

Ephrata to consider street

BY JOE DENNIS
of the Journal

EPHRATA — As the City of Ephrata continues to move forward with plans for a comprehensive waterline and street improvement project, a pair of actions tied to completion will be on Wednesday's agenda for council consideration.

Only one
engineer
firm
responds

First is appointment of an engineering firm to meet the city's general engineering needs and the second is consideration of a funding mechanism to ensure residential streets will be maintained on an on-going basis following completion of the improvement project.

Selection of a consulting engineering firm is needed as part of the state Public Works Trust Fund Loan Program is an important part of the application process, city administrator Wes Crago

said in a written report to the council.

He noted public works director Bill Sangster issued a request for qualifications for engineering firms and received one response.

That response came from Gray and Osborne of Yakima, a consulting engineering firm that has been Ephrata's engineering firm for the past 50 years.

The \$9 million Public Works Trust Fund Loan the city is seeking is a key to successful completion of the street

maintenance funding

and waterline project, and both Crago and mayor Chris Jacobson have expressed optimism about Ephrata's chances of receiving the loan, particularly since a city application for a pre-construction loan has already been approved by the state.

The other street and waterline related issue to be brought before the council is preliminary discussion on possible directions the city may want to take to ensure an on-going funding source for

maintenance work on the project is completed, Crago said.

Jim Berschauer, a retired Ephrata business owner and member of a city committee formed some years ago to study city water rates, raised the issue of a maintenance mechanism in a letter to the council.

Stressing his satisfaction with work of the Citizen Street Commission and

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Street

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support for the project and its funding mechanism stressed the importance of putting a plan in place to be certain that funds are set aside to be certain adequate money is available to maintain streets on a long-term basis.

Berschauer noted in his letter such action is particularly important because of anticipated residential growth bringing new city streets that will have to be maintained.

Crago, in a report to the council, said a number of options are under consideration including designation of a portion of the city's property tax, or establishing a minimum dollar figure to be allocated to street maintenance each year, along with council adoption of a street maintenance plan each July when the annual Six-Year Street Plan is adopted.