

STREETS, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS MEETING MINUTES

April 11, 2022

In Attendance: **Vermilion City Council:** *Monica Stark, President of Council; Steve Herron, Council At Large, Pat Stein, Ward One; Teresa Mayle, Ward Two; Greg Drew, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five*

Administration: *Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Chris Hartung, Police Chief; Tony Valerius, Service Director*

Call to Order: Steve Herron, Chairman, RESOLVED THAT this Health & Safety Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: 2022 Streets Program

S. Herron said last month council asked the city engineer to do a condition rating of the roads selected and then he would come up with an approximate cost estimate on the distance the road council chooses. He said C. Howard did prepare a pavement condition rating and estimated construction cost spreadsheet showing the proposed method of repair, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein as part of the official record.

C. Howard reviewed the streets from the five wards. He said the pavement condition rating (PCR) is a numerical rating of pavement distresses on a scale of 0 to 100, based on visual inspection. He said Pineview Drive scored the worst (25.5 PCR). He provided an estimated construction cost for each roadway, including the approximate length of each street, and the proposed method of repair. He explained that Berkley Road (Overlook to Claremont) could probably be resurfaced with base repairs.

P. Stein asked the finance director how much money is allocated for street repairs for 2022. A. Hendricks said at this point, none of the listed projects are in the budget estimates for this year. She only included the ones that carried over from the year before that were related to state funding allocations.

B. Brady asked what the difference is between the pavement resurfacing, base repair, and the reconstruction – reconstruction is tearing the whole street out? C. Howard said this is correct. B. Brady said it is not the mill and fill. C. Howard said resurfacing is more mill and fill and they need to do the base repairs in the areas that need it. He explained that reconstruction is a complete replacement as the road is beyond the point of doing anything that

is beneficial in the long term. B. Brady asked what kind of longevity they can expect with mill and fill. C. Howard said with mill and fill you'll get like 10 years out of it, but with replacement you'll get more as long as you maintain it. For example, with previous projects they have done in Valley View, they have done concrete, so he did a price for asphalt replacement and a price for concrete replacement. B. Brady said it doesn't cost that much to upgrade to concrete. C. Howard said they are seeing increased asphalt prices because they are petroleum based. B. Brady said what he gave council is a little deceiving because of the length. She said Berkley is so much longer than any other street, so if they look at a per foot cost it is hugely different. C. Howard said it is a starting point.

T. Mayle addressed Nicholson and noted it is not a very big road, so would it be worth taking a look at this to see if they can get it fixed since the potholes are really bad. C. Howard said they can look at this if council wishes.

Mayor Forthofer said these five streets are being reconsidered for reconstruction or rehabilitation, but with the case of Nicholson, he wasn't sure if the gentleman that spoke last week wanted it to be a perfect road. He simply wants it graded and filled, so they don't drive off the road. Perhaps this could fit into a maintenance and repair budget. S. Herron agreed. B. Holmes agreed as well and he thinks they have a good relationship with the contractor that is helping the city out, and in some areas where they will receive asphalt grindings, then this would certainly help this road this summer.

B. Holmes addressed Highbridge Road and the small section of Brownhelm Station to Vermilion Road and he didn't think they should wait too long. With the upcoming construction of Sunnyside and Vermilion Road, he thinks Highbridge and Brownhelm is going to take the brunt of it, and they will be left with a Nicholson Road if they don't hop on this sooner than later.

B. Brady said the city has a few streets like Nicholson – they have Woodside and Lansing that are stub streets, so if they do something like they're talking about on Nicholson, then maybe they can take a few horrible streets that they don't need to pave to make them drivable because there are residents living on these streets.

Mayor Forthofer asked how much money the city has available. A. Hendricks said in the Street M&R budget they have a little over \$113,000 over and above what they budgeted in the standing operating for the year. The Road Levy (200) has about \$1,650,000 available, but the Urban Paving Contract that was awarded at the last meeting exceeded what they had estimated by \$192,000, so this is down to just under \$1.5 million. Also, permissive use has \$377,000 available for the current year.

M. Stark asked the finance director that if council would choose a road like Highbridge that is almost \$900,000, would they be able to move a little bit in the streets and move it over to M&R to do some of the work on Nicholson. A. Hendricks said the auditor's will not allow the city to transfer but she can split the costs between those two funds to pay the bill. M. Stark said they could in fact get Highbridge Road done and then Nicholson for repair. A. Hendricks asked council to not consider spending every penny this year with their costs, but technically this is the monies that are available for projects.

