

City of Winsted
City Council Work Session
Vollmer Room
Tuesday, April 5, 2022
5:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor George Schulenberg
Council Member Mike Henrich
Council Member Tom Ollig
Council Member Bonnie Quast
Council Member Steve Stotko

Staff Present: Mr. Adam Birkholz, City Administrator
Ms. Raquel Kirchoff, City Clerk-Treasurer
Mr. Justin Heldt, Police Chief

I. Call to Order

Mayor Schulenberg called the Work Session to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. Winsted Public Cemetery – Seal Coating

Mr. Adam Birkholz, City Administrator, stated that Mr. Aaron Kubasch was present with a request for maintenance of the Winsted Public Cemetery road. Mr. Birkholz stated that the City does not own the cemetery; a cemetery organization does.

Mr. Kubasch provided a history of maintenance at the cemetery, to include that sealcoating of the road was last completed in the year 2006. Mr. Kubasch explained the maintenance that the cemetery organization and volunteers complete at the cemetery. He continued by stating that the organization has only enough funds to have the grass cut during the year.

Mr. Kubasch stated that the City of Howard Lake donates funds to Howard Lake's cemetery organization for maintenance of the Howard Lake Public Cemetery. Mr. Birkholz stated that the City of Lester Prairie owns the Lester Prairie Public Cemetery and has full control of its operation, to include setting plot rates, collecting the funds, and completing the maintenance.

Mr. Birkholz stated that based on the prices in year 2021, it would cost approximately \$1,200.00 to complete the sealcoating. A quote has not yet been obtained for the current year, so the price will likely increase.

The City Council Members discussed and were in favor of the City sealcoating the cemetery road. Council Member Henrich noted that the road is frequently used as a shortcut for drivers; not for visiting graves. He suggested installation of speed bumps on the road because of this. Mr. Kubasch thanked him for the idea and stated that the organization would consider it. He continued by stating that at one time a gate was in place on the road; however, it was removed because a volunteer must then man the gate.

III. Sanitary Sewer Cleaning

Mr. Birkholz stated sanitary sewer cleaning is included in the 2022 budget, and is included on the April 5, 2022 Consent Agenda for approval. He continued by stating that the City's goal is to meet the League of Minnesota Cities recommendation to clean every sanitary sewer line, once every four (4) years. The low quote received for this service in 2022 is from Ritter and Ritter, Incorporated, who also completed the cleaning in 2021. To meet the required quantity of line in conjunction with the four (4) year rotation cycle, the cost is \$15,201.80. In addition to this, City staff recommend some televising to fill gaps that exist in the City's geographic information system (GIS) for wye connections in sewer lines. This brings the cost to \$19,450.81.

The City Council Members were in favor of the project.

IV. Downtown Lighting Evaluation

Mr. Birkholz stated that as part of the 2022 City Council Goal Setting Retreat, the Council directed City staff to begin the evaluation and redevelopment process for the street lighting located within the downtown area. The evaluation is currently focused on the repair or replacement of the underlying electrical services, and does not include rehabilitation or replacement of the light poles in the area.

Determining the cost of repairing the underlying electrical services is difficult because City staff does not know how much of the existing underground wiring is damaged. CR Electric estimates that 33% of the fixtures have new conduit and wiring, while the remaining fixtures still have old, direct burial wires. CR Electric has requested paid time to open up each of the poles to determine which poles have been repaired in the past.

Mr. Birkholz stated that at this point, two (2) options to consider for repair of the lighting include installation of new wiring or installing solar energy poles; however, at this point it is difficult to compare the price of these options because of the unknown cost of the bad wiring.

Council Member Stotko stated that he calculated the number of feet in the area based on City Council memos regarding the subject and estimated 5,810 feet at a worst case scenario. If the estimated 33% of the fixtures that do not need new conduit and wiring is subtracted from those feet, and the remaining feet is multiplied by the \$20.50 per foot cost to core new electrical conduit in between the poles is calculated, the cost is approximately \$81,000.00. He continued by stating that he estimated an additional \$72,000.00 for poles and fixtures based on past City Council memos. This still may not include all project costs.

Council Member Stotko stated that in some initial research regarding solar energy lighting, the cost looks to be significantly less.

Council Member Stotko stated that the City Council must consider the project carefully; consider the costs, and where the money that is not budgeted for the costs will come from. The City Council needs to consider the age of the poles, at approximately thirty-three (33) years when it considers just repairing electrical at this point or completing the project with new poles and lights.

Council Member Stotko asked where the money for the option chosen is planned to come from, at this point in time. Mr. Birkholz stated that the Streets Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) fund has funds. Those funds are next planned to be used in the years 2026/2027 for a large-scale street redevelopment project. He noted, however, that in the 2022 budget cycle, the budgeted funds for this fund were reduced.

Mr. Birkholz stated that the lighting has been an issue for many years and the project has been delayed. The first step is to determine how much wiring needs replacement, which is a large amount of the cost. To gather that information, there will be labor cost from CR Electric. Mr. Birkholz estimated that cost at \$1,000.00. The City Council Members asked if it was possible for CR Electric to show the Public Works staff how to do this research to save on the labor cost, because the decision is not yet made on what option to move forward with. Mr. Birkholz stated that he would see if this was an option.

V. 2022 Street Improvements Project – Bonding

Mr. Birkholz stated that the City Council will consider awarding the 2022 Street Improvements Project at the April 5, 2022 meeting. He continued by stating that Mr. Shannon Sweeney, David Drown Associates, had provided information regarding bonding for the project at a recent City Council Meeting. At that time, it was planned to complete the competitive process for bonding. With interest rates rising fast, and with project costs lower than anticipated, Mr. Sweeney has since recommended an alternative process of working through the Minnesota Rural Water Association midi loan process, and soliciting quotes from local banks. This will save the City money on issuance costs. Quotes were solicited and the information will be presented at the April 19, 2022 City Council Meeting.

VI. Other

a) Release of Mortgage Lien

Mr. Birkholz reviewed a request from Mr. Joe Remer for a release of lien from the City on his mortgage/property, related to a loan that Five Star Direct received from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) in the past to be paid back to the City for economic development use. He continued by stating that the loan was not fully paid and the business went bankrupt.

The City Council Members stated that they would like to review past opinion from the City attorney regarding the defaulted loan.

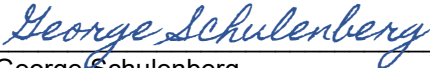
b) Assessed Property Value Increases

Mr. Birkholz stated some assessed property values have increased. If residents want to challenge assessed values, they must contact McLeod County. A meeting will be conducted at the County on April 8, 2022 regarding valuations. Residents should review their proposed tax statements received from the County for meeting dates, times and location.

VII. Adjourn

Council Member Ollig motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Quast seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

The Work Session adjourned at 5:52 p.m.



George Schulenberg
Mayor
City of Winsted

ATTEST:



Raquel Kirchoff, CMC
City Clerk-Treasurer
City of Winsted