

City of Vernon Center  
PH & Regular Council Meeting Minutes  
11-3-22, 7pm

Council Present: Lisa Peterson, Eric Pederson, Emily Edwards, Mayor Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett  
Staff Present: PW supervisor Mark Willette, Clerk Diane Roelofs  
Others Present: Rep. Bjorn Olsen, Lisa Graphenteen-Mkto/BEC Affordable Housing

Mayor Ziegler opened the Public Hearing at 7pm. It was reported that no assessments would be necessary as they all paid or signed a payment agreement before the deadline. Mayor Ziegler asked if anyone had any comments or concerns about utility special assessments. No comments. Councilor Peterson made a motion to adjourn the public hearing at 7:01pm. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Pederson, all approved, motion carried.

Mayor Ziegler opened the regular council meeting at 7:01pm.

**Agenda:** Remove 11 and 10b as not needed. Reorganization of agenda and Betty Bergeman update will be added to the miscellaneous. Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Peterson, all approved, motion carried.

**Public Safety:** Patrols per the month totaled 47.56 with an average of 10.71 per week.

**Infrastructure Project-Rep. Bjorn Olsen:** Rep. Olsen started out by saying that he visits all councils within his district to touch base with them. He is on the local gov't committee and the transportation committee. Council informed Rep. Olsen of the city infrastructure project and the need to move forward before the 2024 deadline of the state bonding. Council also told him that there were 2 bills written up by Rep. Munson's office to be passed onto the incoming representative. Rep. Olsen stated that it would be hard to get more money as the one bill asks; but the language change bill would be much more attainable. He will stop down to Rep. Munson's office and pick up the bills upon his election.

**Mankato/Blue Earth County Affordable Housing Action Plan-Lisa Graphenteen:** Ms. Graphenteen presented information on the 2020 BEC/Vernon Center Housing Study. She asked council what the City of Vernon Center's main housing priorities are. Lots in the past that have had houses taken down are not being replaced with a house; therefore, the lot sits empty losing potential tax and utility revenues. Another concern is that the city also has city-owned empty lots and would consider selling for a small amount if there is a guarantee a house would be put up. Another concern of the city would be that the programs like Small Cities Development hit only the low-income residents. It would be a benefit to those residents who don't meet the low-income requirements to have a program of a very low or zero interest loan for residential improvements.

**Public Works-Supervisor Mark Willette:** Mayor Ziegler provided a picture of a 6" steel pipe that was discovered in the alley behind the post office. Council was asked to consider approving a change order in order to investigate the line. Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve a change order to investigate the pipe. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried. Railroad Street showed the Speck property waterline to run down Railroad St. and a temporary correction was made until the waterline will be fixed. There is a service line under Co. Rd. 10 to Lori Spence & Luke's Electric that will need to be reviewed for horizontal boring next spring. Clerk should look up history of the installation of the 6" water line. One pedestrian cross walk sign disappeared and council agreed it should be replaced. MDH inventory was reviewed by council. MPCA report should include 6 blocks of sewer main for the I&I Reduction Report.

The city would like to thank the Speck family, Wayne & Pat Krosch, and Bailey family for allowing the construction company to lay and work on the sewer pipes during the construction of sewer pipe bursting. The pipe bursting should

be done by the end of next week. Sup. Willette asked if the council would be okay to stock pile 2 loads of gravel for Railroad St. and allies for bad spots and settling estimated at a cost of \$1400. Council agreed to this.

**Consent Agenda:** Consent agenda included the 10-4-22 minutes, checks for the month (deposits \$41,305.38 and checks \$25,826.80), October Cash Balance Investment Report, City Savings & Loan Bal excel report, Sept. bank recons, revenue & expenditure guideline reports, Nov & Dec. calendar of events, DNR drought report, BEC Mayor/Clerk meeting, 2022 Local Weed Inspector Report. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

**Additional Bills:** Council reviewed the additional bills and briefly discussed the necessity of a charge for towing a Fire Truck to D&K Tire. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the additional bills. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried.

**Parker Place Apartment letter:** Council reviewed a letter from Brooke Wentzlaff, owner of parker Place Apts. Reasons were reviewed by council and a letter will be sent out in response. The current process of billing the water and sewer fees has been administered since 1998, loans are based on revenue levels from the 2015 Project and currently the water and sewer funds are barely making money. The Council agreed it doesn't seem prudent to make changes to our current rates/fee structure until the projects are completed so it can be determined the operating costs and loan obligations.

**Snow Plow Contract:** Council reviewed the snow plow contract submitted by Peterson Motor Grader Service which showed an increase from last year. Councilor Pederson made a motion to approve the Peterson Motor Grader contract for Nov. 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried. Councilor Lisa Peterson abstained from the conversation and approval.

**Res. 2022-33 Utility Special Assessment Procedure:** The resolution contained procedures per the water and sewer ordinance for the city to follow for utility accounts delinquent to be assessed to their taxes. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Res. 2022-33 Utility Special Assessment Procedures. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried.

**Fire Department:** Councilor Pederson reported 3 medicals and 2 fires for the past month. No report on the FEMA truck grant. SCBA grant will be due by the end of the month for a final report.


**Miscellaneous:** Agenda reorganization, Fire Dept. should have a report filled out for each meeting and put under the consent agenda, Public Safety should also be put under the consent agenda and pulled out when there is an issue or the deputy liaison comes to the meeting. A resolution should be updated for the consent agenda. Zoning public hearing will be continued on Monday, Nov. 21, 2022. Councilor Bennett reported that the sign for Betty Bergemann memorial is a minimum of \$20,000 and that a bench will be researched instead. Councilor Bennett will work on the project.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> at 7am and then Tuesday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

**Adjourn:** Councilor Peterson made a motion to adjourn at 8:16pm. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:

  
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Diane Roelofs, Clerk-Treasurer

  
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Dana Ziegler, Mayor

  
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Date Approved