

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 16, 2012 at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Randy Backous
 Councilmember David Elvig
 Councilmember Colin McGlone

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
 Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
 Human Resources Manager Colleen Lasher
 City Clerk Jo Ann Thieling
 Interim Engineer Shane Nelson
 Mayor Bob Ramsey
 Councilmember Jeff Wise
 Development Manager Darren Lazan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Backous called the regular meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

There was none.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Elvig, seconded by Councilmember McGlone, to approve the agenda, as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Backous, Councilmembers Elvig, and McGlone.
Voting No: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Councilmember Elvig, seconded by Councilmember McGlone, to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2012 Public Works Meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Backous, Councilmembers Elvig, and McGlone.
Voting No: None.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.01: Review Bids for Snow Removal at Parking Ramp and Municipal Center

Public Works Superintendent Riemer reviewed the staff report. He reported that in September 2012, staff sent out a request for quotes for contracted snow removal services for the parking ramp and the municipal campus. Staff contacted 33 contractors on our bidder list to make them aware of the bid. Of those 33 contractors, seven picked up bid information; however, only two actually submitted quotes. The successful bidder would be responsible for all snow removal for the ramp, the municipal campus surface lots, and all sidewalks in the adjacent areas. The sidewalks included the segments leading into the rail station as well. The contractor would be responsible for application of de-icing materials for those areas. Mr. Riemer continued that the contract required a yearly lump sum for these services, with separate bids for the ramp and municipal center. The contract would run from November 2 through April 15, with a one-half inch snowfall to be the trigger point for service. He noted that if the snow event happened during business hours, staff would provide minimal service until the close of business. Mr. Riemer informed the Committee that the quotes received were as follows: On Call Sweeping Inc. bid \$29,000 for the parking ramp and \$20,000 for the Municipal Center for a total of \$49,000. Complete Grounds Maintenance bid \$32,700 for the parking ramp plus \$16,850 for the Municipal Center for a total of \$49,500. He presented some statistics regarding snowfall/snow removal beginning with 1998. From 1998 through the 2011-2012 seasons, there were 93 full-scale plowing events. The lowest snowfall was the 2002 – 2003 season with three events. The highest snowfall was 2010 – 2011 – with 16 events. Using 1998 to present, the yearly average was eight events. Mr. Riemer also presented statistics related to minor plowing events (sanding, minor snow falls, etc.). The lowest was six events in 2011-2012 and the highest was 29 for the 2001 – 2002 season. The average was 17 minor plowing events. Mr. Riemer estimated that the staff costs for snow removal at \$3,696.07 per event. The case cover sheet and attachments detailed how Mr. Riemer arrived at that amount. He suggested that with the building of the apartment complex, snow drifting into the parking structure should be minimal. He expressed concern that with the contract quotes coming in at \$49,000 and \$49,500, that's more than the City's snow removal budget would allow. However, if the two could be split - we could use the most help for the Municipal Campus versus the ramp.

City Administrator Ulrich stated he would like to “throw in a pitch” for taking the low bid. It would help significantly to have staff relieved of that snow removal duty and he was in support of what Mr. Riemer is saying.

Councilmember McGlone stated he has always been most critical of any snow removal that City staff does. He feels it is never up to standard and added he feels he is an expert on snow removal as he has done it every year since he was 17 years old. He recommended trying out a contractor, at least for the municipal piece. He continued that some issues came up last week about perception – and he feels that Ramsey has perception issues. This case “screams” it to us. We contact 33 contractors ourselves and put it in the newspaper twice and we only have two contractors bid on it. He reported that his contractors tell him they do not like bidding a project in Ramsey because it seems only certain contractors get the bid or staff really doesn't have any intention of awarding the bid anyway. Councilmember McGlone stated that he contacted the

low bidder for this case and talked with him about how he came up with his numbers. He (McGlone) suggested that with the numbers received from the contractor, it would appear that we could have snow removal done for about half the cost of staff. He added that when we bid these things out, we need to make it easier for the bidder to understand exactly what we are looking for.

Jeff Miller, On Call Sweeping, talked about the snow removal at the Municipal Center being mostly sidewalks. He stated that he was told to include the apartment sidewalks as well which may explain why his bid for that portion was a little higher than the other bid. He suggested that one of the reasons the City may not have received many bids is because the first thing it stated in the request for quote was the need for an articulated loader. He suggested that was an unnecessary piece of equipment and he felt that would discourage a lot of bidders.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer explained that was put in there because if a contractor wanted to use it in the bid – they could. It was not stated that it was mandatory for the bid.

