

**Regular Public Works Committee Meeting
City Of Virden
City Council Chambers
Thursday June 18th, 2026**

Meeting called to order by Alderman Bertolino at 7:00 PM

Alderspersons in attendance: Bertolino, Carter, Neighbors, Karrick, Donley, Matrisch, Boster and Calloway

Absent: None

Also in attendance: Mayor George Murphy, Director of Operations Gary Etter

Audience: Rick Maguire, Mike Marsaglia, Shelly Wagner, and Debbie Butler

Comments from Audience:

Shelly Wagner spoke on the great job she though the Public Works guys are doing and her feelings that they should get a living wage.

Debbie Butler spoke on her support for the Public Works Department.

Mike Marsaglia inquired about the percentage of raises the Police received and what Teamsters asked for stating that he has been on both sides of a strike.

Mayor Murphy gave a brief explanation on what the Teamsters had asked for and how much the three year contract would cost the city if approved.

Topics:

1. Approval of Minutes 05-21-26

Motion: made by Karrick seconded by Boster to approve Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes of 05-21-26. **Motion:** passed with all in favor

2. Status of insurance claim from storm

Gary Etter inquired as to where the insurance monies from the storm claims will be going. Recommending a line item be established to put those into, to aid in keeping storm related repairs separated.

3. Shut off agreement with VSD

The shut off agreement draft with VSD was reviewed. Major concerns are what the VSD will possibly bill the residents, does the Council need to write a

resolution or ordinance? Mayor Murphy will forward the information to Craven for consultation.

4. Duplex at N Dye

Dickie Lowder requested a sidewalk be installed at the duplexes. He was informed that he would have to get the property surveyed. Lowder inquired if the concrete driveway can go all the way to the street. Garry Etter stated his concerns about the snowplow chipping the driveway and, in the future if any work is to be needed on the drainage tile, and the driveway needs to be cut, the concrete will be replaced with gravel. Dickie Lower will give the project more thought as he may fund the project himself.

5. Air Conditioner Council Chambers

Most of the parts are in, replacement to start on June 29th.

6. Water Conference Sept 9-11

Recommendation made by Karrick seconded by Matrisch to take a motion to the council to allow two Public Works people to attend the Water Conference September 9-11th for cost of \$310. **Recommendation:** passed with all in favor

7. Update on SRTS

Project is waiting for DOT walk around. Several complaints on concrete being left in yards, washout from recent rains and no grass growing. Gary Etter expressed, the final payment is not to be done till the problems are satisfactorily corrected.

8. Update on North End drainage project

Garry Etter reported the project should be completed in the next couple weeks. Additionally there was a water main break and Otter Lake Water Commission had to replace 26 feet of pipe (paid for by the Commission).

9. New light posts outside water department

Light pole bases were rusted out and sent to Girard for repair. Before the repair was completed the bases were mistakenly disposed of. The shop owner replaced the bases and poles at no cost to the city.

10. 15 minute parking sign area

The sign in front of the Community Hall limiting the amount of time for parking was discussed. The consensus was more study into what the sign should say and its location needs to be done.

11. Tornado siren update

Mayor Murphy spoke about two grants he is researching, one from USDA, and one thru IEMA. These are reimbursement grants however, work cannot

start until the grant is awarded (both grants will take some time for approval). With the importance of the siren, the city may have to look at other ways to fund the replacement cost (\$35,000 plus crane service).

12. Any update on water main extension for Clinic/Sav- Mor

The owner had contacted the mayor looking for an address, and was referred to the county. The owner also contacted the Director of Public Works on what materials may be needed for the project. Recent survey and stakes may have been done by DOT.

13. Spraying for mosquitoes procedure

Gary Etter spoke about the procedures and regulation requirements for mosquito/weed spraying. The city must provide a 24 hour notice before spraying. The notice must include chemical names safety data sheets and application schedule. The notice can be posted online for public access. Spraying will start at dusk and not at 6:00 PM as previously done. Spraying will now be done from north to south and east to west instead of scheduling by wards to better accommodate operational efficiency. Gary also spoke about the difficulties of spraying where multiple residents have opted out of the spraying due to beekeeping, herb gardens, and wildlife sanctuaries, which has created challenges in getting coverage. The entire 500 block of Dean St. and parts of Dye street are now excluded from spraying. Spray drifts has always been a major concern. Public works will not spray if the conditions appear to be too windy or rainy or extremely dry. In the event of unsuitable weather conditions a make-up day may be required. The City spends nearly \$10,000 annually on chemicals, and regulatory burdens are increasing.

14. Tree ordinance for Morton tree grant

Mayor Murphy passed out a draft of a Tree ordinance for the Committee to review. **Motion:** made by Boster seconded by Carter to take the Tree ordinance to the July Council meeting for approval. **Motion:** passed with all in favor.

15. Progress of tree inventory

The tree inventory was awarded to Steve Green of Green View Companies. Steve went over the software with Ryan Calloway. The inventory covered the parks and (starting from the south) most of the trees on easements up to Cemetery Road. Steve may be at the July Public Works Committee meeting to do a presentation on the five most hazardous trees, which removal may be covered under the grant.

16. Progress of RFP for tree planting

An RFP for tree planting and maintenance is being finalized and will go to council for approval before bidding.

17. Answers to attorneys questions brought up at police meeting

Q1. How can the city dispose of surplus property (e.g., bicycles and cat cage at the police station)?

A1. The city can sell or dispose of surplus property by ordinance without public bidding, provided a majority of the corporate authorities approve.

Karrick spoke to an individual who expressed an interest in taking all the surplus bicycles: the city may give them away or auction them off.

Q2. What is the deadline on the Judge's order for cleaning up the property at 832 N Springfield St.

A2. The Judge's order does not state a deadline for cleaning up the property at 832 N Springfield St. meaning the city can act whenever feasible.

18. Water shut off regulations (same as topic #3)

Additionally:

Bertolino stated that he met with the owner of the 222 W Hill St property to move some totes for her. She has received a bid for demolition and has since forwarded it to her insurance company. Bertolino will continue to follow up with the owner.

Mayor Murphy had a zoom meeting with Judge Troemper and Craven about the 332 S Springfield St. Mayor Murphy was at the site and also presented photos, and testimony from firefighters confirming severe structural damage. There's a large section of the roof missing, the 1st floor is missing, the stairwell is missing and the basement door is gone, which all damage has left the inside of the house to be exposed to the weather ever since the fire eighteen months ago. Judge Troemper will be granting the city the ability to demolish the property.

Asbestos inspections for three of the four demo houses will start next week. The 332 S Springfield house cannot safely be tested. A letter will be sent to the city stating, when demolishing the house, it is to be treated as if it has asbestos (wet demo). Access to some houses may require a forced entry and there were concerns about possible squatters. Houses include the West Jackson house, 433 S. Springfield, and 337 S Emmett.

A resident has expressed an interest in purchasing the Finis St property from the city. Mayor Murphy will consult Craven on the sale process. The amount the city would be willing to accept is yet to be determined. Gary Etter noted that there is a camper shell on the property and someone may be living in it.

Executive Session:

Motion: made by Bertolino seconded by Karrick to enter into Executive Session at 8:19 pm for Collective negotiating. **Motion:** passed with all in favor.

Motion: made by Carter seconded by Karrick to approve the Public Works Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 05-21-26. **Motion:** passed with all in favor

Motion: made by Calloway seconded by Carter to adjourn at 9:12 pm.

Motion: passed with all in favor.

Jonathan J. Myint
City Clerk

Date Approved: