

HEARING continued from page 2b

Project has been planned for several years

usually it was because businesses could generate more cash flow to pay for an assessment.

Council member Rob Sampson said this policy is part of the ongoing discussion, that the city has a lot of projects in place and the council wants "to be equitable to everyone in the city."

Tom Zetah asked about money in the budget already set aside for roadwork.

Smith replied that the budget has about \$200,000 set aside for roadwork. She explained that the city's financial advisor advised them to not use those funds for this project. Instead those funds should be used for overlays and repairs to other city streets.

Zetah also asked about the possibility of a grant.

Welch responded that there is nothing to apply for right now, but perhaps there would be next year. He thought it would be more likely to be a low interest loan rather than a grant.

Sampson added that by pursuing this project now, the city would be considered to have a project "shovel-ready" when those stimulus funds became available.

Howie Kaibel asked if the city had considered asking their legislators to include this project in the state bonding bill.

Welch replied that the city could spend time doing that, but that "the chances were pretty slim."

Connie Mattke was representing her mother Evelyn Tholl. She asked about the 30 percent being assessed to property owners.

Sampson said that in order to get bonding "we have to assess a certain amount."

Welch added that the state mandated that at least 20 percent be assessed.

Bjerga asked if the city would consider the 20 per-

cent as their policy rather than 30 percent.

Sampson thought the city could be at risk of losing the bonding if they couldn't meet the 20 percent because the project had overages or if someone didn't pay the assessment.

Bjerga disagreed saying he thought, since it was going on to the property taxes, "it will get paid one way or another."

Welch added that the city looked at the assessment policies of a lot of other cities.

"Some cities assess 100 percent, so the city is trying to be reasonable," Welch said. "They need some leeway if other additions come up."

It was also noted that a final assessment hearing will be held once the project is complete.

Robert Jensen, Sr. said taxes on his property in Motley were much higher than taxes on property he owns in Cass County and he asked if council members had spent time with others like that township to see how they did it.

Mattke shared her personal example of living in a rural area near Spicer, saying the neighbors in a cul de sac were assessed \$7,000 per home to have a tarred road.

Zetah asked if the city would consider extending the commercial assessment from eight years to 15 years like the residential.

He also asked about lowering the property owners portion by five percent to 25 percent rather than 30 percent.

Bjerga also added that bonding now would likely lock in a low interest rate, "so it's the ideal time to do it, no doubt about that." He added he'd still like to see them at 20 percent because "those few dollars mean a lot to some people."

Marge Mills said it would be "nice to walk on a road that was safe, rather

than full of holes. If our town can't look nice, why would anybody want to come here?"

Gary Nieken wanted to know "when are we going to get our street? I live in that swamp hole," referring to a persistent water problem on Beaulieu Street.

Welch said the soonest they could start was when road restrictions are off next spring.

The proposed project area includes:

- Beaulieu Street from County Line Rd. to Hwy 10
- Main Street from 6th Ave. to 5th Ave. and 4th Ave. to Hwy 10
- 6th, 5th, 4th and 3rd Avenues between Beaulieu Street and Main Street.

The area has been extended one more block from 6th Ave. to County Line Rd.

The city plans to improve the roadway and the storm sewer system.

Beaulieu will have mill and inlay between 3rd Ave. and Hwy. 10 with the existing curb and gutter and sidewalk to remain in place. Between 5th and 3rd Avenues on Beaulieu will be a 36 ft. wide bituminous roadway with curb and gutter. A 24 ft. bituminous roadway will be in place west of 5th Ave. The storm sewer system will be extended to the west with curb inlets to pick up drainage.

Main Street from 3rd Ave. to Hwy. 10 and 3rd Ave. will have a 36 ft. wide bituminous roadway with curb and gutter and a storm sewer with curb inlets.

The remainder of Main Street, and 4th, 5th and 6th Avenues will have a 24 ft. wide bituminous roadway with ditches.

Welch had a graphic showing what assessments were currently on each lot. Property owners approached him separately after the meeting to get specific figures for their lots.



Up close look

Bryan Hutchison (far right), 1st Asst. Fire Chief with the Motley Fire Department, spoke with Kindergarten students from Motley Elementary School Oct. 8, about fire prevention; and showed them

various pieces of equipment stored on fire trucks. Also pictured is MFD 2nd Asst. Chief Steve Dille (center) and Kindergarten teacher Mrs. Ferdon. (Staples World photo by Dawn Schimpp Timbs)

Seasonal flu vaccine delays

Cass County Health, Human and Veterans Services, Public Health Division recently announced they are experiencing delays in receiving the remaining doses of the seasonal flu vaccine.

"We are not able to hold any further community public clinics until the remaining seasonal flu vaccine is received," said Jamie Richter, Adult Public Health Supervisor.

Regarding the H1N1 vaccination planning, public health will be targeting the high risk groups first as the vaccine becomes available.