Chairperson Backous asked for clarification on the bid for ½ inch of snowfall and the 2-inch snowfall on the road, which Public Works Superintendent Riemer provided. The ½ inch is for sidewalks – to keep ice clear and safe for walking. The policy for snow removal on the roads has been when there is two-inch accumulation.

Mr. Miller agreed you are always trying to get ice off the sidewalks.

Chairperson Backous stated he would remove the parking ramp contract because it is not an issue and thinks the decision would be based on the municipal center bids. He noted the parking ramp will be heavily used by Flaherty & Collins and asked what is its fair share of the cost.

Development Manager Lazan explained the snowplowing costs are allocated through the Parking Use Maintenance Agreement (PUMA) so Flaherty & Collins will absorb 3/8ths of that cost beginning this year even if they are not open. He indicated staff will follow up on that issue.

Councilmember McGlone asked if the other contract bid 500 feet of sidewalk.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer answered in the affirmative.

Chairperson Backous agreed the bid process can be flawed but without a solid argument why it is not accurate, he would have to support the low bid of \$16,850 from Complete Grounds Maintenance versus the \$20,000 bid from On Call Sweeping, Inc.

Councilmember Elvig asked if the City has history with either bidder.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated On Call Maintenance has done abatement work (mowing) for the City.

Councilmember Elvig asked whether Complete Grounds Maintenance had provided an insurance bond.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer answered in the affirmative.

Councilmember Elvig noted the staff recommendation had been changed to contract plowing for the Municipal Center and in-house plowing for the parking ramp.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated that is correct and indicated staff could use help around the Municipal Center since staffing was down one-half of a position. He stated he did not think the parking ramp would be a big issue, noting the first floor will have the most snow and last year they did not plow the top floor.

Councilmember Elvig agreed and pointed out the City does not know what to ask for with the parking ramp because there is not much history. He stated some contractors may not bid because it is for a city and a low-bid situation. In addition, an articulated loader is in the bid and that may have been an issue.

Motion by Councilmember Elvig, seconded by Chairperson Backous, to recommend that the City Council approve the \$16,850 bid for snow removal service with Complete Grounds Maintenance for the Municipal Center and use City staff and equipment for snow removal service at the parking ramp for the 2012-2013 snow season.

Further discussion: Councilmember McGlone asked for an estimate for one full-time equivalent (FTE). City Administrator Ulrich estimated \$65-70,000. Councilmember McGlone noted the subcontractor would provide labor, materials, vehicles, fuel, and insurance for \$16,850, which is far less than the City's cost for one employee. He felt in this particular case, it is clear that an employee is not cheaper than going with a subcontractor. Chairperson Backous concurred.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Backous, Councilmembers Elvig, and McGlone. Voting No: None.

5.02: Resident Concern – 167th Avenue (IP 08-27)

Interim Engineer Nelson reviewed the staff report and resident complaint that the top soil brought in by the City contained rocks, glass, and other debris. He stated the edge between the resident's lawn and the City's project was noticeable and while walking the site he did see a piece of glass and broken pieces of asphalt. Interim Engineer Nelson noted the City has previously attempted to resolve this issue but the residents feel they have not received what had been promised with this project. Interim Engineer Nelson stated he does not have all of the history on this issue and it is a policy decision of the Council to make. He presented the quotes submitted by Mack and Shayle Domiguez, noting the low quote for removal of top soil and installing black dirt totaled \$10,540.

Councilmember Elvig stated his road project had similar problems this past year so he "feels the pain" of the Dominquez family. He explained the City had poor policy and has taken action to remedy these issues. He asked about the private contractor that had been sent out to correct the issues.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated that was done after the fact.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated the City supplied the dirt the first time and brought it on site but did not grade the dirt to restore the properties.

Councilmember Elvig asked if another contractor was hired to do landscape work, indicating he does not remember approving that work to be done.

Councilmember McGlone stated he is also not aware of giving that direction.

Councilmember Elvig stated he is not in favor of hiring an outside contractor and wants the City's staff or the project contractor to remedy the issue.

Chairperson Backous stated the problem was the dirt supplied to the project, not the contractor.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated that is correct.

Chairperson Backous asked if the quotes appear to be high.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated the quotes are higher unit prices than the City pays on a road project. He presented the costs and indicated that given the small size of the project, he found the quotes are probably not too far off.

Shayle Dominquez, 7046 – 166th Avenue, stated this has been a four-year-long process. She explained the first dirt they put down contained a mesh, that gets stuck in their tractor, and planted clover. Ms. Dominquez stated they had purchased a lot of black dirt that the contractor dug up and brought back poor fill. She stated she had been in contact with former City Engineer Himmer during the entire process and Mr. Himmer had sent someone out who found a bucket full of glass. There are also large slates of rock, pieces of wood and asphalt, and green mesh. Ms. Dominquez stated when the new soil was brought in, it created a yard full of sand burrs. They had watered the grass and trees but the City was supposed to be watering the front yard once or twice a week. That did not occur.

