

City of Vernon Center
12-6-22 Reg Council Mtg Minutes/BUDGET
7pm

Council present: Mayor Dana Ziegler, Emily Edwards, Eric Pederson, Wendy Bennett, Lisa Peterson
Staff: PW Supervisor Mark Willette, Clerk Diane Roelofs
Others: John Ryther, Joah parks, Brooke Wentzlaff-Parker Apts., Eng. Chris Knutson, Adam Finney

Mayor Dana Ziegler called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Agenda: Discussion about tablets will be added as Misc. b. Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition to miscellaneous. 2nd by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

Public Comment: none

Public Safety: Calls showed 46.77 total hours for the month.

Citizen Concern: council reviewed the submitted letter. Clerk was told to send the citizen a reply that it has been referred to Deputy Blakesley for monitoring.

Parker Place Apartments: Brooke Wentzlaff provided paperwork to council of research she has done. She felt the rates are not reasonable and are misappropriated as state statutes state they should be. Council replied to her about the concerns of the water and sewer funds losing the income from a change in her billing request (billing water and sewer fees for just one fee each instead of per apartment). The city did research of the neighboring towns resulted that in general they are billing the same as Vernon Center does. Her other option would be to install meters for each apartment for utilities as stated to her by the utilities commission. Council will consider further discussion when the City Fee Schedule is determined.

Infrastructure Project, Eng. Chris Knutson: Holtmeier Const. submitted Payment for Application #1 for \$389,732.47 that includes a 5% reduction for retainage. The application amount includes \$367,405.34 for the DEED grant portion and \$22,327.13 for city (local) funding. The local funding portion includes 4" PVC pipe & cleanouts that are not covered by the grant. Judd Schultz or MNVAC will send the request to DEED when Holtmeier Const. submits the wage info to him. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve pay application #1 for \$389,732,47. 2nd by Councilor Pederson, all approved, motion carried. Eng. Knutson reported to council that he has been in touch with Ed Gilmore of USDA for more funding information and expects to hear back from him tomorrow.

Public Works: Supervisor Willette asked the council to approve him to get current bids on the sewer correction digs at 201 & 203 Center St. S. in which they granted their approval.

102 West St. N: Council reviewed the compiled letter about sewer compliance and results of the alley work during the project to the owner. The letter will be sent.

SNOW REMOVAL: Mayor Ziegler stated that the city ordinance states that everyone is to have their vehicles off the streets by 1am after a 2" snow fall therefore not allowing the city to tow vehicles prior to that. He reassured everyone that Supervisor Willette and contracted Peterson Motor Grader (Dennis Peterson) work together and have a system that works well. Clerk is to submit snow removal info on the website, newsletter and post at the post office.

MN PFAS Cost Recovery Program: Council reviewed the information and clerk reported that Lake Crystal has contacted their attorney about this and will present it to their utilities commission and council later this month. League of MN Cities has also been contacted and the clerk is waiting an answer. The topic was tabled waiting for a LMC response and to see what Lake Crystal ends up doing.

Consent Agenda: The consent agenda included the 11-3-22 & 11-17-22 minutes, Checks for Month totaling \$34,275.70 for deposits and \$45,5231.44 for checks, Cash Balance Investment report for Nov. 2022, excel city Savings and loan sheet, October bank reconciliations, Revenue and Expenditure Guidelines, Dec & Jan. calendar of events, a form to be submitted by Fire Chief or secretary for the upcoming year, and the 2022 MPCA I&I Reduction Report. Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 2nd by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

Additional Bills: The council was presented with additional bills in the amount of \$2031.03 for November, \$390,140.47 upcoming for Dec. and \$18,748 for Jan.1st. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the additional bills. 2nd by Councilor Pederson, all approved, motion carried.

Res. 2022-34 Revision of Consent Agenda: Council reviewed the resolution adding more items to the consent agenda for future council meetings. Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve Res. 2022-34 revising the consent agenda. 2nd by Councilor Pederson, all approved, motion carried.

Zoning: 401 First St. E: Planning Commission Recommendation: The planning commission provided the council with a recommendation for 401 First St. E. of approval to take down the existing trees and put up a 6' fence along the east property line and then heading west even with the truck wash building. Arborvitae evergreen trees should be planted every 3 ft on the south (street) side of the east to west section of the fence with one year to complete. The fence shall be erected according to the ordinance setbacks. Councilor Peterson made a motion to accept the Planning Commission recommendation for 401 First St. E. to approve their building permit with conditions as stated above. 2nd by Councilor Pederson, all approved, motion carried. A letter will be sent to the property owner informing them of the approval with conditions.

Fire Department: November had 2 medicals and 1 mutual aid fire. No word on the grant and staff is full.

City Fee Schedule: A public hearing will be set for January 3, 2022 for review of the proposed City Fee Schedule. Council will take into consideration and a committee will work on a draft City Fee Schedule.

Miscellaneous: Memorial Bench in memory of Betty and Stanley Bergemann will be tabled until spring of 2023.

Tablets: Some of the 5-year-old tablets are not working at this point. Clerk should reach out to the city IT people and see what they can offer.

BUDGET/Final Tax Levy: The preliminary budget showed an 8% increase in property taxes before council began their discussion. Mayor Ziegler announced that the only way to get down to a lower increase is to cut out big ticket items. The fireworks were brought up first and with a lot of discussion, the council made the decision to cut the fireworks due to inflation, based on the 2 surveys with negative results to spending tax dollars for fireworks, and they felt it was not financially responsible to use city funds to have the fireworks. A non-profit could take over the fireworks, but would need to fund the entire amount and would need to do proper permitting. Other reductions made were a single audit cost, a portion of summer help, council wage total due to fewer meetings expected, under streets the fuel and repair maintenance and capital outlay for future projects. The enterprise funds had the primary pond berm repair changed to coming out of the sewer capital outlay making the sewer profitable. Water repair and maintenance was reduced that also would make the water fund profitable.

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Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Res. 2022-35 Adopting the Final Budget Tax Levy payable in 2023 at \$273,047 resulting in a 3% tax increase and debt levy of \$24,806. 2nd by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.


Next Meeting/2023 City Council Schedule was discussed as July and November first Tuesdays need to be held on a different date. All months will be the first Tuesday of the month except for the following July 12th and Nov. 9th.

Adjourn: Councilor Peterson made a motion to adjourn at 9:10pm. 2nd by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:



Diane Roelofs, Clerk



Dana Ziegler, Mayor

1-5-23
Date