

Public Works Committee Meeting

City Of Virden

City Council Chambers

Thursday October 16th, 2025

Meeting called to order by Alderman Bertolino at 7:08 pm.

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

Absent: Calloway and Carter

Also in attendance: Mayor George Murphy, City Clerk Jon Myint, and Director of Operations Gary Etter, and Senior Water Clerk Jessica Selhime

Audience: None

Comments from Audience: None

Topics:

1. Approval of Minutes 09-18-25

Motion made by Bertolino seconded by Matrisch to approve Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes of 09-18-25.

Motion passed

2. Water meter Locator

Gary Etter said the present water meter locator (transmitter portion only) is 10 years old, no longer working properly and is not repairable. The cost of a new one is approximately \$2,200.00. He has the money in his budget.

Recommendation made by Bertolino seconded by Matrisch to take to the Council a motion to approve the Director of Public Works the authority to purchase a new Water Meter Locator in the amount of approximately \$2,200.

Recommendation passed

3. Sink hole Rt.4

At the corner of Sav-Mor on Rt 4 there is a sink hole that has become a concern.

An inspection using a camera and a drone has revealed that the clay tile pipe has collapsed just beyond the original repair.

The collapsed pipe appears to be connected to the SavMor's downspout drainage system.

The flat roofs in the area drained through the pipes as there are no external gutters.

The precise extent of the problem underground is unknown; it might require a minor patch but could involve extensive digging near and under the building structure.

Safety risks and potential structural danger to adjacent building basements are concerned if deeper excavation is needed.

Attempts to contact relevant officials and SavMor's representatives have not produced a clear answer or arrangements.

There is a desire for clear, written guidance from authorities (such as the Department of Transportation) as to what is required, and who is responsible.

The building owners (potentially SavMor) should be contacted about the extent and the cause of the problem.

Options discussed included exposing the pipe, patching the section, or more extensive work if needed.

The use of concrete versus asphalt to patch the area is debated, depending on requirements and feasibility.

There will be costs, feasibility, and safety concerns with a larger project, especially if the sidewalks or building foundation is affected.

Further attempts will be made to contact SavMor and relevant building owners before proceeding.

Attempts will continue to get clear instructions, permit requirements and possible aid from DOT.

There may be a possibility of requiring an outside contractor if the problem exceeds the Public Works capacity and resources.

4. IGA with VSD and letter

Due to no representatives from VSD were present, no discussion or action was done.

5. Parking around the City Square

Alderman Boster would like to see a limit of 2 hour parking around the square.

There is a reoccurring problem with some cars and trucks consistently occupying the same parking spots for long periods of time.

There is frustration that these vehicles remain parked during important events like street shows car shows as well as during regular days.

Repeated observation is that the city's parking restrictions specifically 2 hour parking limits are not enforced as a result of vehicles often remain for hours or days on end without any consequences.

The same parking spots coincide with locations where the city displays are set up each year notably for Christmas and events for visitors.

Concerns expressed that parked vehicles distract from public events and photo opportunities, especially when families want to take pictures in front of a display.

It was noted that during previous events the vehicle owners have sometimes had to be contacted to move their vehicles, such as for the car show for Christmas at the library.

Discussion about where local residents especially those living above the businesses such as the Real Estate building are able to park.

Clarification that Hendricks Outlet parking lot is a private property and not available for the public or for overflow parking.

A specific resident is identified as living above Musso's old building in an area with limited parking.

Multiple members expressed doubt that a new or an existing 2 hour parking regulation would be enforced, referencing past experience where the rules were ignored.

A suggestion was made to implement seasonal or timed no parking rules in high impact locations

Several council members stated that the problem stems from the lack of consistent city or police enforcement.

There were concerns about long term parking causing damage to the roadways from oil spots coming from stationary cars.

No clear resolution was reached but, the possibility of police intervention and seasons of specific restrictions were floated, as potential steps forward.

Additional:

The following on the North End Drainage due to unexpectedly high bid costs was presented for discussion by Mayor Murphy:

Sleman contacted DCEO (Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity) and discovered possible extra grant funds, likely from unclaimed awards.

The city prepared and sent a letter to DCEO detailing their financial needs and including the latest audit 2023, outlining recent expenditures to show available funds are less than the audit indicates.

Tracy Tavender received a call from Lisa Thomas Wayne, the DCEO Grant Manager for Virden regarding the city's letter and audit.

Lisa was impressed by the grant submission and agreed that the city could not cover the project's overage with existing funds.

Lisa presented the situation to the Director Wendy Bell, who is open to considering extra funding.

However, the agency is currently in a shutdown phase for account reconciliations, so it is unclear if additional funds will be available.

Lisa hopes to give the city a definite answer within 30 days (aligning with the bids 90 day validated period).

The city was advised to proceed with collecting the paperwork from the lowest bidder to be ready once the funding decision is made.

Boster added there is a statewide mandate for agencies to return 4% of their budget due to significant shortfalls (around \$2 billion) causing funding delays.

Gary Etter inquired about the status of the houses awaiting demolition.

Progress has been stalled due to other City project priorities.

House on 337 South Emmett St, next step is to get an asbestos check.

Discussion about seeking to purchase property from Gary Lair no clear contact method is identified.

The deadline to use allocated funds is November of 2026.

One property that was attained through a tax sale at the end of September; confirmation of ownership documentation from the county is still pending.

The house on Stoddard St. has been wrapped in a white material; the roof remains open (the wrap on the house was possibly installed by a neighbor to secure it).

Ownership of another property is unclear due to the deaths of the previous owners Ernie Lair. One of Lair's sons is to believe to live in Girard but contact details are unknown.

Donley will attempt to contact a family member.

The Strode house on South Springfield St. that burned down, insurance is still assessing whether to remodel or demolish the house.

Boster added the house on Springfield St. (two houses from him) locating the owner remains difficult, the lawn has intermittently been mowed by someone unknown.

Discussion on mowing and general maintenance, the backyard and bushes require attention.

If the city maintains the property after legally mandating notifications, they can file a lien for reimbursement.

Past attempts at cleanup were stopped due to ongoing Fire Marshals or Insurance investigations.

Executive Session:

Motion made by Boster seconded by Bertolino to enter into Executive Session at 7:48 pm.

Motion passed.

Motion Made by Boster seconded by Matrisch to approve the Public Works Executive session meeting minutes of 6/19/25.

Motion passed

Motion made by Boster seconded by Matrisch to adjourn at 8:29 pm.

Motion passed.

Jonathan J. Myint
City Clerk

Date Approved: