

City of Vernon Center
2/10/2025
Regular Council Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, and Lisa Peterson
Staff Present: Clerk Kara Hansen, and PW Supervisor Mark Willette
Others Present: Vickie Wiederhoeft, Karen Lachmiller, Chris Knutson

Mayor Ziegler opened the regular council meeting at 6:00 PM.

Approve Agenda

Mayor Ziegler asked to move the parcel split to item #3. PW Supervisor Willette asked to move Infrastructure Project a to Public Works as item e. He also asked to add Blower for WWTP as f and the City Pickup to be added as g. Councilor Peterson asked to add the assessment deferral to Follow up from Previous meetings and be designated item c.

Councilor Peterson 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 1/14/2025 & 1/28/2025 mtg minutes, Check Reconciliations, December Cap Funds, December Cash Balance Investment Report, Checks for Month showing in \$138,060.52 deposits and \$236,444.55 in checks, City Expenditure Guideline, City Revenue Guideline, 2020-23 Project Balance Excel Spreadsheet, February & March calendar of events, the BEC Call Log for January, the January FD Report, & the SSS Financing Participant List.

Councilor Bennett pointed out a typo in the 1/28/2025 minutes where the dollar amount was \$210,00. Clerk Hansen was able to change \$210,00 to \$210,000. Councilor Bennett also reported under SSS Financing 204 Main St E would be using Peterson Motor Grader to replace the sewer lateral. Clerk Hansen was able to make the change to the SSS Financing documents.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the corrections to the 1/28/2025 minutes and the 2024 SSS Financing list. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

Additional Bills

a). Add'l Bills

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

b). Resolution 2025-08

Clerk Hansen said this transfer is fix the negative balance in the 601, and was recommended by Burkhardt & Burkhardt as a journal entry.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-08 Funds Transfer. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

c). PFA Loan Payment

Clerk Hansen said a motion is needed as this is payment for a bond.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the MN Public Facilities Accounting Payment in the amount of \$2,565.00. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Infrastructure Project

Mayor Ziegler said he asked Engineer Knutson to be present because on 1/28/2025 there was a special meeting with Ed Gilmore of USDA-RD and Shannon Sweeney of David Drown Associates to talk about

where the City stood in regards to finances. Mayor Ziegler said, according to Ed Gilmore, the City needs to come up with \$210,000 of projects for the WWTP and \$475,000 for the WTP to meet the 50/50 split needed for the full funding amount from USDA-RD. Mayor Ziegler said he had PW Supervisor Willette draft a list of items and work needed for both the WWTP and the WTP. He asked if putting in another well would be feasible. Engineer Knutson said it was a possibility as a new well would cost the city around half a million dollars. He asked what else would be needed for the WWTP. PW Supervisor Willette said the WWTP needed new blowers, HVAC systems, and electrical. Engineer Knutson said everyone would need to get a list together, get an estimated cost, and send that to Ed Gilmore of USDA-RD to see if the USDA-RD loan would cover it. The new well wouldn't be considered a change order so it would need to be a newly bid project. Engineer Knutson said after bidding the well project could be started in five or six months. Mayor Ziegler asked if something could be ready by the March meeting. Engineer Knutson said there wouldn't be any documents, but they would have an idea of what the City would like to pursue. It would take a month or two to put bidding documents together. Then another 45 to 60 days for the contract to be approved by funding, and that well work could be done in winter as well. Engineer Knutson said if there was money left over that could be applied to a jetter for the City as well, but a jetter could be funded by bonding money if there was any left after the project. Mayor Ziegler instructed both Engineer Knutson and PW Supervisor Willette to draft a list for council to review at the March meeting.

Public Works

a). PW Supervisor Notes

PW Supervisor Willette said he discovered the municipal building and the WTP didn't have much for gas. He called Crystal Valley who put a gauge on the regulators, and when the furnace kicked on the gas dropped to 0. He called Northwest Gas to check on the regulators and discovered the regulators didn't have proper ventilation. They installed two new vents and the problem was solved. Mayor Ziegler asked if the previous vents were new. PW Supervisor Willette said the vents and regulators were installed five years ago and they worked fine for four years.

