

Public Works Committee Meeting

City Of Virden

City Council Chambers

Thursday, March 20th, 2025

Meeting called to order by Bertolino at 6:19 PM

Aldermen in attendance: Mottershaw, Bertolino, Neighbors, Donley, Mitchell, Boster, Schnetzler and Alderwoman Calloway

Absent: None

Also in attendance: Mayor George Murphy, City Clerk Jon Myint, Director of Operations Gary Etter

Audience: Crystal Creasy

Comments from Audience: Crystal Creasy sent Mayor Murphy an email asking: what are the rules and regulations regarding Solar Panels being placed in yards.

Mayor Murphy responded:

We don't have any regulations on those right now. Only Ameren regulations are controlling them right now. I'm not saying we don't need to have something, but we don't have anything at this point in time.

Bertolino explained that we talked to Craven about that, and we can't stop them due to something that Governor Pritzker signed.

Mayor Murphy added the only time the city could do anything is if it were obstructing the view of the roadway.

Her other question was: If people have boards and other debris around their property that they don't pick up and the wind blows that debris and damages someone's home or automobile who is responsible for the damage? The person who had trash in their yard because they're in violation of the ordinance. Or the city because they're not enforcing the ordinance? Or is the property owner just completely out of the money? Additionally, who's responsibility is it to go around and pick up all the debris that has been blown around?

Mayor Murphy response was, if your neighbors tree falls in your yard or on your house and causes damage, your insurance company has to pay for that unless the tree was rotted. Our ordinances are enforced when there's a complaint.

Crystal said that she had complained many times. She believes debris came from one of the places behind her property. She said that I've had five gallon buckets, coolers hit my car, I've had boards in my backyard and a board hit a window. It's trash, it's just junk but the wind picked it up and took it all over the town. I picked it all up and discarded it. It was all over the block and the OSB is blowing all over also.

Gary Etter confirmed that it was disgusting.

Boster explained that if her car were damaged due to something that had been blown, it would be up to her insurance company to fix the damage.

Mayor Murphy said that it doesn't seem fair but that's the Insurance Lobby.

Crystal said, unfortunately that's what I thought it was but, I understand.

Topics:

1. Approval of minutes (2/19/25 & Special 2/27/25)

Motion made by Boster seconded by Bertolino to approve the minutes of 2/19/25 and Special 2/27/25.

Motion passed with all in favor.

2. Altorfer PM 6 year agreement

Etter and Karen Burgess talked with the contractor and the six year contract can be canceled at any time.

Motion made by Boster seconded by Bertolino to take this issue to the City Council for approval.

Motion passes with all in favor

3. American LED light projected proposal for the whole building (water office to the Community Center)

Chris Chandler of GFCA Energy Solutions LLC gave Etter a project summary cost to replace all the overhead light fixtures with LEDs. The total cost would be \$7,831.12, the project incentive amount would be \$6,631.00. The final cost to the city would be \$1,200.00.

The cost savings to the city is estimated to be about \$129.91 a month.

Motion made by Mottershaw seconded by Boster to take this issue to the City Council for approval at next month's meeting.

Discussion:

How will the old fixtures be disposed of?

How will the old fluorescent bulbs be disposed of?

If a bulb goes out in the new LED fixture, can the bulb be replaced or will the whole fixture need replaced?

Etter will find out and have answers at the next Council meeting.

Etter will have LED lights put on the Agenda under Building and Grounds

Funds are available under Building and Grounds.

Motion Passed with all in favor.

4. New water meters

The housing area needs 28 meters. The Director of Operations recommends buying them from Sensus instead of buying from Badger because if bought from Badger they would have to be replaced when the new water meters are replaced throughout the city. The cost of a meters is \$155.00. The total of the 28 meters is estimated at \$4340.

Tariffs, if any may affect the final cost of the meters.

Public Works will install the 28 meters; the radio part of the meter will be activated at a later date.

Motion made by Boster seconded by Mottertshaw to take this issue to the Council.

Motion passed.

5. Frontier Boring Permit

Frontier updated their Boring Maps and timeline. The new timeline is 04-01-25 thru 06-30-25.

The map and timeline met with the Director of Operations approval.

Motion made by Mottershaw, second by Boster to take this issue to the Council for approval.

Motion passed with all in favor.

6. Vac Truck

During required annual maintenance an unexpected maintenance invoice of \$6,500.00 is going to be received. The Council was ok with it, due to the Vac Truck has saved the city enough money to pay itself off and this something that had to be done to keep the truck in proper working order.

Additionally:

Mayor Murphy expressed his displeasure with the whole appointment and reappointment process of the Virden Sanitation District Council. He discussed his phone conversations that he had with Senator McClure's and Representative Rosenthal's office about the fact that appointments and reappointments for the Sanitary Board come from the attorneys that represent the Board. Stating that sounds like a conflict of interest and is self-serving additionally, why should that be the only way the names are presented?

Mayor Murphy said that he had given the names of three people to McClure and Rosenthal for appointment. He's stated he was told by Rosenthal getting the names from the attorneys is how those papers land on their desk. They are just supposed to approve them. McClure said they don't have the ability to, and know how to, interview candidates for the position. Rosenthal wasn't going to do anything about any changes at all. He said you need to talk to those attorneys, and you give them the names that you want to show. McClure was just fed up with the whole thing. Monday was the last time I talked to him. He was signing off on it and is going to say OK.

Discussion:

The Sanitary District not responding to Virden's contract offer.

What type of is legislation needed to change the 1917 act, so the people of Virden have some say on who gets appointed to the board.

The late bills and billing process from the Sanitary District.

Alderman Mitchell spoke about a tile that had been cut into by a farmer off of Grove St. out by the creek. Josh from the Sanitary District told him that he would go look at it and call Gary Etter.

Crystal brought to light that a light pole had been knocked down at the corner of Dye and Liberty Court some time ago by a storm. The broken pole had been removed (about 18 months ago) but not replaced.

Gary Etter will contact Ameren.

She also asked about a Spring Clean UP. This issue had been discussed and answered at a previous meeting and there has been no new information since the last time she asked.

Motion: made by Boster seconded by Bertolino to adjourn at 7:10 PM.
Consensus passed.

Jonathan J. Myint
City Clerk