



Minutes
Committee of the Whole

The Committee of the Whole met on **Thursday, September 26, 2013** at **5:30 pm** at **City Hall, Council Chambers, 30 West Central Street, Chippewa Falls, WI.**

Council Members present: Rob Kiefer, Amy Mason, Jane Lardahl, Bill Hicks, and George Adrian. Absent were Mike Hanke and Chuck Hull.

Others Present: Mayor Greg Hoffman, Finance Manager/Treasurer Lynne Bauer, Director of Public Works/City Engineer/Utilities Manager Rick Rubenzer, Street & Utility Maintenance Manager Rick Ruf, Water Supervisor Rory Olson, Wastewater Supervisor George Hobbs, Mechanic Nick Pieper, and City Clerk Bridget Givens.

The meeting was called to order at 5:48 pm by Council President, Bill Hicks.

Item #1. **Tour the City Water Utility Building.**

The Committee met at the City Water Utility Building located at 1100 W River Street. Water Supervisor, Rory Olson, conducted a tour of the building. Following the tour, discussion was had by the Committee regarding the possibility of combining the Water Utility and Street Departments so they are under one roof, and selling the Water Utility Building.

Item #2. **Tour the Street Department Maintenance Facility.**

The Committee then proceeded to the Street Department Maintenance Facility located at 5 Riverside Drive. Street & Utility Maintenance Manager, Rick Ruf, led the tour and advised of the general condition of buildings, their current use, and anticipated life cycle.

Item #3: **Discuss the Space Needs Analysis Report done by River Valley Architects, Inc. Possible recommendation(s) to Council.**

The Committee returned to the City Hall Council Chambers, 30 W Central Street, to discuss the Space Needs Analysis Report. The primary question raised by members of the Committee was why we would want to combine the departments under one roof. Councilor Adrian advised it had been discussed in the past to consolidate the Street Department and Parks Department, but it was felt there is more commonality between the Water Utility and Street Department. Mayor Hoffman shared that Street & Utility Maintenance Manager Rick Ruf was hired with the intention he would eventually oversee both the Street and Water Utility Departments – combining would facilitate the process.

Mr. Ruf was questioned if Option A, as presented in the study, was a viable option. Mr. Ruf felt the amount of warm storage needs would be closer to 8,000-10,000 square feet versus 5,000 square feet.

Concern was expressed over the study and the amount of time taken to conduct the study as the phrase “casual observation” was used frequently. Councilor Mason questioned why only one cost estimate was obtained. Mr. Rubenzer explained that the survey was done last fall in anticipation of a quick turnaround to meet budget meeting deadlines.

Further discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of combining. Additional information would be needed before any decisions are made such as a selling price for the Water Utility Facility, any potential costs savings associated with combining, and any cost factors that would need to be considered such as the addition of fiber optics at the Street Department.

Following this discussion, the Committee recommended the following action items be taken:

1. Clerk Givens add a closed session item to the Council Agenda of October 1, 2013 to discuss the potential sale of the Water Utility Building located at 1100 W River Street;
2. Finance Manager/Treasurer Bauer compile an estimate of cost savings to combine the departments; and
3. Director of Public Works/City Engineer/Utilities Manager Rick Rubenzer contact River Valley Architects for an estimate to increase to 8,000-10,000 square feet of warm storage versus 5,000 square feet.

Item #4: Adjournment

Motion by Mason/Lardahl to adjourn at 8:01 pm. All present voting aye, motion carried.

**Minutes submitted by:
Bill Hicks, Council President**