

Council Present: Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, Adam Finney, & Lisa Peterson  
Staff Present: Clerk Kara Hansen, Public Works Supervisor Mark Willette  
Others Present: Tamara from MRM, Shiela Morey, Anthony James Moreno

Mayor Ziegler opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 PM. There was one property who didn't pay their utilities. They had signed a deferred payment agreement stating they would pay the back due amount on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, but Clerk Hansen never received a payment.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to adjourn the public hearing at 6:01 PM. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

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

### **Approve agenda**

Mayor Ziegler asked to add Resolution 2025-32 Utility Assessments and to put it under 9c. Councilor Finney asked to put 101 Oak St S Water Meter under 8b. Mayor Ziegler asked to pull out the SSS Financing from the consent agenda and put it under 8c.

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

### **Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda included the 10/7/2025, 10/28/2025, & 10/31/2025 meeting minutes, check reconciliations, Savings and Loan Balances, October Cash Balance Investment Report, checks for month showing \$28,204.59 in deposits and \$46,027.11 in checks, October Expenditure Guideline, October Revenue Guideline, 20-23 Project Excel Spreadsheet, November & December calendar of events, the BEC Call log for October, November Fire Department Report, Fire Department PPE, and the 2025 Weed Report.

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

### **Additional Bills**

#### **a). Additional Bills**

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the additional bills. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

#### **b). Resolution 2025-27 Funds Transfer**

Clerk Hansen said this is a transfer based on a 2015 Project Assessment payoff.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-27 Funds Transfer from the 601 Checking to the 2015 Project Savings in the amount of \$1,773.90. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

#### **c). Resolution 2025-28 Funds Transfer**

Clerk Hansen said this transfer is to fix a negative balance in the 420 account which totals (\$1,130.69.) There are three more invoices she's waiting on which total \$20,070.00. She is proposing a \$22,500.00 transfer to ensure the account remains positive.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-28 Funds Transfer from 607 savings to 420 general fund in the amount of \$22,500.00. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

#### **d). Resolution 2025-29**

Clerk Hansen said this transfer is to move the Public Safety Grant money from savings to checking.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-29 transfer funds from 402 Public Safety to 101 general checking in the amount of \$14,266.00. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Peterson. Councilor Finney abstained.

**e). Snow Hauling Contract**

Clerk Hansen said Peterson Motor Grader's rates are the same this year as they were last year. Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve the Snow Hauling Contract with a retainer of \$21,600 and hourly fees of \$145/hour for hauling, and \$240/hour for plowing. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. Councilor Peterson abstained. All approved. Motion carried.

**Public Comment**

Anthony Moreno and Sheila Morey were present representing the homeowner of 101 Poplar St E. The homeowner had not specified an agenda item to speak about, but simply wanted to be informed about the meeting. Anthony brought up the sign on the north side of town advertising the meat market and asked what it would take to bring a nicer sign to town. PW Supervisor Willette said the sign was on private property, and it would be up to the owner of that property to remove or replace it. Councilor Finney said he would investigate whose property the sign was on.

**Infrastructure Project**

**a). Well Project**

Mayor Ziegler said there were two special meetings as the federal government was furloughed and Ed Gilmore of USDA-RD would be unreachable until the federal government approved a budget. Until then, invoices would not be reimbursed and they couldn't write checks to fund the well project. The contractor, Rubin Construction, and the City decided to extend the contract so it wouldn't need to be rebid and there were \$150,000 of expenses that would need to be paid. The money would likely be pulled from the Future Project Fund. PW Supervisor Willette said work was tentatively set to begin at the WWTP on December 1<sup>st</sup>, weather permitting. PW Supervisor Willette said there is a color code change for a hydrant for the well. It'll be yellow, and for non-potable water use and cleaning.

**Public Works**

**a). Public Works Supervisor Notes**

PW Supervisor Willette said he spoke with Clerk Hansen about the budget and decided to order some radio readers and water meters with that money. Mayor Ziegler said he is still working on the sewer lateral report for the City.

**b). 101 Oak St S**

PW Supervisor Willette said he successfully replaced the meter at 101 Oak St S, but there is a software issue with the Banyon program and he has to read the meter manually. Clerk Hansen reported that the meter is reading the usage in that resident as it should.

Mayor Ziegler said residents will receive one warning to move their vehicles before a projected snowfall of 2 inches or greater. After the warning, if their vehicle is still on a city street, they will be towed.

