

**Lanesboro City Council
Special Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 18, 2024 – 3:30 p.m.
Lanesboro Community Center Meeting Room**

Present:

Members: ___ Jason Resseman ___ Chase Bakke X Joe Goetzke
 X Mindy Albrecht-Benson X Kathryn Wade
Staff: X Mitchell Walbridge ___ Darla Taylor ___ David Haugen
 ___ Mark Lawstuen ___ Jerod Wagner ___ Tara Johnson
 ___ Joseph O’Koren
Guests: Keith Allen, Chuck Ackman, Jeanne Poppe, Representative Greg Davids, Brian Malm

Special Meeting

Call to Order: Member Albrecht-Benson called to order the special meeting at 3:30 p.m.

- A. **Agenda:** Member Goetzke entered a motion to approve the agenda as submitted; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

New Business

- A. **Minnesota State Highway 250 Road Construction & Utility Replacement:** City council members met with Chuck Ackman, Senior Regional Outreach Director for U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar; Jeanne Poppe, Southern Minnesota Outreach Director for U.S. Senator Tina Smith; Keith Allen, District Outreach Representative for U.S. Representative Brad Finstad; and Minnesota State Representative Greg Davids. Brian Malm, city engineer from Bolton and Menk, summarized the scope of the road improvement and utility replacement project. Malm provided an overview of the cost-sharing arrangement the city has established with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. He explained that the City of Lanesboro’s estimated construction costs are approximately \$4.9 million, with \$1.35 million in secured grant funds. Additionally, the city will incur roughly \$1.6 million in engineering fees for both administrative oversight of the utility project and its design. While the city may be eligible for additional MnPFA water and sewer grants, these funding sources are not guaranteed. Furthermore, the city is not in an ideal position to issue additional bonds due to elevated debt levels from recent projects. City council members emphasized the need for financial assistance, highlighting that Lanesboro is a significant driver of tourism for Fillmore County and the entire region. They noted that although the city has the opportunity to improve its infrastructure as part of the road construction project, delaying the utility infrastructure replacement could result in much higher costs later, as all roadway costs would then fall solely on the city. Council members Albrecht-Benson, Goetzke, and Wade expressed concern over the project's impact on small business owners and residents. Administrator Walbridge also mentioned that additional road projects will be occurring in the region simultaneously, including Highway 52 from Fountain to Chatfield and the Highway 52 and I-90 interchange. These projects may deter visitors to Lanesboro.

Representatives from each of the legislators’ offices suggested potential funding sources for Lanesboro to pursue. At the federal level, the best option discussed was requesting congressionally directed spending in the coming years. If obtained, this funding would serve as gap financing with fewer stipulations on how the dollars can be spent on the project. At the state level, Representative Davids recommended requesting funding through a bonding bill in the 2025 and 2026 legislative sessions. Both Representative Davids and Senator Jeremy Miller can assist with this process in the upcoming legislative sessions. Representative Davids requested that Administrator Walbridge and City Engineer Brian Malm formulate a financial needs request and submit the information to his office. The city will continue to communicate with each legislator’s office as planning and the project progress.

Approved 08/05/2024

Member Albrecht-Benson adjourned the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Clerk