

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

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 19, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Chris Riley
 Councilmember Debra Musgrove
 Councilmember Matt Woestehoff

Also Present: City Engineer Bruce Westby
 Public Works Streets Supervisor Shane Turner

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. CITIZEN INPUT

Jim Myslicki, 16811 Zirconium St., expressed concern with the condition of 167th Avenue NW between TH 47 and CR 5. He commented that people are often driving on the shoulder of the road to avoid potholes. He stated that he has not seen any activity from the patching crew on that road, although he has seen patching on other roads in the area. He commented that there is a lot of traffic on this section of roadway and wanted to know if there would be patching. He recognized that there is a resurfacing of the roadway potentially scheduled for 2023. He commented that something needs to be done before that time. He commented that there is not even a center line painted on the roadway, which is a concern. He stated that he has been a resident of Ramsey for 36 years and his taxes continue to increase but the road conditions continue to deteriorate.

Chairperson Riley confirmed that the segment of road is scheduled for reconstruction in 2023.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that the road will be completely reconstructed in 2023 and staff is also reviewing the potential pedestrian elements.

Chairperson Riley commented that while there are several steps for approval, the road will be reconstructed in 2023.

City Engineer Westby commented that staff is attempting to address deep potholes, even on roads scheduled for reconstruction in future years. He recognized that staff is behind on that activity.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner commented that he will review the condition and if he needs to get someone out there sooner than scheduled, he will do so. He confirmed that the road is in poor condition, and he does have a work order for patching.

Mr. Myslicki asked if the patch crew goes out every day or whether they operate on a complaint basis.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner explained that his patch crew is the same crew that handles other duties such as street sweeping, tree trimming, stormwater duties, and signs. He commented that the crew only has four employees, and they are spread thin between all the necessary duties.

Chairperson Riley asked how the work orders are prioritized.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner confirmed that the volume of complaints and traffic level of the road are taken into consideration.

City Engineer Westby stated that staff is currently conducting interviews to add two additional public works employees that would work on the streets. He commented that there is not a City policy on the center line and the City also does not have a paint sprayer.

Mr. Myslicki commented that there are yellow tabs used for temporary purposes and perhaps those could be used but noted that his priority would be for the patching to occur.

Dan Ridgeway, 15410 Argon Street NW, commented that he has been in contact with the Mayor since February or March of this year. He stated that they would like something done as his home has been flooded out twice. He noted that when they purchased their home they were not aware there were issues with flooding and provided details on the first flooding experience. He stated that he reached out early this year in attempt to remedy this before winter comes around again. He stated that he is unaware what the yard looked like before he moved to the property and prior to the septic system being replaced. He stated that his property is graded in a manner that causes water to flood in through the sliding door when the snow is melting.

Mrs. Ridgeway commented that there is a river that goes through their yard.

Mr. Ridgeway provided details on the path the drainage takes to reach the holding area/pond on a neighboring property. He commented that the neighbor behind their property has a holding tank that fills up and eventually drains on the other side through the culvert.

Chairperson Riley commented that the Ridgeway property is a low point in the area.

Mrs. Ridgeway commented that the sandbags the City provided is the only thing that has saved their house.

Mr. Ridgeway provided photographs of the flooding. He also provided photos of the culvert and expressed concern with the safety of children.

Mrs. Ridgeway stated that they also experience problems when there are heavy rain events.

Chairperson Riley asked what would happen if the culvert were removed.

City Engineer Westby replied that the culverts are needed to direct stormwater runoff under streets and driveways to the proper areas for drainage and storage, and to prevent flooding of properties.

Mr. Ridgeway commented that the culvert needs to be replaced. He stated that the water on his property needs to be channeled away from his home.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the Ridgeways replaced the septic system.

Mr. Ridgeway replied that the septic system was replaced prior to their purchase of the home.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that typically a drain field cannot be in the same location as the last and therefore that would lead him to believe the septic was previously located in a different location.

Mr. Ridgeway noted that the previous owners apparently experienced flooding, but they had not been told that or they would not have purchased the home.

Chairperson Riley noted that would be a separate real estate issue. He commented that he can see that the property as a whole is at a lower elevation. He noted that staff will provide an update on this item later on the agenda.

