CASPIAN—The pros and cons of a new Department of Public Works building were discussed at the December meeting of the Caspian City Commission.

With cost estimates between $350,000 and $375,000, not including ground work, some commissioners wondered if city funds would not be better spent on city streets. __PUBLIC__

Commissioner Tony Dallavalle said he would like to see more roads paved, while Commissioner Colleen Smetak noted that people have asked her what is wrong with the old building.

Mayor Mark Stauber replied that to bring the old building up to date could cost more than putting up a new pole building. “A new building would be much more energy-efficient and all under one roof, not scattered all over,” he said.

The proposed 60-by-80-foot building would be erected near the Caspian-Gaastra Fire Hall. It would include a small office, restroom and public works garage.

Commissioner Gary Sabol liked the idea of the new building being near the fire hall and added that the price seemed reasonable.

Stauber said that, financially, the city is in the shape to do something. Either way, he added, something will need to be done with the old public works building.

With no grant dollars available in the near future, but a low interest loan a good possibility, City Manager John Stokoski was directed to look into a more detailed cost estimate for the building.

A public hearing was held preceding the meeting, allowing public comment on the recent MEDC water project. The MEDC grant of $187,500 helped purchase radio read meters on all residences and a new generator, as well as updates to the wellhouse, water tower and control panels. The public hearing was the final stipulation before the project was officially closed out.

GEI Consultants’ Mark Stoor updated commissioners on the Rural Development sewer project, noting that a few minor issues were able to be taken care of without disturbing the blacktop. The final pay application was authorized, with the total budget coming in at $3.45 million.

Expenses were $4,200 over the RD grant amount, which the city will pick up. Stokoski explained that it was better for the city to chip in a little and get more done than to give grant money back. The completion date for the project was extended to May 15 to insure that final restoration is acceptable.

Commissioners agreed to put a parcel of land at the end of Third Street out for bid, with a minimum bid of $500 plus closing costs. It has received a purchase request from a nearby landowner.