documents take a longtime so to keep it moving forward staff would like to put it in the 2027 budget for consideration of the council. Martens stated that it could always be put into consideration for the 2027 budget and, depending on what happens, it could get moved around or cut.

Motion by Alderperson Martens to approve Developing preliminary engineering plans to implement the Wausau Center Urban Design and Transportation Master Plan. Motion died due to lack of a second.

h. Approve Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of E. Thomas Street just west of McCleary Street

Niksich stated he worked with Edmondson, the Assistant Planner, on this item. This is for the trail crossing on East Thomas. It met all the guidelines, except for the pedestrian traffic. However, it was noted by the engineering staff that did the counts that those trying to cross had to wait for an extremely extended amount of time. Leading Niksich to believe that may be dissuading people from using this trail, and it being a newer trail. If this crossing was made safer, it would probably cause more pedestrian traffic to use this crossing and trail. The 3rd criteria is 1500 vehicles per day minimum. The amount of traffic on Thomas St far exceeds that and this is not a very safe crossing. For that reason, staff recommends approval, and it is also supported by the bicycle and pedestrian committee. Hoenecke confirmed that this is immediately to the west of the bridge. Niksich stated he was correct. After a motion to approve and a second, Hoenecke asked if there was an estimate of the cost of installation. Niksich stated it depends if it is bid out to a third party or done in house. It can range from \$15,000 to \$20,000. Trueblood asked if they are solar. Niksich believes there is power in that location, so they would likely not be solar. They would be manually activated. Trueblood asked for a brief history of what has been done to manage traffic at this site. Niksich stated that the trail was just completed in 2024. Previously, the only pedestrian traffic would have been coming from

the north traveling south. There has not been anything except the high-visibility crosswalk put in there. Trueblood questioned if, for significantly less, could a state law requires Yielding to pedestrians at crosswalk sign be placed, or a narrowing of the curbs? Are there other options that were being considered? Nicksich noted that at this crossing there is already a center median for a pedestrian refuge island, lanes are already reduced, we would not want to reduce any further with bike lanes being on either side. There is currently high visibility signage for pedestrian crossing posted. Thomas St was just reconstructed in 2018 or 2019, making it a fairly new construction that is pedestrian-friendly. Martens feels that the RRFB would greatly improve the pedestrian experience at this location. It is a nice path, and we should encourage people to use it.

Motion by Alderperson Martens, seconded by Alderperson Hoenecke, to approve a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of E. Thomas Street just west of McCleary Street. Motion Passed 3-0.

- i. Approve Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Stevens Drive and Golden Meadow Street.

Nicksich stated this meets all criteria except the pedestrian crossing. However, the traffic was much less for staff reviewing this location. In their opinion, there were no close calls or extended waiting periods for crossing. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory committee did recommend placing an RRFB at this location. However, staff does not support this. Hoenecke would also not be in support of this. Having frequented the area, he would consider something like this at W Wausau Ave before he considered this location, given the nature of the amount of traffic and the lack of pedestrian traffic. Marten is concerned that the pedestrian counts were done on June 4th when school may not have been in full swing. He asked if this was something we could study at a later date, maybe September or October.

Motion by Alderperson Martens to Postpone until October so we can have in session school counts for Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Stevens Drive and Golden Meadow Street.. Motion died due to lack of a second.

4 Discussion.

- a. Future agenda items

Hoenecke is interested in knowing a strong breakdown of pressing needs for our infrastructure and facilities as opposed to what would be considered wants or items that could be postponed. He asked if Lindman could provide a list for the committee. Things that are necessary and pressing, that if we don't do something we will not have a viable way to move forward without updating or making adjustments to things in the next 5 years. In lieu of the scrutiny some anonymous citizens are doing, and in looking over the budget, it is a good thing for us to be extremely intentional about recognizing wants versus needs at this time for the city. Lindman said he will prepare the infrastructure proposal and bring it forward for committee discussion. Trueblood would like to follow Attorney Jacobson's recommendation in reviewing the purview of the committee and put together our description. He would like to review that at least by the September meeting, preferably in the August meeting if possible.

5 Adjournment.

Motion by Alderperson Hoenecke, seconded by Alderperson Martens, to approve Adjournment. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 06:49 PM.

**The recording of this meeting may be viewed on
YouTube [@CityofWausauMeetings](#)**



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