

Department of Public Works Committee Report
December 9, 2019

Chairman Clifford called the meeting to order at 5:30.

Present were committee members Etori, Clifford, Tommola, Mattis, and Gillam. Other aldermen present were President Davis, DePoy, Reveal, Humphrey and Whitcomb.

Also present were Attorney Bloomer, Treasurer Markowski, Commissioner Wennberg, Business Manager Gorruso, Assistant Treasurer Holmquist, Engineer Rotondo, Associate Engineer Gillan, Project Manager Sears, Gordon Dritchilo.

Chairman Clifford invited Jim Rotondo to present the Streets and Sidewalks Bond proposal.

Engineer Rotondo said the proposed bond would include \$4 million in road paving and related work and \$1 million in sidewalk work for a total request of \$5 million. This would be over and above the \$500,000 annually budgeted for paving and \$70,000 for concrete, which supports sidewalks and curbs.

Engineer Rotondo walked through a PowerPoint presentation, explaining the need and justification for the bond request. He explained that the current level of paving funding allows only 2 – 3 miles of roadway to be rehabilitated annually, which means the treatment cycle for any road is between 25 and 38 years. He provided a chart showing the current cost to treat all roads in need of work at \$8,743,390.

Mr. Rotondo explained that the selection of streets to be treated under the bond would be a combination of some of the roads that have failed, some that need pavement rehabilitation, and some that only need pavement preservation. The condition of underground utilities will be considered, and effort will be made to ensure equitable distribution of projects through all City quadrants.

Mr. Rotondo explained the principal of pavement asset management, which reduces cost by concentrating on pavement preservation, essentially extending the life of pavement as long as possible and avoiding costly treatments such as rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The plan would be to do complete projects including water and sewer work if needed and incorporate complete streets features and sidewalk work.

Sidewalk replacements and extensions have been covered by a small annual appropriation and by including the work in multiple water and sewer projects in recent years. The Engineering Division will update the 2013 Sidewalk Inventory Report and solicit input from the CAIR committee and the public in selecting project locations. As is the case with streets, sidewalk projects will also be considered using asset management practices.

Bond funds would be used over a 5 year period, similar to the bridge bonds that have been approved in the past.

The City Treasurer has projected that a 30 year \$5 million bond would cost \$300,000 per year in the early years and decline over time. This would add \$45 per year to the property taxes on a house assessed at \$150,000.

Alderman Etti asked where the \$5 million amount came from. Mayor Allaire said it was simply chosen to be big enough to make a significant difference but hopefully affordable for most taxpayers.

Alderman Etti asked whether there would be additional bonds for related water and sewer infrastructure. Engineer Rotondo explained that these would be proposed separately based upon need and funding availability from the state.

Alderman Tommola said that the cost of on-going preventative maintenance needed to be incorporated into the bond, and Alderman DePoy said a long-term plan to properly fund needed maintenance should be developed. Alderwoman Humphrey asked if there was something coming off the bond schedule that would offset the new bond payment cost to the taxpayers. Treasurer Markowski answered that the City Hall bond was being retired this year but other recently approved bonds would take its place.

Alderman Etti asked if there was some opportunity to incorporate some workforce development component into the projects to be funded.

After some discussion Commissioner Wennberg was given an opportunity to summarize changes to the General Fund budget for the Department of Public Works, which will be considered by the committee on Wednesday.

Alderwoman Mattis moved to adjourn to Wednesday at 5:30. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28.