

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO
STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE
WED., JANUARY 7, 2009**

This meeting of the Streets, Sidewalks, and Utilities Committee of Kent City Council was called to order by Mike DeLeone, Chair, on Wednesday, January 7, 2009 at 8:40 p.m.

PRESENT: MR. AMRHEIN, MR. DeLEONE, MR. FERRARA, MR. HAWKSLEY, MR. KUHAR, MS. SHAFFER, MR. TURNER, MS. WALLACH, AND MR. WILSON

ALSO PRESENT: J. FENDER, MAYOR; D. RULLER, CITY MANAGER; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; J. BOWLING, CITY ENGINEER; G. ROBERTS, SERVICE DIRECTOR; AND L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL

Chair DeLeone said the first issue on the agenda dealt with the Spaulding Road Right-of-Way acquisitions, and introduced **Dave Ruller, City Manager**. Mr. Ruller said this was part of the bridge replacement on Spaulding Drive, and asked **Jim Bowling, City Engineer**, to explain the issue.

Mr. Bowling said there were two easements needed, adding they were two small parcels that would allow for the building and maintenance of the bridge. He said it is the same owner, adding they used the same process as the one used for Crain Avenue. He said they made an offer that was accepted.

There were no questions, and no audience comment.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE ACQUISITION OF TWO PERMANENT EASEMENTS FOR THE SPAULDING ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY.

Motion made by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Kuhar, and carried by a voice vote of 8-0-1, with Mr. DeLeone abstaining.

Mr. Ruller said the next issue dealt with an overview for their snow removal operations. He said they have a lot of questions during this time of year, and given the schedule, he and the Clerk felt that it would be a good time for such a report. He introduced **Gene Roberts, Service Director**, at this time.

Mr. Roberts said they try to address citizen complaints as to where they push the snow. He said they worked with the Fire Department recently, updating the safety response routes. He said they have plow routes that have been mapped by the Engineering Division, and they are balanced on the length of time to plow. Mr. Roberts said that the routes are put into books for the trucks, and if they shift from four trucks to five trucks, there is a map for that also. He said all maps are color coded, with different priorities.

Mr. Roberts said they currently have ten two and one-half ton plow trucks; three one-ton plow trucks; and two three-quarters ton plow trucks. He said in the early part of 2008, they purchased a brine tanker, capable of putting brine down prior to a snow event. He said they are able to stay on top of their main routes, adding the brine routes are predetermined.

Mr. Roberts said their current facilities include a salt dome, a shorter tank for calcium chloride, and a taller tank for brine. He said they produce and manufacture their own brine. He said depending on the quantity purchased, the cost is eighteen to twenty cents per gallon, and they are producing it for six cents per gallon. Mr. Roberts said the market value of brine is twelve to twenty-six cents.

Mr. Ferrara asked how far does the salt go with salt brine, and Mr. Roberts said dry salting is not bad, but if not done in front of the storm, it is blown off the road. He said that it typically takes 250 to 260 gallons to salt brine everything on the map, and 600 to 700 tons to pre-salt.

Ms. Wallach asked if it is labor intensive to make their own salt brine, and whether they could make more and sell it, and Mr. Roberts said they would need more storage tanks. He said that ODOT is doing that,

adding that District 4 delivers it to the Summit County Engineer, in exchange for them plowing some of ODOT's streets. He said they could make money, but would not get rich from it.

Mr. Kuhar said that Franklin township is putting down gravel that is lasting quite a while, and Mr. Roberts said that is grit, typically mixed with salt. He said the disadvantage is that in Kent, it goes into the storm sewers, and is not recommended any more.

Mr. Roberts said their equipment preparation is done by the staff at Vehicle Maintenance. He said in 2008 to 2009, the two and one-half ton trucks were fitted with steel edge blades, instead of rubber blades. He said the steel edge clean the road better and uses less salt.

Ms. Wallach asked if there is a difference in how they chew up the road, and Mr. Roberts said the steel edge does cause more damage. He said the cost is less for the steel edge, and lasts longer. He said the rubber blades are \$480 each, and do not clean as well. He said the rubber blades have maintenance costs associated.

Mr. Kuhar asked how long they last, and Mr. Roberts said they usually put about three rubber blades on each truck, adding that when the steel goes, they take it off and replace it. He said they are unsure how much salt they are saving by using the steel blades.

Mr. Roberts said that in 2002, the average experience of their plow operators was 11.21 years. He said following a lot of retirements, in 2008, the average experience was reduced to 6.49 years.

Mr. Roberts displayed a picture of a truck spreading salt brine, adding it leaves wet stripes as the truck drives down the road.

Mr. Roberts displayed a picture of the City's salt dome. He said the bin is full, adding they purchased 4,000 tons, and have used about 800 tons.

Mr. Roberts said he wished to commend the plow drivers who work long and hard hours. He said they are not just driving a truck with an arm, adding it looks somewhat like a cockpit. He said they have a joystick that operates the plow and the auger system. He said the boxes are read, and tells the mode of the joy stick. He said one box delivers the number of pounds per lane mile, and how long the plow was in operation. He said the driver controls the speed of the auger and spinner blade, controlling the salt on pavement.

Mr. Roberts said a fully loaded truck is difficult to manage. He said every driver must remember where to put the snow in the cul de sac each time. He said they may not always get it right, but they are always trying to operate safely.

Mr. Roberts reminded them that Mother Nature always wins. He showed two views of SR 261, with one east of SR 43 and the other east of Sunnybrook Road. He said the difference is the tree line which stops the snow. He showed a picture of a church on Fairchild that showed the snow in the street. Mr. Lillich asked if snow fences would be cost effective, and Mr. Roberts said they are reviewing that currently.