Chairperson Backous asked how often the City watered the front yard.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated he has no knowledge of the watering schedule.

Councilmember Elvig asked who handles this issue.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated it is under Engineering since it is related to a project.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated Public Works brought the dirt to the site.

Councilmember Elvig noted there is no recourse with the contractor and advocated for the City to clean up its mess since it had not properly managed the project or supervised the contractor.

He suggested the Public Works Department clean the soil and develop a watering schedule for next spring.

City Administrator Ulrich asked about the extent of this issue in this neighborhood.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated it is confined to this property because most people used sod. He noted sod was also offered to Dominquez.

Ms. Dominquez stated they opted for seed because they do not have an irrigation system and have the biggest yard in the neighborhood. They also wanted the new yard area to better blend into their existing yard.

Mack Dominquez, 7046 – 166th Avenue, stated the area is 300 feet in width and 65 feet in depth so it is a large yard to water if sodded. He stated his neighbors had received \$400 watering bills for their City-sized lots to maintain the sod. Mr. Dominquez indicated they have been told by the two contractors that the soil was bad so the sod would not root well and rain would wash away the sand and expose the underlying Class V.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer asked when watering the grass would be considered no longer a City responsibility.

Mr. Dominquez clarified they did water the grass and had asked for grass seed because it is easier to establish and takes less watering than to establish sod.

Chairperson Backous noted the City's policy is sod to avoid this same situation.

Mr. Dominquez stated they are offering a compromise to get it cleaned up and better than the current situation.

Councilmember McGlone noted the area disturbed, 300 feet by 80 feet, seems like a large area.

Councilmember Elvig stated it used to be the road area.

Councilmember McGlone raised the option of leaving the soil and putting down a base of better soil, noting it will keep costs down. He stated if a depth of new base is put down, it should prevent the debris items from coming to the top and would also not disturb tree roots.

Ms. Dominquez stated the trees were planted on the boulevard to appease them and make it look better.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer pointed out that six inches of top soil could not be placed at an even depth and would have to be tapered toward the curb.

Chairperson Backous suggested the City install sod because it is now a cooler season and if well watered it will not dry out.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer agreed that it would be faster to establish with sod but asked at that point would the residents take over responsibility.

Ms. Dominquez stated they had planned to put in an irrigation system after the project.

Councilmember Elvig suggested an agreement be drafted to outline when the City starts and stops watering so all know the expectations. He stated if more top soil is put down, it would have to be cut down (tapered) back to the curb.

Chairperson Backous asked if it should be tilled prior to laying sod.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer answered in the affirmative.

Chairperson Backous stated if using sod it could be done in several weeks and would eventually blend with the rest of their lawn.

Mr. Dominquez stated with the last soil, the rain revealed large-sized boulders and when the City tried to till it, the green fiber got entangled in the tiller after one pass and they had to quit.

Chairperson Backous stated he could not support an expenditure of \$12,000 on this item.

Councilmember McGlone stated that is why he was suggesting to place additional top soil, taper the edges at the curb, and install sod on top. He stated it will look great from day one and the issue will be over.

Councilmember Elvig stated the term “easiest and cheapest” sounds like a poor use of words, noting the cost of sod will not be the cheapest but would bind the soils and be the best alternative.

Councilmember McGlone concurred and noted this is the best time of year to lay sod. He pointed out the City has expended money over and over on this issue and he thinks his suggestion will remedy the situation.

Mr. Dominquez stated he would like the City to remove an inch or two of existing soil to get out the weeds and then come in with new top soil and sod.

Councilmember McGlone stated a bucket can be used on the skid to pick up rocks and top soil in the same pass. He stated he would support taking that extra step in the procedure to remove the weeds and some of the rocks.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated it is already mid-October and needs to go before the City Council for approval.

City Administrator Ulrich stated this case can be placed on the Council agenda for next Tuesday.

Councilmember McGlone stated some planning will be needed and suggested approval contingent upon Council approval.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer agreed that staff will need time to order locates.

Motion by Councilmember Elvig, seconded by Councilmember McGlone, to recommend that the City Council direct Public Works to develop a plan to remove some rock and top coat, add sufficient top soil, and supply and install sod this fall, and to draft an agreement for a watering plan into the frost with the property owner then taking over responsibility.

