

1502120

**City of Merrill
Board of Public Works
Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 5:30 P.M.
City Hall Common Council Chambers, 1004 East First Street**

Members Present (5 of 5): Mayor Bill Bialecki (Chairperson), Street Commissioner Richard Lupton, Alderman Ryan Schwartzman, Alderman Rob Norton and Alderman Peter Lokemoen

Others Present (some attended only the public hearing) Included: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Alderwoman Kandy Peterson, Alderman Dave Sukow, Tonia Speener, Rod Akey, David Cole, Evelyn Cole, Deloris Bauman, Roger Schmoldt, Kortney Pike, Judy Bevier-North, Marijean Hoppe, Brad Hinner, Bryan Plautz and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A student was in attendance to videotape the meeting for the Cable Access Channel.

Call to order

Mayor Bialecki called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Vouchers

The vouchers were in the meeting packet.

Motion (Schwartzman/Lokemoen) to approve the vouchers, as presented.
Carried.

Consider request from David Cole for waiver of snow & ice removal charges

The City has mailed a bill (\$100) to David Cole for Street Department removal of sidewalk snow and ice at Mr. Cole's property at 109 North Oregon Street on November 18th, 2014. Mr. Cole has subsequently appealed those charges. A copy of the bill was in the meeting packet.

David Cole attended the meeting and, without objection, was granted floor privileges to address the board. Mr. Cole contends that the sidewalk had been cleared off on the day in question. Both Mr. Cole and Street Commissioner Lupton had pictures of the sidewalk area on November 18th. Both sets of pictures were circulated to Board members.

Alderman Norton stated that he would be in favor of a one-time waiver of snow and ice removal charges. He stated that such a policy would be similar to the one-time waiver policy implemented by the Water and Sewer Committee, in instances of excessive water utility bills as a result of leaks.

Motion (Lokemoen/Schwartzman) to disallow the waiver request. Carried.

No Common Council action on the motion is necessary.

Consider request from Relay for Life to place signs @ City entrances

Information was in the meeting packet. Mayor Bialecki had placed this item on the agenda.

Relay for Life of Merrill has submitted a request seeking to erect promotional signs at four City entrances. The signs would contain the words "This is a Relay for Life Community" and would measure 12 inches by 18 inches. Representing Relay for Life, Deloris Bauman distributed information and answered questions related to the request.

Discussion was held on the pros and cons of placing the signs on streetlights versus placing them on separate metal poles. Alderman Lokemoen suggested that placing them on separate poles seems to be the preferable option.

Motion (Norton/Schwartzman) to approve the request to place "Relay for Life" signs on metal poles at four City entrances, and approve directing the Street Department to assist in the installation. Carried.

No Common Council action on the motion is necessary.

Consider bids from engineering firms for design of Superior St. project

Bids for the Superior Street project have been received and opened. It was mentioned that this project also includes work on a portion of West Tenth Street.

Six bids were received. City Administrator Johnson distributed a report summarizing the bids.

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Motion (Lokemoen/Schwartzman) to approve the bid of \$23,000 from Akey Engineering Services, Merrill, WI, for the design of the Superior Street (Grand Avenue to West Tenth Street) project, which also includes a portion of West Tenth Street. Carried.

Monthly report - Street Commissioner

The report was in the meeting packet. Street Commissioner Lupton reported that the Street Department budget at this time is in much better condition than last year at this time, due primarily to the weather.

Monthly report – Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator

The report was in the meeting packet. Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel reported that the 2015 exterior maintenance program is underway. Several orders to raze are in progress.

Monthly report – City Hall Maintenance Supervisor

None.

Monthly report from contracted engineering firms

No written reports were submitted.

Representing Akey Engineering Services, Rod Akey provided a verbal update on the Thielman Street culvert replacement project.

A cost estimate for the Highway 64 reconstruction project was distributed. At this time, the cost estimate was prepared for budgeting purposes only.

