

Council to let bids to bond project

By Russ Pankonin

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Imperial city council members swallowed hard when they saw the estimate to complete street work on 5th, 9th and 12th Streets.

The estimated cost for the proposed project, which also includes replacing water mains on 12th Street, totalled \$1,774,400.

Chris Miller, with Miller & Associates engineering firm, outlined their recommendations during Monday's council meeting.

Miller recommended the city consider a total reconstruction of 5th and 12th Streets, replacing them with concrete paving.

The 5th Street project would run from Hwy. 61 west to Leech Street. The 12th Street project would run from Hwy. 61 west to Broadway.

Cost for the street reconstruction is estimate at \$537,500 for 5th Street and \$907,000 for 12th Street.

In addition, storm sewer drainage would be addressed on both projects and a portion of water main would be replaced under 12th Street from Broadway to Shorthorn Street.

The water project represents a cost of \$181,400, bringing the entire project to a total of \$1,771,400.

Rather than a full reconstruction of 9th Street in front of the school, Miller recommended some milling and a two-inch overlay of asphalt paving.

The 9th Street project would run from Longhorn Street west to Chase Street.

Miller said soil borings along 9th street indicated poor subgrade preparation, which has resulted in significant cracking of the street.

By milling and using asphalt, Miller said the cost would be about half of what a new concrete street would run. He noted asphalt would have a 10-15 year life versus a 30-year life for concrete.

Asphalt estimates for 9th Street ran \$145,500 versus \$300-400,000 for concrete, Miller said.

The reason for using asphalt on 9th Street and concrete on 5th and 12th Streets rests with the depth of paving needed.

Because of the traffic load, 5th would need six inches of concrete and 12th, seven inches.

Once the depth gets to five to seven inches, concrete costs less than asphalt, Miller said.

The existing asphalt on those streets will be milled off and used as a new base for the concrete streets. In addition, storm sewers will be re-routed and improved as part of the project.

How to pay for it?

With that kind of price tag, City Administrator Jo Leyland said bonding the project would be the only way the city could afford it.

Since the paving is already in place, council members thought it was unlikely they would assess some of the cost back to property owners along the projects.

Miller suggested bidding the project yet this year, giving potential bidders the option of starting this fall on some of it or waiting until next spring.

He said the recent depressed economic conditions have created a favorable bidding

environment for projects like this.

Council members gave Miller the go-ahead to complete the necessary planning in order to bid the project yet this year.

Housing funds applied for

The city joined with the Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment to apply for housing rehabilitation grant funds for Imperial.

They are seeking \$450,000 in grant money for the project. In the past, grant funds were targeted to certain areas of town. This application encompasses all of Imperial.

Income standards are used to determine eligibility and repayment of the grants funds, which can total up to \$24,000 per household.

Economic Development Coordinator Leslie Carlholm said it would be near the end of the year before the city hears whether their application gets funded.

Senior facilities turn small profit

During the meeting, Imperial Manor Administrator Kathy Andersen and Roger Petrick with Rural Health Development updated the council on the progress of the senior facilities.

Rural Health Development manages the operation for the city.

Petrick noted the operations showed a slight profit of \$63,000 for the past fiscal year.

He said one of their goals is to maintain private-pay rates at the three facilities—Imperial Manor, Imperial Heights and Parkview Assisted Living.

If the census remains strong, Petrick predicted the operations could show a small profit in the current year.

He said reimbursements for Medicaid residents will decrease between \$1-2 per day this year.

On the Medicare front, Petrick said they haven't been serving the number of Medicare patients they would expect. "There's just not a lot of that volume out there," he said.

Under Rural Health Development's management the past several years, the senior care facilities have reversed a trend where they were losing money into turning a small profit.