For information call the public health division, 218-547-1340



Putting it out

MFD fire chief Dave Greig instructs Lana Hansen, a member of the Motley Elementary School kitchen staff, in using a fire extinguisher Oct. 8, part of Fire Prevention Week. Other kitchen staff that took part in the training were Nancy Nieken, Mary Martin and Tammy Bell. (Staples World photo by Dawn Schimpp Timbs)

ESTHER continued from page 2b

'Motley in the springtime. That would be wonderful,' says Esther as she plans visit

Paul's grave...he's buried there in Motley. Eldon said he would check into it for me."

Esther's voice sobered a bit as she recalled the murder of her brother, Paul, in 1922. He was only 22 years old.

Paul had been hired as a watchman/guard for the railroad; a job that was supposed to be conducted in pairs. There was a railroad strike going on at the time, which made for strained, often volatile working conditions.

Unfortunately, Esther said, her brother's partner did not show up for work that day; and as Paul was walking back to the depot in Staples at around 5 a.m., he was shot four times by some men hiding in the bushes.

The men took flight, Esther said; and were never found.

"My brother lived long enough to say that they got the wrong person," Esther said. "It was very sad for everyone, especially for my folks."

She thinks about Paul to this day; and has been relieved to know that Eldon Morey, along with Paul Schlichting (the Motley cemetery's caretaker) has been tending to his grave.

Since getting in touch with Esther, Eldon said he has been reading up on the railroad strike and on the unfortunate death of Paul Montgomery.

"A lot was written about the murder in both the Motley Mercury and the Staples World newspapers," Eldon said. "In fact, there seems to have been a running heated battle between the editors of the two papers - Ernest Haymaker and E.D. Lum - in regard to the incident."

Haymaker, the editor of the Motley Mercury, was a bit of an extremist, Eldon said. Lum's columns, as well, were spiced with words which wouldn't be described as 'neutral' by most of today's readers.

In addition to Eldon, Esther has been in contact with Ella Topp, a longtime member of the Motley Histori-



Gravestone

Paul Montgomery, a former watchman with the railroad, was murdered in 1922, while on duty in Staples. Eldon Morey and Paul Schlichting, both of Motley, have recently been tending to Paul's gravestone, per request of his sister, Esther (Montgomery) Johnson of Seattle. (Submitted photo by Eldon Morey)

cal Society; and author of the book "The Right Side of the River," written for the town's Centennial.

Ella recently helped Esther locate some of the Montgomery family history; and discovered that the property on which Esther's childhood home once stood is now owned by Mark Frisk of Motley.

The Mill Pond Townhomes, which Frisk built a few years ago, now grace the banks of the water where Charles Montgomery first brought his family from Nebraska.

"I hope I can come back to Motley and meet these new friends," Esther said. "There weren't many people left that I knew when I was there for the Centennial. Margaret Erbe and I had a nice time visiting; but I believe she must have passed away...a Christmas card I sent to her last year was returned."

After she graduated from high school, Esther left Motley to attend college in South Dakota. She majored in English and history, two subjects she is passionate about.

"I've always loved history. You know my grandfather was a general in the Civil War...Moses G. Montgomery was his name," Esther shared.

In addition to history, while she was in South Dakota Esther fell in love with Walter Johnson, a man she described over the phone as "tall and handsome." When he asked her to marry him, she said, "yes."

Walter was a businessman; and his company (ALCOA) moved the Johnson family around quite a bit. "We lived in Sioux Falls, Minneapolis, Cleveland and New York," she said, adding that eventually they settled in Seattle.

"Seattle's great," she tells this reporter. "I hope you can come out and meet my family someday."

Walter and Esther raised three daughters together. Although she taught school off and on over the years, Esther said her most important and enjoyable job was

taking care of her family.

After Walter's death in 1992, Esther met the second love of her life...George Johnson.

"He's Walter's brother," Esther said. "George lost his wife two weeks after I lost Walter."

George and Esther were married in 1993; and have been enjoying life to the max, Esther exclaimed into the phone.

"We have a lot of fun together...we've traveled to Mexico in our motor-home. I think that's the secret to living a long life...you just keep going."

In fact, Esther tells this reporter, her 97-year-old husband, George, plays golf on a regular basis and still reports to work every day.

"My husband's in real estate," Esther says. "He owns 'George Johnson Realty' in Seattle. Did you happen to see a news story CNN did about him recently?"

George even has his own website, Esther says. "If you go to it, you can see his picture. He's very cute," she says with a giggle.

It would be wonderful, Esther said, if she could bring George to Motley; to show him where she grew up so many years ago now.

"If we do come out that way, I imagine we'll have to fly into Minneapolis and then rent a car from there. It would be an awfully long train ride," Esther said, the wheels obviously spinning in her mind.

"Yes, I think we'll just have to fly there," she added.

"Motley in the springtime. That would be wonderful."

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