C. Howard said council may want to consider when applying for OPWC projects, that maybe they should apply for three streets. They had discussed Hollyview, but maybe they can add Highbridge and another street. At least the city may get some grant money. The money would not be available until next year, but it is something they may want to consider because with the prices right now and the supply chain, if they really want to do it, then they're going to pay more, so it may be better to wait. S. Herron asked if the grant money looks at the pavement condition rating. C. Howard said it is a part of it along with daily traffic, and other benefitting users.

B. Brady said if the city engineer gave council these numbers a year ago, would they be significantly lower. Have those costs dramatically gone up? C. Howard said it is a volatile market and they are seeing a lot of numbers, and they are coming in pretty high. B. Brady asked if these increased costs are based on labor or materials. C. Howard said materials and trucking is a big thing right now.

Grant Turner of 4035 Brownhelm Station Road said his family moved to Vermilion last year from Amherst and when his wife's friend knew they were moving, her first comment without seeing the house was, "Oh my, that's a pretty rough road". So, he thinks they have had a problem on Brownhelm Station Road for a long time. He lives at the corner of Brownhelm Station and Highbridge Road and stated these are unacceptable conditions. If you go east on Highbridge off Vermilion Road, the road is caving in. When he goes to his driveway, he has to go to the left of the road because it doesn't exist. When he hears there is no funding this year and these roads aren't going to be fixed, then why and where is the money going. They lived in Amherst for 22 years and the taxes were high (about \$5,000 a year), but they fixed and maintained their roads. He loves living in Vermilion, but the roads are deplorable and an embarrassment. He challenged all of council to drive Brownhelm Station in the next few weeks. He said the Biden administration had this legislation for roads and bridges, so how does this filter down to Vermilion where they can fix their roads. Is Vermilion a place where they receive government funding from the feds to help fix this road. There is development close by and there is a brand-new house being built across the

street and they're not out in the boondocks – they are two minutes from Liberty, and they are close to the main street. He said it is high time the city did something there. The 25-mph speed limit from Highbridge Road over the bridge is a speed trap and he can understand it from the Pit Restaurant where it is residential and going up over the bridge, but over the bridge is really rural and there is a police officer sitting and hiding there who is pulling people over for going 30-35 mph, and he thinks this is disgusting and the fines and court costs are probably over \$100. He said it is very hard to go 25 mph anywhere and he thinks this should be addressed.

Mayor Forthofer clarified that Mr. Turner indicated there was no money, but there is money. A. Hendricks said there is \$1.5 million in the road levy itself and then another half million between the two other funds is after a number of other streets that have been already budgeted for this year. She said they include the Urban Paving Project and the Woodlands entrance. Mayor Forthofer explained that council is trying to see which of these nominated streets will fit inside the \$1.7 million dollar budget.

G. Drew asked if it was possible for Frederick Drive and Gardiner where they connect, and for Gardiner and Dorothy Avenue where they connect – these are the two worst spots. Are they throwing good money after bad if they cut these sections out at least and replace these two sections? C. Howard said it is a complete replacement – the condition is bad, and it needs to be widened a little bit. G. Drew asked if it is feasible to cut these two sections out. C. Howard said if you're going to do it, then you should do it right because you'll never go back and do it again. G. Drew asked if there were temporary repairs that could fix these two spots without ripping it out if there is not enough money to get this on the list. C. Howard said it would be a temporary band-aid fix and it will not last long. He said the drainage is an issue there too.

C. Howard noted there is a 20 percent contingency built into the construction costs because you assume the worst case when preparing estimates. Once it is finalized, it has a 10 percent contingency built in.

B. Holmes said council should all agree that the administration should go out for the grants if they haven't already. M. Stark asked the city engineer which street he would recommend for the grant. C. Howard said with the larger state funding, they are asking for more of an arterial road and these are all private streets in subdivisions, with the exception of Berkley and Highbridge, which are higher traffic roads. He thought they could at least get funding through OPWC to get something. He said Portage and Frederick would never get funding because it is based on how many people are being serviced.

Lee Howley of Portage Drive thanked council for considering Portage and the deliberation of streets. He said the city has done a good job of patching their chuck holes as needed. He thought it may help with giving a little history on Portage as it has no engineered base. They have been patching it for many years and in the past, the Portage residents have contributed with the city to help pave because there was no other option. The city was in worse shape then, as it is now. He said it is their time because they have been patching this road for so long and it is an embarrassment as other roads are. They would like some serious consideration for help from the city. This winter has been really tough with the chuck holes. Given their history with willing to help over the last 20 years and contributing to help pave the road when needed, then he would hope they would be up for consideration soon. They support all the help they get from the city.

