



CITY OF FREEPORT

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November 30, 2021 – Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Freeport City Council was convened at 7:00 pm by Mayor Mike Eveslage, and council members Nick Arnzen, Sarah Blake, Tim Hennen, and Jake Renneker.

Staff in attendance: Interim Clerk-Treasurer Joan Wall, Public Works Director Loren Goebel, Fire Chief Andy Grieve, City Attorney Scott Dymoke, and City Engineer Dave Blommel.

Others in attendance:

Carol Moorman (Star Post)
Mike & Jean Renneker (525 1st Ave N)
Ken & Cherylle Duerr (336 8th St SE)
Branden Roering (Freeport Fire Dept)
Gerry Meyer (330 8th St SE)

Gary & Linda Pierskalla (324 8th St SE)
Jason Saulsbury (316 8th St SE)
Dan Austing (320 8th St SE)
Bud Heidgerken (316 2nd Ave NE)
Fritz Hoeschen (324 7th St SE)

Approve Agenda

Hennen moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Renneker. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Forum

No comments.

Public Hearing on 7th Street SE & 8th Street SE Improvements

Mike Eveslage opened the hearing & turned it over to Dave Blommel. Blommel gave an overview of the proposed improvements for 7th Street SE & 8th Street SE. Both streets were last improved 40 years ago. 8th Street has aged, and the 7th Street roadway has failed, including underneath the road. 7th Street is worse probably because of the traffic difference vs 8th Street.

The proposal includes a full reclamation and overlay for 7th Street, which will add four additional inches of roadway height. It will have an improved subgrade and will bring the existing 5-ton road up to a 9-ton road. Drain tile will be installed to control water.

The proposal includes a mill and overlay for 8th Street. This will get water to the curb & gutter faster, and the road will be even with curb. This improvement has a 10-15 year expected life.

The estimated total cost of the improvements is \$286,000. The City's policy calls for assessing two-thirds of the cost of improvements to affected property owners based on front footage. Blommel believes property owners should see an increase in their property value. The amount would be assessed over 10 years at the City's borrowing interest rate + 1% beginning in 2023.

Blommel opened the floor for questions:

- Jason Saulsbury asked if 7th Street would be widened. Blommel replied, a little, but not a lot. Saulsbury mentioned that he couldn't get to his house one night because of parking for a concert.
- Gary Pierskalla asked when the project would go out for bids. Blommel said February or March of 2022, with the hope of having the project done by July 4.
- Gerry Meyer asked if we were doing anything with storm sewers on 8th Street. Blommel explained that we would definitely be looking at the area near the community center from 7th Street toward 8th Street and we will also look at the rest. Meyer explained the water backs up during a heavy rain up to a foot high coming from the community center. Blommel said we do have plans to address that.
- Eveslage noted that 7th Street deteriorated way worse than expected during the last year.

Public Hearing on 6th Street NW Vacation

Scott Dymoke explained that notices went out to affected property owners and notice was also posted and published. This road has never been improved or used. At the last meeting it was explained that at the west end of the road the land conditions are such that the road wouldn't ever be useful and there are no utilities under the road. Council thought it had already been vacated in the past. Eveslage asked Blommel if there was any reason for the City to use it for an access point for a future development? Given the wetlands, Blommel doesn't see a scenario where we would be allowed to put a road back there.

Public Hearing on Nuisance Properties

Dymoke explained the nuisance is located at 313 2nd Ave NW and proper notice was given about the hearing. He referred us to pages 32-36 of the agenda packet and showed that the City contacted the property owners and took pictures during the summer. Tonight, Council was given fresh pictures taken today showing no significant improvement. Council can decide to take further action, including court action. If the City ends up cleaning the property, it would be assessed to property taxes.

Eveslage remarked that it's unfortunate that it's come down to this. We have heard from neighbors that this needs to be remedied. Arnzen noted that road work has been done long enough that this could have been remedied by now.

Consent Agenda

Hennen moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Blake. Motion carried 5-0.

Reports

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Eveslage moved to accept Wyatt Kemper's resignation effective 12/6/21, seconded by Arnzen. Motion carried 5-0. Eveslage thanked Wall for taking on the responsibility of the Clerk-Treasurer duties again. He recommended that Wall's pay should go up to at least what she was making as Clerk-Treasurer and proposed increasing it more because she took a pay freeze due to COVID in April 2020.

Council is good with being closed on Fridays and being flexible for when Joan needs to be out of the office. An increase in pay would be effective until after training a new Clerk-Treasurer and would then be reevaluated. Eveslage proposed increasing Wall's prior Clerk-Treasurer rate of \$24.60 by 2.5%, which would be \$25.22. Hennen moved to increase Wall's pay rate to \$25.22 until a new Clerk-Treasurer is trained, seconded by Renneker. Motion carried 5-0.

Eveslage suggested having special meetings and interviewing in front of the whole council for new a Clerk-Treasurer and the rest of the council agreed. Wall was directed to repost the same ads as earlier this year and leave the position open until filled. Ads will be posted in the Hometown News, Star Post, the City's website and Facebook page, and the League of MN Cities website.

During the discussion of a request for proposal (RFP) for a new garbage contract, it was mentioned that people really appreciated taking the recent storm damage to the lot near Carr's Tree Service. Dymoke explained that the RFP could be given to local companies and that we could post it on the City's website and Facebook. Hennen asked about not including commercial service in the contract so they can get their own garbage hauler. Dymoke said that is how Melrose is. The down side of not including commercial is having several garbage haulers will be harder on the streets.