City Engineer Westby stated that although staff often reviews the conditions of culverts under driveways, it would be the responsibility of the property owner to replace the culvert under a driveway if needed. He confirmed that he did speak with Mr. Ridgeway to provide an update on the discussion that occurred from the previous meeting.

Chairperson Riley asked what the Ridgeways would want.

Mr. Ridgeway stated that he would like fencing installed at the end of the culvert to ensure a child could not get sucked into that.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that the harder question would be what else Mr. Ridgeway would want. He asked how that would be most effectively done.

Mr. Ridgeway stated that the idea of an easement was previously discussed, and they would agree with that option. He stated that they just do not want to be flooded again and would like something to happen before winter.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that other than calling the police, he would wonder if there was a reason the residents reached out to the City.

Mrs. Ridgeway replied that they called 911 because they had been bailing water for more than an hour. She noted that they were unsure of what to do.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he does not disagree with anything that has been said but asked if there is an expectation that the City should assist with funding this, noting that this is a problem that is occurring on private property.

Mr. Ridgeway commented that he believes the City is responsible as a permit was provided for the new septic system that changed the contour of the yard. He stated that there would also be an inspection after the job was completed.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the Ridgeways would find liability with the previous property owners, as it was mentioned that they experienced flooding as well.

Mrs. Ridgeway stated that they have no idea why the new septic system was installed, and they never met the previous owners.

Chairperson Riley stated that perhaps older system was failing and noted that a home cannot be sold with a failing septic system.

Mr. Ridgeway commented that they are at the lowest elevation which causes their property to receive the most water. He stated that the water needs to be channeled in the yard, so it stays away from their home.

Chairperson Riley stated that the Committee could reconsider that on a future agenda.

City Engineer Westby stated that staff revisited the site after the June meeting. He noted that there are multiple issues that exist in that general area and staff does not want to grade a deeper swale with a larger culvert and push more water to create a problem for downstream property owners. He stated that they need to have a topographic survey of the properties along the drainage line in order to build a stormwater model to determine what would happen if a deeper swale were created. He noted that another property owner in the area has stated that water comes within six to eight feet of his home in the spring and therefore staff does not want to push this issue onto other properties and cause flooding of those homes in return. He noted that the survey work would have a cost of \$2,000 to \$3,500. He noted that staff would need that information in order to complete a good analysis.

Mr. Ridgeway commented that he had no idea the water reached that high on the other neighbor's property.

Chairperson Riley commented that perhaps a retaining wall would help to keep water from going into the sliding door. He noted that perhaps taking out the sliding door would also be an option.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she appreciates looking at the big picture to ensure that solving this problem does not create additional problems. She asked if the survey would assist with any future road construction projects in that area as well.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that the City should find other value in the data as well.

Chairperson Riley asked if there is a policy related to culverts.

City Engineer Westby replied that the City mainly operates on a complaint basis. He asked if flared ends have been installed on other culverts.

Public Works Street Supervisor Turner replied that they have not.

Chairperson Riley commented that the culvert has been in place since the 1970s.

City Engineer Westby commented that there is some brick debris at the downstream end of the culvert, which sprays water around as it exits the culvert.

Chairperson Riley stated that perhaps staff can go visit the site to review the culvert. He thanked the residents for their input.

City Engineer Westby stated that if the Committee would like to provide direction, he has received a verbal quote that the survey work could be done in the next two to three weeks with a cost of \$2,000 to \$3,500.

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Woestehoff, to authorize staff to move forward with a topographical study as discussed.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Musgrove and Woestehoff.
Voting No: None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Woestehoff, to approve the agenda, as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Musgrove and Woestehoff.
Voting No: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve June 21, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Woestehoff, to approve the following minutes:

Regular Meeting Minutes dated June 21, 2022

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Musgrove and Woestehoff.
Voting No: None.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.01: Review Updated Costs to Construct Sedimentation Basin Improvements at Sunfish Lake

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report and recommendation from staff to leave the existing swale as is and not construct a sedimentation basin. Everything is working well as is and the private property owner has not contacted staff since the last Committee meeting when this was discussed. If the private property owner requested this work to be completed, staff would recommend that the property owner be required to pay for the requested work since it solely benefits the use of their property. However, the City could consider contributing an amount commensurate with the estimated long-term savings associated with maintaining a settling basin next to a public street versus maintaining a linear drainage swale along the rear of a private property with access only via drainage easements. Based on a 50-year maintenance schedule, this cost is estimated at \$2,000 as the City would dredge and restore the turf in the swale every 25 years on average.