S. Herron said they can make application for grants and then they can see where they are for funding for these projects. He said the voters put them here to get something done, so do they pick out a project with the available money they have talked about, and then authorize the city to go out to bid. His personal preference is to pick one of these streets and ask the administration to go out to bid and get it done. He would prefer Pineview because it is the worst, and in looking at the costs, he would then suggest Highbridge due to its poor condition. All of these streets are in bad shape, and he totally understands the whole situation is difficult. They will never be able to make a decision that will please everybody.

P. Stein asked if the grants are matching grants. C. Howard said OPWC is based on a dollar amount; usually for the roads they get about \$275,000 in grant funds, but the city may have to spend \$600,000 or \$700,000 to get the \$275,000. It depends on how much the city is asking for in the total cost of the project. It is not a matching grant.

G. Drew said his opinion is that they may be able to get some grant money for Highbridge and Berkley, so this leaves them with Portage, Frederick/Gardiner/Dorothy, and then Pineview. He thought they should lean toward projects in Wards One and Two and getting the most bang for their buck. They may be a little over one million, and they'll get four to six streets done. These are streets that have been neglected for 20+ years.

M. Stark asked what the timeline is for the OPWC grant. C. Howard said the grant application is made in September and the money isn't available till next July.

P. Stein said she did an estimate per footage and understands this isn't really accurate, but it looks like Portage and Frederick are the least expensive ones per foot to do, so they would be getting a lot of streets done. They're not

exactly thoroughfares, but as the summer progresses, Portage becomes very busy.

S. Herron said the finance director had concerns if they would spend and use up so much of the available monies this year. A. Hendricks said she worries about where some of the inflation is going and the impact on other areas of the street department budget, for example, increased costs in equipment and fuel on a day-to-day basis. They also experienced a significant increase in health insurance costs this year. She understands this is very frustrating for everyone, but it may be a time where they look at some additional revenue sources that could be used and dedicated to streets. The permissive use tax which is a tax that is paid when you register your car each year – if the city passes legislation and submits it to the state by July 1, then beginning in 2023 they could get by adding the last \$5.00 per vehicle – this would generate about \$60,000 a year, which that in itself doesn't sound like much, but it would allow the city to borrow almost \$1.2 million. This is more meaningful as to what this could provide the city. The state fuel tax is up conservatively – about \$265,000 a year, which could give the city over five million dollars in borrowing. The concern with this one is that she would probably be more comfortable in waiting until after the election in November because there are candidates who are advocating a rollback on the fuel tax that was implemented in 2019, and she wants to make sure this doesn't happen, especially before committing to that revenue source and then have it taken away. Also, they still have a half percent of forgiveness that could be part of any type of financing of any capital project.

G. Drew said if they proceeded with projects in Wards One and Two and the numbers came in as what was proposed, it still leaves \$700,000+. He asked the finance director how she felt with having this much left. A. Hendricks said she would be comfortable with this. S. Herron said the projects in Wards One and Two add up to about \$1.3 million. G. Drew said maybe the bids will come back less. A. Hendricks said the local share for Vermilion Road next year is approximately \$310,000, so she feels they will still be able to get this done next year. B. Holmes asked what year Sunnyside is slated for. C. Howard said 2024. B. Holmes asked if they would use Highbridge Road to travel when they do Vermilion Road or will they stay off that section of Highbridge. C. Howard said the posted detour route is not what everybody uses unfortunately. Usually, the state pushes everybody onto Route 2. T. Valerius said the section of Vermilion Road next year will be to the south, so they will get off Route 2 to Jerusalem and will head south. B. Holmes said his concern is with these roads taking the beating during construction, which has caused the demise of the road recently. He pushed for Highbridge first and then Pineview.

B. Brady asked how the debt service is as far as roads because obviously the interest rates will be going up. A. Hendricks said if they are going to increase the debt service, the city doesn't have anything retiring quickly, so they will need to have a revenue source or cut something that is already happening as far as your budget to borrow money and to support that debt service. This was her primary reason for mentioning a couple of areas where they could raise some money and increase the borrowing.

T. Mayle said if they are going to look at the conditions of the road, shouldn't they be figuring out which roads are the worse, because Portage has the second highest rating as far as the pavement condition compared to the other streets. If council is looking at doing Portage and Frederick/Gardiner/Dorothy in Ward Two, there are still two other streets according to the number. She asked if this is an accurate evaluation as to the worst streets. S. Herron said Pineview is the worst and T. Mayle said next would-be Berkley, so they are going to bypass these streets that are in detrimental condition according to the pavement condition rating and consider doing two streets that are not quite that bad. S. Herron said it's a possibility, but sooner or later they will need to do something or nothing, but he feels they should do something because they represent people. He still felt they should start with Pineview, but he completely understood where Councilman Drew was coming from because if they can knock out two of these wards, then that is a lot of work. T. Mayle said there are still streets that are bad. S. Herron agrees as a lot of people travel on Highbridge. B. Brady said grant money may cover some of these other streets. B. Holmes said his concern with the grant money is that Highbridge and Brownhelm never has enough traffic as the state keeps throwing that back into their face.

