

City of Vernon Center  
10/7/2024  
Regular Council Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, Adam Finney and Lisa Peterson.  
Staff Present: Clerk Kara Hansen, and PW Supervisor Mark Willette  
Others Present: Chad Ostermann, Faith from MRM, Engineer Eric Meester, Engineer Chris Knutson

Mayor Ziegler opened the Regular Council Meeting at 6:00 PM.

### **Approve Agenda**

Mayor Ziegler moved number 9, Chad Ostermann M&M Insurance, up to 4b. Change order #2 was moved from 6b to 6a, and Pay App #9 moved from 6a to 6b.

Councilor Finney made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda included the 9/5/2024 & 9/30/24 meeting minutes, Check Reconciliations, August Cash Balance Investment Report, Checks for Month showing in \$232,525.59. deposits and \$96,222.33 in checks, Savings and Loan Balance, City Revenue Guideline, City Savings Balances, October & November calendar of events, the BEC Call Log for September, September FD Report, and Resolution 2024-20.

Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Additional Bills**

#### **a). Add'l Bills**

Councilor Finney asked if the Kwik Trip for 160.04 was correct. Clerk Hansen said it was not, and should be \$16.04.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve the additional bills with the Kwik trip fixed from \$160.04 to \$16.04. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Peterson. All approved. Motion carried.

#### **b). Chad Ostermann M&M Insurance**

Chad Ostermann said the City is doing good, and there are not a lot of changes. The insurance premium is down \$285 due to modifications for auto experience and liability experience. Worker's Comp and payroll have also gone down. There have been no work comp losses since 2019, and there was only one liability claim in the past year. He recommended the city waive the tort limit and purchase extra liability insurance as it had in the past.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve to waive the tort limit and purchase the extra liability insurance. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Public Comment**

Faith asked the council if she can get emails for the council to send out questionnaires. Mayor Ziegler said every candidate is running unopposed. Faith said she would check with her editors to see if they still wanted the questionnaire filled out.

### **Infrastructure Project**

#### **a). Change Order #2**

Change order #2 is for curb and gutter on south Hilltop and increase the pavement section, and relocation of curb radius on west side of Railroad St. Includes reconstruction of storm catch basin in the cul-de-sac of Hilltop St. Engineer Knutson said Change Order #2 needs to be approved before Pay

Application #9 can be approved.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Change Order #2 in the amount of \$198,018.30. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

**b). Pay Application #9**

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Pay Application #9 for \$635,525.36 but the City will only pay when it is reimbursed from state bonding, BEC portion of Pay Application #9, and all USDA-RD funding. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

**c). Citizen Concern**

Mayor Ziegler stated the Citizen Concern was already taken care of.

**d). DEED Project Final Payment**

Clerk Hansen said she still has not received paperwork back from Holtmeier so the City can send in the final payment for the DEED Project. She said she contacted Jim Voda from Holtmeier, and has not heard back from him. Mayor Ziegler directed Engineer Chris Knutson to contact Holtmeier and tell them the City wants the paperwork to fulfill the final DEED payment by the end of the month.

Mayor Ziegler brought up the stairs at the post office. He said he can't put a full foot on the bottom step and there were height discrepancies between the steps. Mayor Ziegler said he would like the steps to match code and have it on paper. However, he wasn't opposed to taking the steps out altogether and just having the ramp. Engineer Knutson said redoing the stairs or taking the stairs out will have to be done next spring. Mayor Ziegler said in the meantime a railing needs to be installed to prevent someone from getting hurt trying to use the stairs. He directed Clerk Hansen to send a letter to the post office detailing why there is a need to close the steps off.

Councilor Peterson asked when the road signs would be coming in so the council could approve them. Engineer Knutson asked if they wanted to replace the signs on the streets that were seeing work during the project or all of the signs. Councilor Peterson said the street signs for the 2015 Project were coming to the end of their reflective life and thought all the street signs should be replaced.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to replace all the signs. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

**Public Works**

**a). PW Supervisor Notes**

PW Supervisor Willette said there are items at the Dump Site which aren't in the dumpsters and shouldn't have been dumped there. Mayor Ziegler directed Clerk Hansen to write Vernon Center Township a letter about the items and ask them to remove them. PW Supervisor Willette said the resident at 409 First St E purchased a 1.5" meter and wanted to see if the city would accept the two 5/8" meters he took out for a credit. The council agreed on a \$100 credit per meter for the resident.

**b). Sewer Lateral Replacement Plans**

Councilor Peterson asked which contractors would be performing the work for 301 West St N and 100 Railroad ST. Clerk Hansen said Schwikert's is doing 301 West St N and Crystal Construction is doing 100 Railroad St. Precision Backhoe will be doing the digging and they are approved to dig in the city right-of-way.

**c). WTP – Eric Meester**

Engineer Eric Meester presented a slide show of the water treatment plant improvements and salvage of the equipment. After discussion, the council decided to approve Task One. Engineer Eric Meester said he would draw up a proposal for the Mayor to sign and have it sent to Clerk Hansen this week.

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Mayor Ziegler made a motion to approve the engineering agreement with Nero Engineering for Task 1 only to \$70,114.00 with a completion date of January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Peterson. All approved. Motion carried.

**d). Co-op Elevator Sewer Lateral Condition**

PW Supervisor Willette had a section of Crystal Valley Cooperative's sewer lateral, showing how it's plugged. Mayor Ziegler asked if Crystal Valley was aware of the condition of their sewer lateral and if the City had pictures. PW Supervisor Willette said they were aware and he has pictures. He said Crystal Valley is non-compliant, and they would have to replace the whole sewer lateral.

**e). Sewer Lateral Separation**

PW Supervisor Willette said the sewer lateral between 102 Oak St N and 101 Poplar St W was successful, and that 102 Oak St N still has a non-compliant sewer lateral, and 101 Poplar St W has 3' of sewer lateral that isn't compliant.

**f). Metering and Technology Solutions Software**

Clerk Hansen said to have this technology up and running by January, the City should make the commitment and start the process. The software upgrade was already in the 2025 budget and the invoice would go through in January.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to move forward with Metering software. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

**Follow up From Previous Meeting**

Councilor Peterson asked about the change to the Point-of-Sale Forms. Mayor Ziegler said it was still open. Councilor Peterson asked about the DEED Project. Clerk Hansen said she would speak with Clerk Roelofs about it as she's not familiar enough with DEED. Councilor Peterson asked about the residents who signed up for the Sewer Lateral Finance Program, and directed Clerk Hansen to create a spreadsheet for those who signed up for the new program. Mayor Ziegler said he is not able to attend the November 14<sup>th</sup>, Regular Meeting and election canvassing and asked Clerk Hansen to reach out to Michael Stalberger to see if he was required to be present for the canvassing.

**Next Meeting Scheduled for 11/14/2024**

**Adjourn**

Councilor Peterson made a motion to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02PM.

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Kara Hansen, Clerk-Treasurer

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Lisa Peterson, Acting Mayor    Date approved