Wall reported that Santa Day is Friday and they will use City Hall again as usual.

Fire Department Report

Grieve said the fire department is still looking for new members. There were 14 calls in the last month, all medical, 1 mutual aid fire, and some calls for gas leaks. There have been 107 calls during the last year and that is the most we've ever had. The fire department will burn the brush pile when they have time. We are applying for a FEMA grant for battery powered extrication equipment and don't expect to hear back until July.

Public Works Report

Goebel explained that we have a gas monitor that he uses when he goes down manholes and the fire department uses it too. We need a new one because ours has reached the end of its life. Most cost around \$2,000 with a 5-year warranty and are calibrated every 6 months. After five years they cost \$300 per year with a 6-month calibration. It's a forced 6-month calibration because the machine will shut off otherwise. Hennen asked if it would be a cost share between the city & the fire department. Goebel said yes, half and half. Council agreed to the purchase.

Mike Elfering took another position, so we need to hire a part-time maintenance assistant. Branden Roering and Andy Grieve will help this winter if he doesn't have anybody else to help. Mike Renneker may be interested in the position. The question was asked if we need to post the job. Dymoke said we don't have to but it would be a good practice. Dymoke suggested we could post it on the front door of city hall, on the website, and rely on word of mouth. We should put a deadline on it so we can discuss it at the next meeting. Council agreed the applicant will need to have a CDL and will earn the same pay Elfering did: \$12 per hour for mowing, and \$20 per hour for anything else.

Engineer Report

Blommel reported that project work is done for the year and work will be finished in the spring. Everything is paved except what was never paved. It is good for previously unpaved streets to sit unpaved over the winter and then pave in the spring. Blommel considers that the contractors worked very hard in order to try to meet the deadline, so he is good with their fall "finish" date. Hennen moved to approve payment of application #3, seconded by Renneker. Motion carried 5-0.

Blommel explained a few residents said we should finish the roadway from mid-block on 4th Avenue, around the corner, until the mid-point of 3rd Street SE as detailed in his agenda packet memo. Hennen said it would be good to take a look at it in the spring. Blommel said we need to look into what needs to happen about raising the assessments for the three affected parcels. Dymoke said we don't have a final approved

assessment yet, so it could be fair game to add it. Blommel recommends digging it out, not just mill and overlay. We could also add drain tile, which would be beneficial. We could use the City's street fund to help pay for it. Conversations will need to happen with the homeowners so they understand what would happen to their assessments.

Arnzen asked why hydroseeding was done now. Blommel explained it's temporary fix with no seed in it and it will be reworked in the spring. MPCA requires us to do it.

Attorney Report

No additional items.

New Business

Resolution 2021-14 7th Street SE and 8th Street SE Improvements

Eveslage remarked that not much was said at the hearing. It seems like everyone knows it needs to be done. Blommel assumed we would use option 2 for the assessments because it seems fairer. Arnzen moved to approve Resolution 2021-14, seconded by Renneker. Motion carried 5-0.

Resolution 2021-15 Vacating 6th Street NW Formerly Known as Norman Road

Hennen moved to approve Resolution 2021-15, seconded by Blake. Motion carried 4-0, with Renneker abstaining.

Resolution 2021-16 Ordering Abatement of Nuisance Conditions at 313 2nd Avenue NW

Eveslage moved to approve Resolution 2021-16, seconded by Hennen. Motion carried 5-0. Dymoke will get signed copies of the resolution with pictures. He will call the sheriff's office and have them serve it, and make arrangements to serve their lender as well. They will have 30 days from service to clean it up. We will check again before the paperwork is filed with the court. If the property is not cleaned up by then, they will receive notice of the court hearing.

Loren Goebel Performance Review

Eveslage remarked that the streets look awesome and he has received many positive comments from residents. Goebel also didn't get a pay raise because of COVID last year. Renneker hasn't heard any problems, even with the construction going on this year. Hennen said no news is good news. Renneker moved to give Goebel a 2.5% pay raise, seconded by Eveslage. Goebel said he was hoping to go to \$25.50, which is a raise of 8.5%. Council discussion: Blake agrees that it could be higher, like 3%. Arnzen suggested 3.5% and said he thought the project went very well due to Goebel's work. Arnzen amends the motion to raise Goebel's wage by 3%. There was no second, so the amendment dies. Arnzen amends the motion to raise Goebel's wage by 3.5%, seconded by Hennen. Roll call: Arnzen – yes, Hennen – yes, Eveslage – no, Renneker – yes, Blake – yes. Motion carried 4-1.

Miscellaneous

Blommel said he just realized the pay application amount in his memo is different than the attachment. Council approved the pay report in the attachment, so there's no issue – just wanted Council to know.

Eveslage asked if Joann Timp still makes the same amount for her cleaning services. Wall reported that Timp is paid \$18 per hour for 2 hours per week and that hourly rate has been in place since 2015. Eveslage requested to add this item to the next meeting's agenda.

Eveslage asked if anybody would object to changing meetings from Tuesday to Wednesday nights. That doesn't work for Blommel and Blake.

Adjourn

At 8:54 pm Arnzen moved to adjourn, seconded by Blake. Motion carried 5-0.



Mayor, Mike Eveslage



Interim Clerk-Treasurer, Joan Wall