

Town wants to deal on paving road

Written by CAROL POMEDAY

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Chairman tells supervisors private contractor's estimate came in 35% lower than highway department

Town of Belgium officials decided Tuesday to hold off paving the one mile portion of Cedar Beach Road that is gravel in hopes that the Ozaukee County Highway Department will reduce its estimate for the work.

Town Chairman Tom Winker, who is also a county supervisor and member of the county's Public Works Committee, told the Town Board he was surprised at the cost and decided to get a proposal from Payne & Dolan for the work.

"Payne & Dolan gave an estimate that was 35% less than the Highway Department's," Winker said.

Winker said he met with County Administrator Tom Meaux, County Board Chairman Robert Brooks and a few town officials to discuss the situation.

"We talked about the need for everybody to be a winner at the table and what needs to be done so the highway department is more competitive," Winker said.

"We're in the preliminary stages of having those discussions.

"The town is not looking for a free lunch here. The town is looking to be treated fairly. We want the Highway Department to do our work, but not at any cost."

Supr. Francis Kleckner said Payne & Dolan uses recycled materials in its paving and the work comparisons are not equal. He made a motion to have the county pave the road this fall, but that did not receive a second.

Supr. Bill Janeshek, who works for the county Highway Department and oversees the work done on town roads, agreed with Winker that talks should continue with the department.

"I think we do a better job," Janeshek said. "On Lone Elm Road (where the work was split between the county and a private contractor), you can tell what portion we did. The other end has cracks in it."

Winker said, "I compared price, but I didn't compare quality. I don't think the company would be in business this long if it did shoddy work."

The county adds a 4% surcharge to its work to offset cuts to the highway department's budget, something highway officials disagreed with because it is trying to be more competitive, Janeshek said.

The town had hoped to get a state grant to pay for a portion of the paving project, but that was turned down, Winker said.

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Town resident Tom Petersen said the town should have Payne & Dolan do the work if it can save that much money.

“If we want to get the most for our money, wouldn’t it be better to get it done now rather than wait until March?” Petersen asked.

Resident Jeff Coeur agreed, noting that if recycled materials is a concern, the town can specify the materials to be used so the cost estimates are equal.

“My suggestion is give some work to the county and give some to Payne & Dolan,” Coeur said. “Even if you split it, the town will save money.”

The county cannot bid on work by state law. It gives estimates based on time and materials.

Winker said some townships have used private contractors for recent road projects, but noted there is a value to the township to give the work to the county since taxpayers own the trucks, equipment, gravel pit and asphalt plant. The towns’ road work helps pay those costs.

Charles Parks, the town’s zoning administrator, questioned the need to pave the road since no one lives on it and it is used primarily by farmers.

When Main Street in Belgium is reconstructed next year, much of that traffic will use Cedar Beach Road, which he said will damage a newly paved road.

“Leave it gravel until the Main Street work is done,” Parks said. “In this economy, I think it’s better to maintain what we have rather than add new.”

Janeshek has recommended that the town pave one to two miles of town roads every year. Cedar Beach Road was identified as a priority, and it has been prepared for paving, he said.

The town budgeted almost \$162,000 for paving this year and has spent only \$27,000, but it is \$9,000 over its chip-and-seal budget of \$30,000, Town Clerk Ginger Murphy said.

The town plans to budget another \$162,000 for paving next year, Winker said, and could do two miles then.