Chairperson Riley commented that this is not along the back property line, but through the backyard as the homeowner has property beyond the swale.

City Engineer Westby replied that there is a berm behind the swale that the property owners wanted access to.

Chairperson Riley commented that in dry years the property owner was able to mow the swale area and have use of it, but in wet years the back of the property was not accessible. He commented that this flows across their property. He asked for details on the wetland credits.

City Engineer Westby identified the area that is wetland, which comes up to the edge of the property. He commented that according to the aerial image, the property line is at the back of the swale and therefore if the property owner were using the upland area, that is not their private property.

Chairperson Riley commented that would change his opinion and explained that is not how the discussion was framed when this was previously discussed in the past.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the swale is fully inside of the easement.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that the swale is within the 20-foot easement.

Chairperson Riley commented that if anything of this nature were going to be approved, he would think the City would be allowing the activity and the grading and filling of the swale would be at the expense of the property owner. He commented that his previous understanding was not the same as what the map is showing. He believed that the property owner had additional land beyond the swale, which is why he felt that this needed to be discussed but if the map is correct, he does not feel the same.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he does not have an appetite for this type of improvement project.

Chairperson Riley commented that in dry years the swale can be mowed and used as yard, but in wet years, it would not be the same.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that sometimes when residents have concerns with property lines, a survey is required to show the exact lines. He asked if the City has the ability to obtain the survey from the County to know where the property line is.

City Engineer Westby replied that City staff would not have that information, a surveyor would need to perform that duty. He noted that typically there are pins at the corners of the property, but staff does not go out to perform that duty. He stated that it is pretty clear that the swale is at the property line.

Chairperson Riley asked if the property owner would agree that is where the property line is, as he did not recall that from the past discussions.

City Engineer Westby replied that he also recalls that the homeowner had stated that they used the upland area in the past but was unsure if the homeowner believed it to be their property. He stated that he could reach out to the property owner if desired.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that knowing where the property line is would help to guide her decision.

Chairperson Riley agreed that he would find that information helpful.

City Engineer Westby replied that he could reach out to the property owner to determine if they would be comfortable with staff going on the property in attempt to locate those property line pins.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there would be potential grants the homeowner could attempt to obtain for the project if it were to move forward.

City Engineer Westby replied that the project would replace one sediment removal process with another and therefore was unsure that would improve water quality. He noted that he could reach out to the Anoka Conservation District (ACD) to ask if there would be any grant opportunities.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that this seems like an instance where the homeowner is not aware of where the property line is. He noted that the homeowner could have assumed the upland past the swale was theirs when it does not appear to be their property and therefore may change their perspective.

City Engineer Westby commented that staff will follow up with the property owner to verify the location of the property line and then have a discussion with the property owner about whether they still want to pursue the sedimentation pond project.

5.02: Consider Recommendation to City Council to Temporarily Increase Funding for Pavement Management Program and Street Maintenance Budget

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report and recommendation of staff to temporarily increase annual PMP funding to mitigate unmet street reconstruction bubble needs, to minimize annual maintenance costs, and to minimize the term of the increased funding as much as practical to reduce impacts to the street maintenance budget including equipment and material costs, professional services, and staffing. However, as annual PMP funding amounts increase, so will impacts to engineering costs including engineering staff and professional services. Staff recommends increasing the street maintenance budget by \$750,000 to allow an estimated 19 miles of streets to be spray patched while PMP projects in the 2022-2031 CIP are completed, and as streets constructed between 1975 and 1985 having PASER ratings of 4 or less that are not included in the 2022-2031 CIP can be reconstructed.

