

CITY OF STEVENS POINT

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS MEETING

August 12, 2024 - 6:04 PM

Community Room
933 Michigan Avenue, Stevens Point, WI

MINUTES

Roll Call

- PRESENT** Chairperson Mayor Wiza, Chris Tiffany, Ald. Keymer, Ald. Kneebone, Ald. Shuda, Ald. Buse, Ald. Morrow.
- OTHERS PRESENT** **Directors:** Scott Beduhn - Public Works, Dan Kremer - Parks and Recreation and Joel Lemke - Public Utilities and Transportation.
City Staff: Attorney Beveridge, C/T Corey Ladick, Deputy C/T & Finance Manager Carrie Freeberg.
Alderspersons: Marc Christianson - District 1, Jacqui Guthrie - District 2, Lara Broderick - District 4, Allison Birr - District 5, Dale Steinmetz - District 6 and Sam Lang - District 9.
Others Present: Jeff Wiesman - Wood Street Rental at 2240 Wood St., Scott Plaski - Dave's Body Shop at 825 Park St., Wayne Bushman - Park St. Property, Caleb Herrin - Wisconsin DOT, Felix Grutzik - Mini Tractor Enterprises, Nicolas Proulx - Pixelle and Justin Hoagland - Baker Tilly.

Informational

1. **Director's Report**
 - a. **2024 Street Improvements Project (Northside)**
 - b. **West River Drive**
 - c. **West Zinda Bridge**

Director Beduhn gave a brief update on the highlighted items in his report.

No action was taken on this informational item.

Discussion and Possible Action

2. To accept the ordinance amendments in Chapter 9, Section 9.05 as it relates to parking.

Chris Tiffany **moved**, Ald. Morrow **seconded**, to accept the Ordinance Amendments in Chapter 9, Section 9.05 as written.

Call for the Vote: Ayes: **All**

Nays: **None**; Motion **Carried**

3. To award the 2024 Pavement Maintenance Program Project #24-04 to Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, LLC out of Plover for an amount not to exceed \$281,744.25.

Ald. Morrow **moved**, Ald. Keymer **seconded**, to award the 2024 Pavement Maintenance Program Project #24-04 to Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, LLC out of Plover in an amount not to exceed \$281,744.25.

Call for the Vote: Ayes: **All**

Nays: **None**; Motion **Carried**

4. To consider a request from WisDOT and OCR to eliminate the Park Street Railroad Crossing.

Director Beduhn introduced Caleb Herrin, the regional railroad coordinator with the Wisconsin DOT who came to talk about the program and give us a background on how they identified this crossing.

Caleb Herrin added that he works closely with the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads (OCR) and handles anything railroad-related for the north-central region. He explained that they go through each municipality every year to see if there is any potential for safety improvement measures. One of the most common measures is to go through the crossing elimination program to identify crossings with safety issues. He said that Park Street has been on the radar since 2017 when there was a semi vs. train crash due to how the road is angled across the tracks, leaving enough room for a semi to fit through the gates.

Mayor Wiza asked why, to which Caleb said to eliminate one less crossing and one less potential incident.

Mayor Wiza then asked why not just change the gate arrangement so they couldn't fit through the gate at the angle to which Caleb replied that is a potential option. However, a four-quadrant gate system typically doesn't go on a two-lane city street, and on top of that, any signal cost is usually 100% up to the municipality or the state.

Ald. Keymer asked how long the City has to consider this and how common it is for a

city to have three crossings this close together, to which Caleb said there isn't a time for it as long as negotiations or conversations are being had. He said that the three close crossings are one of the reasons they have the cross-elimination program.

Nicolas Proulx of Pixelle pointed out that that is their truck route with 20 to 30 semis per day going along that route to the back side of the mill. He asked what the proposed solution is to keep their trucks coming, to which Director Beduhn stated that at the moment, that has not been decided. He added that if the board and the council agree to move forward with this, we would pursue different options.

Sam Lang, District 9 Alderperson reported that this is in his district, and agrees that this is not a good railroad crossing for safety. Still, he expressed concerns about re-routing all the truck traffic through residential areas.

Jeff Wiesman of Wood Street Rental reiterated Pixelle and Sam Lang's concerns regarding how the truck route could be changed or what the alternative to changing this route would be.

Scott Plaski spoke on behalf of Dave's Body Shop asked what would happen to the stretch of road if the route were to change, to which Caleb said that was discussed. The preliminary way that stuck out to them is that Park Street would stay curved around to Prairie Street and the other side of the tracks, the asphalt would be obliterated from the railroad's right-of-way back onto the body shop property and have some barrier or signage reminding traffic that it's not a through route. Caleb stated that the two entities would have to discuss what would happen with the body shop parking lot and the City's right-of-way. Scott Plaski voiced his concerns over how the deliveries that the body shop gets would work. Scott also pointed out that Wisconsin Street used to be a truck route and there were many issues with that, which is why it no longer is a truck route. He added that he doesn't see any other good alternative to the route.

Felix Grutzik of Mini Tractor Enterprises added another issue with the existing truck route is the blind intersection at Park Street and Water Street due to the building on Water Street that butts up to the sidewalk. He would like to see a more visioned intersection for truck traffic. He suggested dropping the speed limit on Water Street.

Director Lemke stated that from the Public Utilities perspective, they don't have any issues with closing this because they have alternate routes. However, he pointed out that when the City petitioned for the quiet zone, we put a considerable amount of money into making changes required to make that intersection meet those requirements according to their design. So, if there is a design issue, we have already participated and spent a lot of money meeting those requirements. He feels this is either the railroad or the WisDOT issue that needs to be resolved.

Caleb pointed out that it is a possibility that if this is viewed later by OCR and some agreement can't be made, OCR can take this to their review process and force it to be shut down, which in this case, would also make the City burden the whole cost of it, and

we wouldn't get any of the incentive money that is listed in the closure process document to which Mayor Wiza responded with disbelief and added that the railroad has been one of the most uncooperative entities the City has ever dealt with long before he was Mayor.

Ald. Morrow **moved** not to consider their request at this time, **seconded** by Ald. Shuda.

Ald. Morrow asked what our plan B was if they were to shut down the gate, to which Mayor Wiza responded that if OCR or WisDOT were to come back with an alternative, we would have to consider it at that time. Caleb corrected that any alternative would come from OCR, not WisDOT, and said he would relay our information to them.

Ald. Buse asked if we have the ability to keep the conversation about cost at a high level as far as potential reimbursement if we're forced to move forward with the closure, to which Caleb explained that that is the reason why he is here as a coordinator because if reimbursement were to take place, it would come from WisDOT office and not OCR.

Mayor Wiza suggested that Caleb take our concerns to OCR and if they choose to make additional requests, we could look into investing staff time into looking further into it at that time.

Call for the Vote: Ayes: **All**

Nays: **None**; Motion **Carried**

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:44 p.m.