S. Herron MOVED: M. Stark seconded to authorize the administration to go out to bid on Pineview with an estimated construction cost of \$1,235,348.00 for pavement reconstruction with asphalt pavement. Discussion: B. Brady said it's tough because they have spent a lot of money in this ward only because the streets are so bad, but they have really let other wards not get money because of those streets. G. Drew said this has been his argument with Ward Two for a long time. He said if you pull up google map images of that road – 15 years ago it looks the same, but it's worst now and the residents feel like they're being neglected. He said it's the same thing with the railroad crossing – that crossing did not get the Quiet Zone – how come? They are throwing all their money downtown. B. Brady felt they needed to spread it a little more evenly. S. Herron said the residents feel the same way on Pineview. C. Howard said the motion isn't to go out to bid, but to prepare plans as the first step, then once the plans are in they can review them and go out to bid. Roll Call Vote 2 YEAS (Herron, Stark); 5 NAYS (Stein, Brady, Drew, Mayle, Holmes). **MOTION FAILED.**

G. Drew MOVED; P. Stein seconded to authorize the administration to prepare plans for Portage Drive, Frederick, Gardiner, and Dorothy. Discussion: T. Mayle said what if they do Highbridge because it sounds like it is a major concern and it's only a little bit more roughly than Ward One. B. Holmes said he would second that. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS (Stein, Brady, Drew, Herron, Stark); 2 NAYS (Mayle, Holmes). **MOTION CARRIED.**

TOPIC TWO: Sherod Park Playground

M. Weisenberger said a year and a half ago the Parks Board started to look at all the playgrounds within the community and established a playground committee. In the last year or so Grace United Methodist Church approached them with a generous donation of \$225,000 to address a need they see for families to be able to have a place to play together in the community. With this in mind, it brought this project to the forefront. There is a need at Sherod park as the existing playground has outlived it's 30 years. They want to put in a playground that will meet the needs of the whole community and will encourage people of all ages and abilities to be able to utilize that playground. He said he provided council with a packet describing the playground project along with pictures.

Over the last few months, he has been working with three different playground companies and they collected three proposals utilizing the same parameters and the same \$225,000 equipment budget. He provided council with the proposals of which he reviewed with council. He said they are looking at two different types of surface material – one would be the traditional engineered-wood fiber, which is mulch, but one of the new trends is not only to make it ADA accessible, but to be inclusive. They would like to incorporate the rubber surfacing, which is significantly more than the mulch, but it has a longer lifespan. With the three budget areas combined, the company that came in with the best design and the most played value, they feel they can comfortably select Snider Recreation out of North Royalton, Ohio. They are a distributor for Burke Playground equipment. The three companies they looked at as far as quality is comparable in regard to the manufacturing and materials used. He said they also want to offer adventure play for the older kids and something multi-generational, which is a playground that is comfortable for not only the kids, but for their parents and grandparents. He said they identified \$380,000 for this project and the playground committee is committed to raising the balance, which is \$70,000. He said some of the funding would go towards site improvements such as basic grading, drain tile, and parking lot improvements.

T. Valerius said they are looking for a motion from council to have legislation prepared to award the contract to Snider Recreation.

B. Brady asked if all the money is coming out of the parks board budget (capital) – nothing is coming out of the general fund? T. Valerius said it is coming out of the parks board budget, but there are significant donations as well. B. Brady asked how this leaves their remaining available funds as far as the other parks along with maintenance. A. Hendricks said the maintenance in the first few years should be very little, and then it would be if they needed to work on their surfaces or rebuild their bases, which can get costly, but the plan should hold up. M. Weisenberger said the rubber material needs sealer every three or four years. B. Brady said she is worried about the rest of the parks since they are putting this much into one park. She doesn't want to see the other parks suffer because the budget is depleted. A. Hendricks said the big capital expenditure is donation based, so it really is just ongoing maintenance. M. Weisenberger said over the last several years they have been able to accumulate some funds knowing they have this project and the Main Street project coming forward.

B. Holmes said the rubber matting helps the longevity of the playground and lowers the cost of bringing in other material every year. P. Stein said the rubber material is a lot cleaner.

M. Stark MOVED; S. Herron seconded to have legislation prepared to award the contract to Snider Recreation for the new playground at Sherod Park. Discussion: G. Drew said this is a great project. S. Herron thanked Grace United Methodist Church for their generous donation. Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

S. Herron adjourned the meeting after no further business came before the committee.

Next Meeting: May 9, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m. at the Vermilion Municipal Court Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio