

City of Winsted  
City Council Work Session  
Vollmer Room  
Tuesday, May 4, 2021  
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

## **I. Call to Order**

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

## **II. Water Meter Replacement Project**

Ms. Raquel Kirchoff, City Clerk-Treasurer, stated that City staff has been working with its meter consultant regarding water meters that are installed throughout the city. A growing number of meters are not sending a proper radio signal when the Public Works staff reads meters each month. It was determined by the manufacturer that faulty batteries, due to their age, were affecting the radio signal.

During the 2021 City Council Goal Setting Retreat, the City Council approved a priority for the Public Works Department to update and replace failing water metering infrastructure to address this problem.

The current equipment and technology dates back to 2008 or earlier and several technology upgrades have occurred since the initial equipment installation. City staff has worked with the meter consultant to determine the most cost-effective and beneficial solution moving forward, which is to replace defective meter heads with new HRE Register and Orion Cellular Endpoint meter heads. Software must also be purchased for the meter heads to read and be inputted into the City's billing system.

The cellular endpoint meter heads will enable technology giving utility customers the ability to access their specific meter read information at regular intervals, if they choose. Staff time for Public Works to read meters may also be reduced in the future, as more meter heads are replaced with this technology.

It is recommended that the City purchase 150 meter heads at this time, to replace the meters that are not currently sending a radio read and to have some on hand.

Currently, there are approximately 1,020 meters installed throughout the city. City staff will include a plan and budget for replacement of all meters in the 2022 budget and beyond.

The total cost for replacing 150 meter heads, and the BEACON and Banyon Data Systems software is \$41,245.00. In addition, there is a \$.93 per meter monthly fee once the new heads are installed. The cost will be split evenly between the Water and Sewer funds. Each fund has sufficient fund balance for the purchase.

Council Member Ollig asked if the plan was to replace the meter heads as they fail. Mr. Adam Birkholz, City Administrator, stated that was the plan. Approximately 67 have failed; the City estimates that same number to fail in 2021, plus will purchase some to have on hand for additional housing development.

Mr. Birkholz stated that he spoke with People Service, Incorporated, who provides the City's wastewater treatment facility services, and water services for other cities, about the brand of meters that the City is using. They stated that the differing brands of meters all have issues; however, they think that the brand the city is using is one of the better ones.

Mr. Birkholz stated that the May 4, 2021 City Council Agenda includes consideration of approval for purchase of the meters.

## **III. Winsted Lake – 2021 Shoreline Treatment Service Quote**

Mr. Birkholz stated that Clark Environmental provided a quote for treating the swimming area of Winsted Lake. The City Council Members discussed the treatment option and stated that it is not needed at this time.

#### **IV. Downtown Parking Standards – Parking Bollard Installation**

Mr. Birkholz stated that the property owner at 151 Main Avenue West has requested permission to install bollard posts in front of his building, since drivers have hit his building more than once in recent years. City staff is concerned about how the sidewalk would be maintained if permission is granted. The City Council Members discussed the request, and the McLeod County road project for this area that is planned in upcoming years, and stated they are not in favor of installation of posts.

#### **v. Other**

##### **a) Tree Removal – Shady Creek Drive**

Mr. Birkholz stated that the City has received a request to remove a tree on Shady Creek Drive that he will likely approve a quote for approximately \$750 from the City's current tree trimming contractor to remove. City staff will need to assist with brush and debris removal.

##### **b) May 4, 2021 Organization Reports**

Mr. Birkholz briefly reviewed the organizations that would provide a report at the May 4, 2021 City Council Meeting.

##### **c) Winsted Municipal Airport**

Mr. Birkholz provided an update regarding hangar owner concern over the condition of the seeding of the runway. The City engineer has been on site with the contractor to assess the concerns and how the seeding has taken hold. They feel some of the areas have not germinated yet because the runway was seeded late in the fall, and the season thus far has been cool and dry. If their assessment is not accurate, they have a plan in place of when they will come in and reseed. There are some areas that were seeded earlier than late fall, and they have germinated well.

Mr. Russ Runck, hangar owner, provided pictures of the runway and explained concerns because they were told that the airport may not open until August or later. Mr. Birkholz stated that the City is hoping that the runway may open by June or July and that he can forward information from the engineer that provides a plan for reseeding if turf does not grow in areas near the taxiway. He continued by stating that a rocky base was included on the runway for the purpose drainage. It is meant to be different than a front yard, for example.


Mr. Birkholz stated that some hangar owners have requested permission to bring a small number of their planes back to the Winsted airport. They had to lease hangar space at a different airport if they wanted to use their plane, and those leases are expiring.

The City Council Members discussed the airport and the request and directed the Airport Commission to discuss the request to allow a small number of planes to land before the runway is open at their next meeting. Mr. Birkholz stated that an Airport Commission meeting would be held within the next few weeks.

#### **VI. Adjourn**

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

The Work Session adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

  
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George Schulenberg  
Mayor  
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

  
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Raquel Kirchoff, CMC  
City Clerk-Treasurer  
City of Winsted