

City of Vernon Center

1/8/2024

Public Hearing and Regular Council Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, Adam Finney, and Lisa Peterson

Staff Present: Clerk Kara Hansen, Public Works Supervisor Mark Willette

Others Present: Engineer Chris Knutson and Calvin Baarts

Public Hearing: Mayor Ziegler called the Public Hearing to order at 6:01 PM.

Clerk Hansen discussed the fee changes in 2024. All water and sewer rates have increased 2%. Bag tags have also increased by 7%, but the city has not purchased bag tags since 2019. Garbage and recycling rates will increase by 4% starting July 1st. There were no questions about the fee schedule.

Councilor Finney made a motion to close the public hearing. 2nd by Councilor Peterson. All approved.

Motion carried.

Mayor Ziegler opened the regular council meeting at 6:02 PM.

Approve agenda

Councilor Edwards asked to pull item "G" from the consent agenda for review. Councilor Bennett asked for the property at 102 West St N to be put under Additional Bills. Line item #12, Jesse Kietzer Fire Chief, was removed.

Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the 12/5/2023 meeting minutes and 12/13/2023 special council meeting minutes, Check Reconciliations, December Cash Balance Investment Report, Checks for Month showing \$2,610,804.51 in deposits and 2,075,759.40 in checks, Savings and Loan Balance, City Revenue Guidelines, City Expenditure Guidelines, 20-23 Project expense report, City Savings Balances, January and February calendar of events, BEC Call Log for December, VCFD December Report, Resolution 2024-01 for appointments and Designations, Resolution 2024-03 approving subscriptions, dues, and memberships, Resolution 2024-04 Authorizing Clerk to pay bills, Resolution 2024-05 Authorizing clerk to make electronic funds & wire Transfers, and the Emergency Procedure Plan & Contact List with minor changes.

Councilor Finney made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved.

Motion Carried.

Councilor Edwards stated Item "G" Resolution 2024-01 for Appointments and Designations had

Councilor Peterson on the personnel committee. It needed to be changed to Councilor Edwards.

Councilor Finney asked to be put on the zoning board as the regular council member. Mayor Ziegler was moved to alternate on the zoning board.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-01 Appointments and Designations with the corrections and changes. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

Additional Bills

a. Add'l Bills. Clerk Hansen said she accidentally left off LJP, but added it last minute to the agenda packet. Councilor Peterson asked if Willow Creek Restoration and Renovation was for the city shop. PW Supervisor Willette said it was. Councilor Peterson asked if that was all the work the city shop needed. PW Supervisor Willette said he is having a plumber come out in February and an electrician will follow. Mayor Ziegler said Nero Engineering was for the overseeing the extraction of the water treatment plant

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equipment from the City of Rushmore.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the additional bills with the addition of LJP. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

b. SEH Bills. Clerk Hansen said the council wanted both these invoices put on the agenda for the January meeting. Councilor Peterson asked if Clerk Hansen had heard anything further about PFA bonding. Clerk Hansen said PFA Senior Loan Officer Katelynn Kanuit reached out to her last week and stated she would be in touch soon. Mayor Ziegler asked if there was enough money for the bond the city took out last month to cover both these bills. Clerk Hansen said there was enough money to cover these invoices. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the two invoices from SEH. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

c. Northland Trust Invoice. Clerk Hansen said this invoice needed a motion as it was for a loan. Councilor Bennet asked if Northland Trust was a bank. Councilor Peterson said it is a bonding agency. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the payment to Northland Trust. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion Carried.

c. 102 West St N. Councilor Bennett said a resident reached out to her inquiring about the property because the current owner took out a loan with a ten-year life on it, and if the owner sold the property, where would the remaining money go on the loan. Mayor Ziegler said the owner would have to extend the remaining balance toward the city unless the city approved the new buyer take it on which the council has done in the past. Councilor Peterson said the owner who wishes to sell will have to work with DEED and come up with a plan for the remaining amount on the loan. If DEED and the homeowner come to an agreement then they can present it to the City Council. Mayor Ziegler said it is a pre-sale agreement. Councilor Peterson said if the homeowner sells the property without telling the city council, then the city council should be mentioned in the closing documents because of UCCs filed. There should be payments made to the city unless there are arrangements made beforehand.

Public Comment

None.