Further discussion: Chairperson Backous asked if staff is available to complete this work during the fall season. Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated staff time will be tight because of tree planting that is already underway. City Administrator Ulrich stated the City does not have adequate staff available and suggested two quotes be obtained for this work. Mr. Dominquez stated that was tried twice with the original contractor but they ended the contract. With the second contractor, they were given the option of sod or seed and indicated if the seed did not take the contractor would remove the seed and put down sod, which was part of their \$6,000 contingency. Councilmember McGlone stated that is a problem the City will have to resolve on a different tract. He stated the City can "police" the contractor to assure it is done right. Chairperson Backous agreed and noted the City does not have enough staff to complete the work this fall. He asked Mr. or Ms. Dominquez to call if they don't think the project is going right. Mr. Dominquez asked if the project can be cleaned this fall and the sod laid in the spring. Councilmember McGlone stated he would then recommend nothing be done until the spring because that will be more cost effective. He stated he worked on another project where Sauter & Sons provided the dirt and that city tested the soil and demanded Sauter & Sons remove it. City Administrator Ulrich noted one of the quotes is \$10,540 and suggested staff obtain quotes to Harley-rig out the rocks and put down several inches of top soil with the cost not to exceed \$10,540. Interim Engineer Nelson clarified that \$10,540 bid is only for earth work and does not include sod or seed. He felt it may cost closer to \$15,000.

Councilmember Elvig withdrew his motion and Councilmember McGlone withdrew his second to the motion.

Councilmember McGlone noted if bid this fall for spring work it may result in a better price.

The consensus of the Public Works Committee was to direct staff to explore options and obtain two bids for raking out soil, adding top soil, and installing sod with the work to be completed by May 1, 2013.

Mr. Dominquez stated that would be acceptable.

Ms. Dominquez explained that people on work release were used to clean their yard, which was of concern to them because they both work in the law enforcement field.

Chairperson Backous stated the City Administrator will review the appropriateness of that procedure for residential yards.

5.03: Sunwood Drive Project – Completion of Signal System, Irrigation System and Sidewalks

Interim Engineer Nelson reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember McGlone asked why it was not known there is a 12 week lead on mast arms for the signal system.

City Administrator Ulrich stated he does not know about this particular situation, but there was a similar situation with the rail station. In that case, they were in the design process of the electronic components and did not have all the specifications needed for the cabinet.

Councilmember McGlone stated he walked the sidewalk today and it seems reasonable to get them installed.

Chairperson Backous noted there is not much choice with regard to the mast arms for the signal system.

Councilmember Elvig stated there are many checkpoints and certifications with this type of project. He stated he wants the project to keep moving forward and suggested negotiating a date by which it has to be completed.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated North Pine Aggregate is asking for an extension of time and staff is recommending a firm date so it is reasonable and the project does not drag on.

Councilmember Elvig recommended staff also get the contractor's signature on the completion date.

Councilmember McGlone asked if the sod will be installed on the boulevard this fall and if so, who will be watering it.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated the sod will be installed this fall and a maintenance period will be specified during which the contractor will be responsible for watering. He stated he will verify the timing of that maintenance.

Motion by Councilmember McGlone, seconded by Chairperson Backous, to recommend that the City Council approve the requested extension of time to December 31, 2012, or 10 days after delivery of mast arm, for completion of the signal system with the understanding that the work will be completed as soon as possible after receiving the components and an extension of time to May 15, 2013, for completion of the irrigation system and the sidewalk, if necessary, for City Project 12-20, Sunwood Drive Project, with the contractor signing the written agreement.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Backous, Councilmembers McGlone, and Elvig.
Voting No: None.

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT

6.01: Consider Boulevard Maintenance Options on Dysprosium Street

Public Works Superintendent Riemer reviewed the staff report.

Chairperson Backous suggested staff ask property owners to remove garbage cans from the street, noting that has been asked previously.

Councilmember McGlone suggested also asking Ace Solid Waste.

Councilmember Elvig asked if the trees are guaranteed.

Public Works Supervisor Riemer stated the contractor watered the trees for 30 days and there is a maintenance agreement for one year.

Councilmember McGlone stated he talked with Allen Young, Mid-America, who thanked the City for everything it has done with the project and reported his tenants were happy with the access maintained during the project. Mr. Young had also indicated they were satisfied with the sight lines but had received tenant calls about vibrations from the project.

Interim Engineer Nelson stated he had communicated with Mr. Young via e-mail and telephone.

Councilmember Elvig stated vibration from tamping equipment with another project had damaged his building. He suggested that issue be addressed during a project.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Elvig, seconded by Councilmember McGlone, to adjourn the Public Works meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Grant Riemer
Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Carla Wirth, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*