

Harvard's Future: Paving Paths and Powering Progress

May 21, 2025

The City of Harvard Administration Committee convened on May 21, 2025, at 6:33 p.m. The meeting was attended by Mayor Mike Kelly, Deputy City Administrator Deb Bejot, Supt. Rob Lamz, Chairwoman Lisa Haderlein, Aldermen Joel Kriete and John Lavalley, and Alderwoman Rosa Luna, who joined electronically. The committee addressed a diverse agenda covering vital municipal infrastructure, policy updates, and long-term strategic initiatives before adjourning at 7:10 p.m. Key actions and discussions included:

1. **Approval of Minutes and Public Comment:** The meeting commenced with a roll call and the approval of the minutes from the April 16th administrative committee meeting. No public comments were received on items not on the agenda.
2. **Ayer Street Resurfacing Project:** The committee favorably discussed the bid for the resurfacing of Ayer Street, spanning from Five Points to Park Street. This project will include full-depth patches as needed and the application of durable thermoplastic marking, aiming to revitalize the downtown area. Schroer Asphalt Services submitted the winning bid of \$391,006.15, which was notably lower than the engineer's original estimate of \$506,436.10 due to competitive bidding. Public Works has been proactively cleaning, televising, and planning repairs for storm and sanitary sewers in the area, including addressing a collapsed storm sewer. The committee emphasized the use of all available patches, given the favorable pricing. A motion was passed to recommend accepting this bid to the city council.
3. **Ayer Street Resurfacing Project Phase III Engineering Contract:** Christopher Burke Engineering was recommended to provide construction engineering oversight for the Ayer Street Resurfacing Project Phase III. This contract, totaling \$49,987.00, was deemed a strategic move to protect the city's investment by ensuring quality control and adherence to standards, especially for full-depth patching. Discussions raised questions regarding the proposal's phrasing for "five total hours for field operation" and clarification on engineer roles. The committee also inquired about the project engineer's authority to halt work and the reporting structure, confirming they would report directly to the city as a "watchdog". Concerns were also raised about the testing company's lack of a specific Quality Assurance (QA) manager listed, unless the project engineer was also assuming that role. A motion was made to recommend this engineering contract to the city council.
4. **Rush Creek Bike Path Grant Project:** An update was provided on the McHenry County grant project for the Rush Creek bike path. The city is awaiting the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) from the county, which has experienced staffing and turnover issues. It was clarified that the city's approved budget of \$50,000 is specifically for its share of the Phase One engineering, not the total project cost. The city anticipates a favorable cost-sharing split, potentially 90/10 or even 95/5, with the county, and the \$50,000 is expected to cover Harvard's portion even with potential increases in engineering fees. Once completed, the city of Harvard will be responsible for maintaining the entire path from Shadow Creek to Rush

Creek, with the level of maintenance to be determined by the city. Phase One engineering will define design aspects such as width (six or eight feet) and material (concrete, asphalt, or crushed limestone), and the project is expected to include pedestrian crosswalks, especially at Cross Street. This item was for information only, requiring no immediate action.

5. **Amendment to School Zone Ordinance (Washington School):** A proposed amendment to the school zone ordinance concerning Washington School was discussed. This change was prompted by the need to properly mark and include areas on Hutchinson, Jackman, West Thompson, and West Washington streets to ensure effective school zones. The amendment necessitates an ordinance change and the addition of eight school zone signs and eight end-of-school-zone signs, replacing existing unauthorized 10 mph signs with 20 mph school zone signs. The estimated signage cost is approximately \$1,500, which can be covered by the Public Works budget. Chief Bowman confirmed compliance in other school areas but noted the need for four additional end-of-school-zone signs there. The committee voted to recommend this ordinance change to the city council.
6. **Declaration of Surplus Property:** The police department declared old office furniture and outdated cameras as surplus property for scrapping. The furniture, acquired from an Oakbrook remodeling project and dating back to the 1970s or 1980s, includes three desks, a filing cabinet, and an upright cabinet. These items, along with older, obsolete cameras that have no resale value due to their quality, will be disposed of. A motion was approved to declare these items as surplus for scrapping.
7. **Strategic Vision Update:** The committee received an update on the city's strategic vision, specifically regarding an ongoing salary survey. Data has been collected to establish comparable pay baselines for city positions, with a final report expected to be presented to the council by June or July. Discussions are anticipated regarding specific positions that may need adjustments. The strategic vision document itself was last refreshed in the fall of 2023.
8. **AT&T Tower Contract Negotiations:** An update was provided on the negotiations for an AT&T tower. The previously approved contract for a new 200-foot tower adjacent to the tracks was withdrawn due to concerns about its height and potential conflict with future downtown plans. Discussions have now shifted to installing a tower rail on the existing downtown water tower (134 feet tall). This alternative, which AT&T would fund, is considered a better overall solution that would mitigate the risk of damage to the water tank, unlike a previous T-Mobile installation that was drilled directly into the tank. Negotiations are ongoing regarding the cost of the tower rail installation, rent, and annual increases, with the city believing this is a more suitable and cost-effective approach for both parties.