Next meeting

Wednesday, February 25th, 2015 at 4:00 P.M.

Recess

At 5:58 P.M., Mayor Bialecki announced that a recess would be held until 6:00 P.M., the scheduled time of the public hearing portion of the meeting. He called the meeting back to order at 6:00 P.M.

Public Hearing: Sidewalk projects for 2015, including Memorial Drive extension

The public hearing concerned the 2015 sidewalk maintenance program, plus a proposed project to extend sidewalk on the west side of Memorial Drive, from East Sixth Street to north of East Tenth Street.

Mayor Bialecki reviewed the public hearing guidelines.

City Attorney Hayden read the public hearing notice.

Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel gave a verbal summary of the projects. There are two main projects. The first project is sidewalk maintenance in an area generally confined to the Second Aldermanic District, west of Center Avenue. The project includes the following (where requested or needed): isolated sidewalk, driveway approaches, curb and gutter. This project was originally scheduled for 2014, but was delayed to do a high bid price.

The second main project is the extension of sidewalk on Memorial Drive, as noted earlier. This project was initially approved in 2009, but was then delayed when the City was unable to obtain a "Safe Rides to School" grant to fund the project. The project was again proposed in 2014 by several citizens, including two alderpersons.

Motion (Schwartzman/Lokemoen) to open the public hearing. Carried.

Judy Bevier-North, 1003 N. Memorial Drive, questioned why she would be assessed for the installation, since the sidewalk to be installed would not be on her property. Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel explained the current City policy on sidewalk installation. Judy Bevier-North then asked why the residents on Johnson Street were not assessed when sidewalk was installed on the opposite side of Johnson Street recently. She was told that Church Mutual Insurance had requested and paid 100% for that sidewalk installation.

Roger Schmoldt, 905 N. Memorial Drive, stated that he does not recall that, when the Memorial Drive project was initially proposed, there would be a split on the charges between property owners on both sides of the street. He asked whether there had ever been a City sidewalk project in which both private property owners and governmental entities were both assessed. Mr. Schmoldt then requested that his comments/notes be made part of the meeting record. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Alderman Lokemoen replied that the ordinance has been changed since this project was initially considered. The change included the 50/50 split on charges to property owners on both side of the street, to make sidewalk installation more acceptable to property owners. He stated that, in his opinion, the fact that governmental entities are also being assessed is not pertinent.

Roger Schmoldt stated that, according to his observations, there is more pedestrian traffic on East Tenth Street and Sales Street than there is on Memorial Drive. To his knowledge, nobody on his side of the street is in favor of the project. He added that he feels he is being charged twice, since he also pays county and school taxes.

Brad Hinner, 1001 Memorial Drive, asked if it is possible that he would be charged 100% if, at some future date, sidewalk is installed on his side of the street. Alderman Lokemoen speculated that it would again be a 50/50 split on the charges, but he could not say for sure. Alderman Lokemoen then suggested that, at some point, the ordinance could be changed to clarify that a property owner could not be charged 50% for one side and 100% for the opposite side.

City Administrator Johnson reported that from his experience in other municipalities, the cost of sidewalk installation was typically split evenly between the residents on both sides of the street, regardless of the side of the street on which sidewalk was installed.

Alderman Sukow stated that, although the project areas are not in his district, he wants to err on the side of pedestrian safety when considering sidewalk installation.

Motion (Schwartzman/Lupton) to close the public hearing. Carried.

Alderman Lokemoen stated that he is in favor of eventual sidewalk installation on all streets. He hopes the Common Council shares that opinion.

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Motion (Lokemoen/Lupton) to approve the 2015 sidewalk maintenance program, plus a proposed project to extend sidewalk on the west side of Memorial Drive, from East Sixth Street to north of East Tenth Street. Carried.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion (Schwartzman/Lokemoen) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:23 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

William N. Heideman, CMC, WCMC
City Clerk