**c) SSS Financing**

Mayor Ziegler said most of the funds for the SSS Financing Plan were used up, and the City should look at closing the program. Clerk Hansen said she has three quotes that she hasn't received invoices for, but they have been deducted from the funds, leaving the SSS balance with \$5,121.94. Councilor Peterson asked Clerk Hansen to research how long the SSS Financing plan was to be open and have that ready for the December meeting.

## **Follow up From Previous Meeting**

### **a). Fidium-Consolidated Contract**

Clerk Hansen said the updated quote had one copper line open and two VOIP phones for City Hall and the Fire Department. Councilor Peterson said with the taxes and fees the monthly amount for the City phone and Internet should be relatively the same.

Councilor Finney made a motion to approve the Fidium/Consolidated contract. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried. Councilor Peterson abstained.

### **b). Cannabis Ordinance**

Clerk Hansen said she's been in contact with John Considine, but correspondence has gone months. She said in her latest set of emails the City cannot delegate the county to have authority to grant a cannabis license within the City of Vernon Center, as the county has no authority to enforce the City's zoning ordinance. Councilor Peterson asked if the amount of cannabis retail locations was based on population. Clerk Hansen said it was, and per population the county can only allow six cannabis retail businesses in the entire county. She reached out to other cities and received three ordinances and did a comparison of them. The council looked at the comparison and asked Clerk Hansen to draft an ordinance with specs including business operation closure at 10 PM and the buffer distance of at least 500 feet in parks. Then have the city attorney review the ordinance, and present it at the December meeting.

### **304 Hilltop**

Clerk Hansen said the residents of 304 Hilltop St set up a deferred payment arrangement at City Hall on 10/30/2025 with the plan to pay on 11/3/2025. To date, she has not received a payment. She said the phone numbers for the residents do not work so she's not able to contact them by phone. She said they didn't pay their past due balance in May and had their water shut off, and they attempted to contact her family after hours and tried to come to her house to resolve the issue. She said she's told them not to contact her or her family members if there is an issue, and to only come to City Hall during business hours. Mayor Ziegler emphasized that it is inappropriate for residents to contact the city clerk or her family outside of business hours for city matters. If a resident has an issue, they need to go to City Hall during regular business hours. He said if something similar happened in the future that Clerk Hansen should inform the personnel committee straightaway so they can handle it. He didn't recommend the water be turned off to 304 Hilltop St as the Cold Weather Rule is in effect until April.

## **Resolutions for Assessment**

### **a. Resolution 2025-30**

Clerk Hansen said this resolution is to certify those residents who signed up for SSS Financing and had their sewer laterals replaced.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-30 certifying SSS Financing assessment to Blue Earth County. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

### **b. Resolution 2025-31**

Clerk Hansen said this assessment is for lawn work done at 100 First St E.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-31 certifying lawn care charges to 100 First St E as property assessment. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

### **c. Resolution 2025-32**

Mayor Ziegler said this was what was discussed at the public hearing.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-32 certifying delinquent utilities to the county. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

### **SCDP For 100 Kendall St**

Clerk Hansen said she received a letter from the bank who repossessed the property at 100 Kendall St. She said she reached out to Judd Schultz as the previous property owner had an SCDP Loan taken out. Judd Schultz said the City has the option to save the lien by paying off the current mortgage, but he didn't recommend it, and said the City's lien would be wiped out by the foreclosure. Mayor Ziegler said he didn't recommend the City buy the house to wipe out the lien.

### **City Owned Properties**

Clerk Hansen said she is working with the city attorney's office to determine the legal feasibility of selling city owned property with stipulations the buyer builds on those properties. The city can set up a "restrictive covenant" which would bind any successors in the event the new property owner sells the property without developing it. Mayor Ziegler asked Clerk Hansen to reach out to the attorney and clarify the costs for paperwork, and encouraged the council to speak to other residents to see how they'd feel about selling and having the plots developed. He also wanted the council to research how they should sell the properties, such as having a sealed bid process.

### **Utility Amounts from Previous Residents**

Clerk Hansen said there are three balances from residents who sold their houses and didn't fully pay off the amount. She reached out to the auditors, and they recommended they be adjusted in UB, but she needed council approval. She said she reached out to two of the previous residents and one paid the back amount, and she couldn't get ahold of the other. Councilor Peterson said the (\$.77) due to one resident should be refunded them, and she recommended the \$42.60 be cleared from the books. Councilor Finney made a motion to waive the \$42.60 final utility billing charge and to refund \$.77. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Peterson. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Next Meeting Scheduled for 12/9/2025**

### **Adjourn**

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

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 PM**