

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

A Broken Bow, Neb., firm submitted the low bid on two major public works projects in Imperial this summer, and that bid was accepted by council members Monday night.

Myers Construction, Inc., will be in the community much of the summer, as they build a new sewer lift station in Campbell Park and also complete four blocks of water main installation on Broadway.

Chris Miller of Miller & Associates was at Monday's meeting. His firm recommended Myers' low bid at \$457,886.

At the opening June 3, four other firms bid the public works projects, with bids ranging from \$474,484 to \$572,512.

Myers Construction's bid was just eight-tenths of a percent off the engineer's estimate for the projects.

The water main project represents about \$257,000 of the total bid, Miller noted, who believes the firm will start on that work first.

Four blocks between 7th and 11th Sts., on the west side of Broadway, will have the new water main installed, connecting the other eight-inch water mains to the north and south added in previous years. New water line services to each side of Broadway will also be laid.

Miller said, at the upcoming preconstruction meeting, he will put in a request that the Broadway work be done before the fair in August.

The lift station installation in the northeast area of Campbell Park includes about \$200,000 of the bid, Miller said.

Replacement of the manhole in the parking lot along West 7th St., is also part of the project. Miller said the entire parking lot will be torn up and replaced as they install the new manhole.

The lift station will be built just northwest of the Lions picnic shelter. It will replace the aging lift station at that site.

No decision on how the projects will be funded was made Monday, but it was indicated some revenue bonds will be sold to cover part, if not all, of the costs.

There are over \$300,000 in reserves in both the sewer and water departments, but the city's auditor has indicated the current reserves are lower than should be, according to Public Works Supt. Pat Davison.

The contractor will be required to complete both projects by Nov. 15, or penalties can be assessed.

Other council business

Imperial Volunteer Fire Department members plan to pursue an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) assistance to firefighters/fire station construction grant to fund their fire hall construction plans. Miller & Associates is working with the fire department on details for

the application that will seek approximately a \$1 million grant from the federal stimulus funds. Nick Schultz, who is on the building committee, said the 42-page guidelines indicate that EMS, emergency management agencies or other departments that do not have firefighting responsibilities are not eligible for this grant money. Such entities can be included in the building plans, but if a grant is awarded, it would likely be reduced by the same percentage those non-firefighting areas take up in the building. Schultz and other IVFD members believe Imperial's application will be low on the priority list, based on the guidelines, but felt they should make the application and "try for it." Applications must be submitted by July 10, with awards announced later this year.

The Senior Services facilities in Imperial submitted figures for the 2009-2010 budget, and council members approved advertising for the public hearing. According to a report from Administrator Kathy Andersen and Roger Petrik of the facilities' management firm, they are hoping for no private pay room increases in the coming year. Salary increases will be given to department heads, and the bonus program for employees started last year will continue. Andersen said they expect a \$4,000 decrease in their workman's comp. premiums this next year. There will also be a lower reimbursement rate in the coming year from Medicaid, which is based on costs and census days. Overall, for the past year, the facilities expect about a \$10,000 profit, according to Petrik. The council also discussed some window replacement and skylight repair in the facilities.

City Attorney Phil Pierce will draw up a less restrictive ordinance on open pit burning for the council's consideration at an upcoming meeting. City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland said the issue arose on a question from a police officer about patio fire pits, when it was discovered that the city code basically restricts all open burning. Pierce will draw up an ordinance that will follow the state statute, thereby allowing patio fire pits. Fire Chief Bryan Dannatt and Police Chief Larry Browning believe those units pose little fire threat.

The council also approved some adjustments in the Owner Occupied Rehab program guidelines that adds verbiage that lead-base paint will not be used in its projects. Also adopted was a self-evaluation and transition plan, which reviews city-owned facilities to determine if they are all handicapped accessible. Handicapped parking spaces are needed in Campbell Park, according to the review.

Work will begin soon to open two streets in the city. Public Works Director Pat Davison said he was asked by the Upper Republican NRD to open up East 4th Street, which runs behind their new building, and the connecting Orsa Street, that runs north from East 4th to East 5th. Another request for opening Willow Street, located north of East 5th between Dollar General and Brophy Electric, and Cherry Street west to Longhorn St., was also requested by Bob Mendenhall. He wants street access to a lot he owns in the Schroeder subdivision. The city will grade those streets to open them up at city cost. If additional improvements are sought, those will be at the expense of the adjacent property owners.

After a 35-minute closed session, the council authorized Mayor Annie Longan to negotiate on behalf of the city on possible purchase of real estate property. The council and other city officials have been considering such a purchase for several months.