Infrastructure Project

a. Interim Loan Update. Clerk Hansen informed the council that the loan funds came through on December 27th, 2023 which was the closing date. She immediately paid Holtmeier the city's portion of Pay Application Number One and Pay Application Number Two. The loan amount will cover Pay Application Number Three if the council approves it.

b. Pay Application #3. The amount for Pay Application #3 was \$289,221.89. Engineer Chris Knutson said the amount was generally from materials on hand, and would be integrated into the work next year. Engineer Knutson said once Ed Gilmore of USDA-RD signs it, Clerk Hansen will need to forward it to him and he will get the documents to Blue Earth County.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Pay Application #3 for \$289,221.89. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

Public Works

a. Water Meter at 102 West St N. PW Supervisor Willette said the owner of 102 West St N had him check to see if the water meter was correctly hooked up. He said it was not. The water is turned off so he

doesn't know if it leaks. Councilor Peterson said if the property is sold, they have to do a point of sale and the point of sale will reveal all problems with the water meter. She instructed PW Supervisor Willette and Clerk Hansen to write a letter to the current owner on what PW Supervisor Willette found, and that Point-of-Sale documents need to be performed before the property sells.

b. Railroad Street. PW Supervisor Willette said there is nothing on County Road 10 for the storm sewer to drain the north half of Railroad St. The water flowed southward beforehand, and the sanitary sewer acted as the drain tile. As the new sanitary sewer has been installed, there is now standing water on Railroad St. PW Supervisor Willette took pictures and notes. Engineer Chris Knutson needs permission to fix it by extending the storm sewer from the west, past the stop sign, and hook it to the east and west side of railroad. Engineer Chris Knutson said the city couldn't use any money for the DEED project for this. The west side of Railroad St is not in the right of way so easements would need to be attained on three properties. A tile line on the east side would be the best option to stay in the right of way. Mayor Ziegler said they need to make sure whatever the contractor does it needs to take care of the standing water on both sides of Railroad, and the city asked Engineer Knutson to get a price for the fix.

c. Park Ave PW Supervisor Willette took Engineer Chris Knutson to Park Ave South to show how wobbly the street is. The city may want to think about extending some asphalt into the following year. Councilor Peterson asked what the timeline was for the bonding bill. Engineer Chris Knutson said the bonding bill goes into 2025, but the contractor will need to be agreeable to it. Mayor Ziegler said they will bring this up after construction starts again.

d. Sidewalk on Main Street The last conversation PW Supervisor Willette had with County Engineer Ryan Thilges is that the sidewalk on Main St would get done, and that would need verified. Mayor Ziegler said a conversation needs to be had with the county as they had agreed to have the sidewalk done. After the county gives the okay, SEH will have to inspect each property and see which properties have rebar and which ones have different materials. Mayor Ziegler said he wanted to make sure every resident is treated the same. PW Supervisor Willette said it would all be in the notes. Engineer Chris Knutson said he will have his inspectors mark which properties had what. Councilor Peterson said if driveways have rebar, they get rebar put back in. If a driveway has mesh, they get 7-inch reinforced concrete. Engineer Chris Knutson said it would be put in a work directive and won't be in the plans, but it will get done. He will also reach out to County Engineer Ryan Thilges about the sidewalks.

e. Other Notes. PW Supervisor Willette said he will start working on the Lead and Copper Rule now that it is winter. He called Engineer Chris Knutson about what SEH found last fall during construction so he can add it to his notes. Mayor Ziegler asked about the information PW Supervisor Willette sent him about the DMRs, and told PW Supervisor Willette to take how much rain received for the month, total flow for month, and what the peak was for the month and provide the information on one sheet. He informed PW Supervisor Willette not to go beyond 2011. He wants a document that shows how much I&I reduction the city has. Clerk Hansen was directed to help PW Supervisor Willette with this.

Miscellaneous

a. Fire Department Donation. Clerk Hansen said the donation is a portable generator from Patricia Dotter. It is in "like-new" condition.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to accept the donation of a portable generator. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. Councilor Finney abstained. All approved. Motion Carried.

b. MnDOT Projects. Councilor Peterson said she doesn't think the city wants to pursue this as they have enough projects at the moment.

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c. Public Hearing Notice. Clerk Hansen said she sent the information for the Public Hearing Notice to the Maple River Messenger on December 21st and received kick back that the paper would include it the next week, but it was never put in. The Maple River Messenger reached out to Clerk Hansen, apologizing for the mistake and owned up to it. Clerk Hansen said she wanted the council to know what happened, and asked the Maple River Messenger to provide a written statement which she received and included in the agenda packet for audit purposes.

d. Point of Sale Update. Clerk Hansen said she reached out to Brenda Reed of Le Sueur County Abstract which is the title company responsible for the sale of 203 Park Ave North, and they had never received the Point-of-Sale documents from Edina Realty. The realtor handling the sale said they would deliver those documents but that never happened. That realtor has since left Edina Realty and is not responding to calls or emails from either Clerk Hansen, Brenda Reed, or anyone at Edina Realty. Brenda Reed reached Vonda Herding in Edina Realty who provided the Water Point-of-Sale documents for 203 Park Ave N, but the sewer is still missing. The realtor is currently looking for those documents, and Clerk Hansen will continue to follow up.

City Council meeting Schedule. Clerk Hansen said the November date is scheduled on the 14th because of the election canvassing.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the city council meeting schedule. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion Carried.

Pay Equity Report. Councilor Peterson asked how the points are calculated. Clerk Hansen said the point system is in place by the state.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to submit the Pay Equity data. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion Carried.

Next Meeting Scheduled for Tuesday, February 6th, 2024

Adjourn: Councilor Edwards made a motion to adjourn. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.