Chairperson Riley commented that the roads are in the worst shape they have been and in discussions with staff it seems that spray patching helps to delay the deterioration of the roads. He stated that all this work needs to be done as soon as possible and acknowledged that the budget is one issue as is staffing and equipment. He asked if there were a budget for it, could the spray patching be done in two years through contracted services. He also asked if it would be more economical to purchase the equipment necessary to do spray patching.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner replied that he could reach out to the contractor to determine if that would be feasible.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked the realistic extension of life that spray patching provides.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner replied that realistically the spray patching provides another five years, which is a band-aid to help the City through this bubble it is in.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted the mention of completing this in two years but stated that perhaps it is done over five years and then perhaps that helps to stagger the needed overlay improvements.

City Engineer Westby stated even if a street is spray patched, areas of the street that were not patched will continue to decay and require patching over time.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked the right amount of spray patching per year and whether a set amount should be budgeted each year for spray patching until it is no longer needed.

City Engineer Westby stated that staff could reach out to contractors to develop some options and recommendations that could come back next month. He noted that those discussions could also occur during the budget work sessions.

Chairperson Riley asked the type of work being done on Xkimo near Alpine.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner stated that staff is attempting to use some different applications on that segment and provided additional details. He stated that they are using the new asphalt float, beginning last week, and it helps to shorten the days and the physical burden on staff.

City Engineer Westby reviewed a recent complaint received and provided photos of the surface stripping that is occurring.

Public Works Supervisory Turner provided details on how the asphalt float works. He commented that there are so many calls from residents that it feels like they are not making progress.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the recommended \$750,000 over ten years would be on top of the annual street maintenance budget.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that would be in addition to those funds used for cracksealing and pavement rejuvenation improvements. He agreed that staff would also recommend increasing the annual budget for cracksealing and pavement rejuvenations.

Councilmember Musgrove asked and received confirmation that the \$750,000 could be spread over five or ten years.

Chairperson Riley commented that there is a need right now and would encourage that occurring much faster. He asked and received confirmation from staff that after that initial need is addressed, the annual budget for cracksealing and spray patching should be one line item with a budget of \$500,000.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed that she supports that concept and would also like to see the 19 miles, with the estimated cost of \$750,000, addressed as soon as possible.

City Engineer Westby stated that staff can reach out to contractors to determine how much could feasibly be done in the next one to three years.

Chairperson Riley asked if something could be done this year.

City Engineer Westby stated that staff would ask that question.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that if staff reaches out to three contractors that all state they could do a certain number of miles, perhaps all three contractors could be used.

Chairperson Riley commented that it seems everyone is in agreement that the streets are a priority and need a solution.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner provided a comparison of the street work that was done eight years ago when he started at Ramsey versus today. He stated they used to spend two weeks each spring patching streets, several weeks each summer as needed, then two weeks each fall patching before winter. Now they receive multiple complaints every day and could patch potholes all day, every day of the year, but can't due to other duties so roads are getting worse each year.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that perhaps the pavement management and street maintenance funds could stay in their accounts if not spent at the end of the year.

Chairperson Riley commented that he was fairly confident that the funds were being spent, and if they were not in any given year, they were spent the next year.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed that it would be nice to have dedicated funds used for pavement management and street maintenance.

Chairperson Riley moved the discussion towards street reconstruction needs and funding.

City Engineer Westby stated that during the budget discussion, staff would need to hear that the available ARPA funds, above what is needed for police, would be used for the streets in order to move forward on development of plans for PMP projects not already programmed for 2022.

Chairperson Riley commented that it would seem the only question for police funding is related to the vehicle cameras and that decision should be made at the next budget worksession in order for staff to move forward on the road plans. He commented that the City clearly does not have enough money budgeted for what needs to be done. He asked the feasibility that staff would be able to complete more road projects if the funding were increased in future years.

City Engineer Westby commented on the additional work that would place on Engineering staff and the number of projects they could develop plans for and manage construction on in one year. He stated that potentially they might be able to complete all plan preparation in-house but could use consultants, if needed, depending on funds available.

Streets Supervisor Turner provided details on potential impacts to street maintenance work.

Chairperson Riley commented that he could see the benefit in bonding once in order to get ahead but would not want to consistently bond as it would seem better to just place it on the tax roll at that time.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he likes the idea of saying there is \$5,000,000 to get done as many miles as they can, noting that he would not be opposed to using outside consultants if they could move forward and if the cost would not be that much higher. He stated that while he does not like bonding, it would be a tool to help them get outside of the bubble.