Mr. Roberts said they are often asked how they compare to other cities. He displayed photos that showed Kent was in similar shape than some of the other communities.

Mr. Roberts said their Fixed cost is \$1.350 million for their rolling stock. He said the average equipment replacement cost annually is \$152,000, and the operating cost for equipment is approximately \$47,500 annually, and that includes fuel and maintenance costs.

Mr. Roberts said their operating costs and materials fluctuate from year to year. He said in 2006, they had twenty-nine events that produced twenty-nine inches of snow, while in 2007, they had more events and less snow. He said they have been unable to find a correlation between the operating costs and the events.

Ms. Wallach asked if events are snow storms, and Mr. Roberts said that was correct. He said some may last twenty minutes, and in March 2008, the crews were out for seventy-two hours. Mr. Wilson asked if that was considered one event, and Mr. Roberts said that was correct.

Mr. Kuhar noted that it always snows on the weekend and at night. He asked if there was a breakdown of the costs after hours or during hours, and Mr. Roberts said he did not have one at this time.

Mr. Roberts said the Governor commissioned ODOT to find out why the salt costs were all over the place. He said that Portage County was the third lowest bid price, and along the Ohio River, some places paid \$150 per ton.

Mr. Roberts said they are plowing and salting the primary routes during the event. He said they plow the secondary streets, not salting as often. He said the side streets are cleared at the end of the event, but they due salt hills and intersections in the neighborhood. Mr. Roberts said they only use overtime during the evening, but not for most clean ups. Hee said the streets are not as good, but the residents seems satisfied if they see them in the morning.

Mr. Turner asked if the City belongs to a consortium for salt, and Mr. Roberts said they belonged in 2007-2008, and it would have cost an additional \$50 per ton if they purchased through the consortium.

Mr. Roberts said for 2009, they are tracking storm forecasts in detail, and the crews are using new report forms to log the details. He said they are tracking time and material in greater detail, adding that they are trying to cut the dry salt application. He displayed the new data tracking form with the recent ice storm, showing a cost of \$12371,35 with expenses in maintenance, salt, salt brine, and labor. He said overtime will be tracked also. Mr. Roberts said they will have a report for each shift.

Mr. Kuhar said if they had a universal driver on the second or third shift, they could eliminate the overtime, and Mr. Roberts said the typical call out by the police is for two trucks. He said in terms of timing, they can try to stay up with the snow, if the police were right on the money, but have found that typically two trucks do not handle it. He said on this day, they have five trucks and one mechanic on duty. He said if there is no mechanic work, the mechanics is driving a plow truck. Mr. Roberts said they do not have the resources to go above six trucks, and once the staff has gone sixteen hours, they are done for eight hours. Mr. Kuhar asked if it takes more than two trucks to keep main streets clear. and Mr. Roberts said that was correct.

Mr. Roberts said they are going to attempt to categorize their snow storms, which will help plan their staffing, know when to order salt, and allow them to plan staff rotation. He said the other divisions do not have the necessary experience. Mr. Kuhar asked about the permanency of another shift, and Mr. Roberts said they tried that. He said people started at 5:00 a.m., and some were held over until 7:00 p.m. He said as soon as the storm started, they were calling for help. He said they eliminated all of those problems with the pager call back system. He said they negotiated with the Union that when they page, and the employee is on call, they are to be in the truck within thirty minutes. He said previously, it would take one to one and one-half hours.

Mr. Roberts said they are approaching this scientifically. He said they are not doing perfectly, but are in the adequate to better range. He said the Central Maintenance workers have been approached by other communities asking how they are doing the brine machine.

Mr. Turner asked how they can do better, and Mr. Roberts said they can continue the data they are now gathering. He said they will never get it right, adding that is because they are dealing with Mother Nature. He said the more they pre-plan, the more they work with other departments. Mr. Roberts said on a scale of one to ten, he believed they were at an eight or eight and one-half.

Mr. Ruller said he would provide them a copy of Mr. Robert's presentation.

MOTION TO RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR LAND ACQUISITION.

Motion made by Mr. Hawksley, seconded by Mr. Wilson.

Roll call was taken on the motion. Voting aye: Mr. Amrhein, Mr. DeLeone, Mr. Ferrara, Mr. Hawksley, Mr. Kuhar, Ms. Shaffer, Mr. Turner, Ms. Wallach, and Mr. Wilson. The motion carried, unanimously, by a roll call vote of 9-0.

Chair DeLeone recessed this meeting at 9:15 p.m. Following Executive Session, Chair DeLeone reconvened this meeting at 9:34 p.m.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY TO BEGIN EMINENT DOMAIN PROCEEDS, INCLUDING THEA AUTHORIZATION OF TWO PIECES OF LEGISLATION AGAINST THE AKRON BARBERTON CLUSTER RAILROAD FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION FOR THE CRAIN AVENUE/FAIRCHILD AVENUE BRIDGE.

Motion made by Mr. Ferrara, seconded by Mr. Kuhar, and carried by a voice vote of 8-0-1, with Mr. DeLeone abstaining.

Hearing no further business before this Committee, Chair DeLeone adjourned this meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) TO AUTHORIZE THE ACQUISITION OF TWO PERMANENT EASEMENTS FOR THE SPAULDING ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY.
- 2) PRESENTATION RECEIVED ON SNOW REMOVAL OPERATIONS; NO ACTION
- 3) AUTHORIZATION TO BEGIN EMINENT DOMAIN PROCEEDINGS, INCLUDING TWO PIECES OF LEGISLATION, AGAINST THE AKRON BARBERTON CLUSTER RAILROAD FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION FOR THE CRAIN AVENUE/FAIRCHILD AVENUE BRIDGE.