City Engineer Westby stated that in his opinion, if they are funding \$4,000,000 or less per year, staff could most likely do that in house if those staff members can focus on just those tasks. He stated that anything above that would potentially require outside assistance.

Public Works Street Supervisor Turner stated that eight years ago he was using two employees per day and now he is using all available staff to address patching. He stated that he would ideally like to get back to using one or two staff for patching, which would mean accomplishing the reconstructs as quickly as possible.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that there would be benefit in bringing in the Finance Director for guidance, noting that perhaps it would make sense to bond for \$20,000,000 and do half the city in three years.

Chairperson Riley confirmed the consensus of the Committee to consult the Finance Director to gain input on whether bonding to frontload these improvements would be a possibility, recognizing that outside consultants would need to be utilized.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he would like to see franchise fees put on the ballot this year for residents to provide input. He recognized that may be the unpopular opinion but noted that there would be benefit in doing a short-term franchise fee to get through the bubble and recognize the growth of residential homes that are paying minimal property taxes.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that the need is a huge amount and therefore would prefer to use bonding.

City Engineer Westby confirmed that the Committee is suggesting an amount over and above what is currently allocated on an annual basis.

Chairperson Riley commented that people are right to complain about the condition of the roads.

City Engineer Westby stated that the intent is to follow up with discussions during the budget worksessions, rather than waiting another month to talk about this again.

Chairperson Riley referenced the reclaim light option and noted that if staff believes that is a suitable option for some roads, he would support that, but he would not want to choose that option if it is not the right fit for the road.

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT

6.01: Receive Update on Available Funding Assistance for Basement Waterproofing

City Engineer Westby provided an update to the Committee on available funding sources to assist property owners with wet basements to fund waterproofing projects. Staff is seeking direction on whether a webpage should be added to the City's website to make this and other associated information available to the public.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that if the information is placed on the website perhaps that would be helpful rather than having residents call into City staff.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that his only concern would be an implied responsibility of the City. He stated that in most cases, a wet basement is not the responsibility of the City and therefore may prefer the route where staff provides the information if someone calls in.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she has concern with providing the information in a list.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that this would be a good task for a new communications staff member in order to craft the message in a manner that does not imply City responsibility.

Chairperson Riley commented that it is a great resource, and the information could be made available if residents call.

6.02: Receive Updates on Improvement Projects, Studies and Items of Interest

City Engineer Westby provided updates on improvement projects, studies and items of interest and the Committee provided input.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that it seems there is no good solution for the Argon Street problem with water. He asked if there is enough space to place a retention pond in the yard.

Chairperson Riley encouraged staff to be creative. He stated that yard is a bowl, so that land would drain into the lower level of that home regardless. He stated that if the sandbags are helping, it would seem that a retaining wall could help, or perhaps that sliding door could be taken out.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if an easement would require some type of purchase of property.

City Engineer Westby replied that whenever runoff from City streets is directed through yards the City generally wants an easement. He commented that there are many situations where water was directed through yards prior to incorporation of the City in 1974. He stated that staff will try to be creative in looking at options. He agreed that if the sandbags are working, perhaps they could mound up the ground in that area. He stated the City did not create the issue, it inherited it.

Chairperson Riley stated that if the septic system is the issue perhaps moving that would be the solution.

City Engineer Westby stated that staff will bring back a list of options.

Chairperson Riley asked if there are any culvert improvements the City needs to consider.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner replied that there are hundreds of other culverts of that nature in the community. It was noted that there would be more liability to the City in placing a barrier on one culvert and not the other 299. He commented that he has zero trash guards in stock that could be placed. He noted that there are safety issues with guards as well. He did not recommend installing guards, noting that if there is that much water moving through a guard it could pin the child and they could drown.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for an update on the TH 47 sound wall.

City Engineer Westby provided an update.

6.03: Review Future Topics Calendar

Councilmember Musgrove relayed a complaint she received from a resident regarding vehicle speeds on 151st Lane.

Public Works Streets Supervisor Turner replied that he would place the speed trailer on 151st.

Chairperson Riley noted a sign on the median at the tracks on Alpine that needs to be repaired.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Woestehoff, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to adjourn the Public Works Committee meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Westby
City Engineer / Interim Public Works Director

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.