PW Supervisor Willette said 104 Oak St S is planning to have a new sewer lateral installed by Boening Brothers this year. Kyle Boening called PW Supervisor Willette and asked how to bid the sewer lateral installation as there is a ten-foot stretch of pipe he doesn't have footage on. PW Supervisor Willette informed Kyle Boening to bid it separate as the City won't know what's there until the ground thaws and they uncover the pipe. He told Kyle Boening he may have to bid higher based on if an outside footing is located which would require the removal of footing and an outside sump pump and basket installed. PW Supervisor Willette contacted Peter Oare of C Emery Nelson about the blowers at the WWTP. Peter Oare thought the City needed to replace the silencers at the WWTP as the ones there are currently plugged. Mayor Ziegler said he thought they replaced the silencers in 2019. PW Supervisor Willette said they only replaced one set in 2019 and there are two sets of them. He will send out an email when he gets the pricing to replace them.

PW Supervisor Willette said Engineer Eric Meestner was in town last month to talk about the WTP and redoing the City's current building and plan. He told Engineer Meestner they had to incorporate the 150 gallon a minute because of city water usage during the summer months. Last year the peak day saw 93,000 gallons used. He also said the new well to be installed needs to be in an area that has a 10-foot by 10-foot window. Mayor Ziegler said the pipe should be there already and it needs to be ran into the old WTP plant where it could be hooked up.

PW Supervisor Willette said MidWest Flo Cal will calibrate the new line at the WWTP. He sent an email to

Terri Roth and Pam Rodewald of MPCA to see about equipment getting replaced, and if it could wait. Calibration was part of the project costs for the WWTP. They told him the plan was reasonable. PW Supervisor Willette said he spoke with Engineer Chris Knutson and RPR Doug Maeder about some sidewalk shifting on Main St due to the cold weather. He also said the City Pickup had to have new tires put on and a new battery installed.

b). Street Sweeping

PW Supervisor Willette said he'll be getting the street sweeper from Winnebago in to do the non-project streets and asked Engineer Knutson when the contractor was going to sweep the streets. Engineer Knutson said the timetable was April, and it was covered by bonding.

c). Railroad Drain Tile

Clerk Hansen said PW Supervisor Willette pointed out the areas on the map were where Urban Oil had their gas station. PW Supervisor Willette said there was a Gopher Call put in that area to bore six holes and extract soil samples. He said he is hesitant about putting the drain tile all the way down railroad street by the old gas station. Mayor Ziegler directed PW Supervisor Willette to contact the MPCA and ask them if they were the ones who made the Gopher Call. The City would want the results of any testing before they install the drain tile in spring.

d). Trench Work at 301 First St E

Clerk Hansen said this discussion was tabled from the last meeting. At the last meeting, Todd Schwarz wanted to know if the trench work was going to be done this year, and if it was going to be assessed back to the owners. Councilor Peterson said there may be a precedence set on that block as another property several houses over filled in their trench and put drain tile there and paid for it themselves. She said it happened before she was on the council. Mayor Ziegler asked if water had been pooling there before the project, or if it was pooling because of the project. He then asked what the bid was. PW Supervisor Willette said Peterson Motor Grader bid it at \$2,208 with another \$275 to seed it all. Mayor Ziegler said the matter should be tabled until spring so they could see where the water in that area does.

e). Sewer Connection at 303 West St N

PW Supervisor Willette said the property owner at 303 West St N has a water and sewer hookup. The sewer had to be hooked up during the project if the property owner didn't terminate it. He said the City sent the property owner a letter about the sewer and water being attached to the city main, and if it wasn't terminated, then they would be charged for it. Clerk Hansen pulled the letter up and showed the council. The letter was dated April 16th, 2020. She also found another letter sent to the property owner dated April 11th, 2023 informing them of their non-compliant sewer line. PW Supervisor Willette said he camera'd the sewer line and it showed clear water coming in. Mayor Ziegler directed Clerk Hansen and PW Supervisor Willette to contact the property owner and ask them to be present at the next meeting to discuss their open water and sewer line.

f). WWTP Blower

g). City Pickup

PW Supervisor Willette asked to drive the City pickup to and from work and his house as his personal vehicle needs work done.

Mayor Ziegler made a motion to let PW Supervisor drive the City Pickup home and to work. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

Follow up From Previous Meeting

a). Fire Invoices

Clerk Hansen said the 2023 Skid Steer fire invoice was paid by a third party in person. She said she was directed to reach out to M&M Insurance about the 2024 grass fire about the property owner not paying the invoice, and she was informed the insurance company can only remind the individual to pay the invoice, but they cannot make them do it. Mayor Ziegler said the matter should be tabled until later this year.

b). Consolidated Proposal

Clerk Hansen said she reached out to Consolidated Communication about the proposal, and asked her contact when fiber optics would be brought in town. The target date for that to happen will be June or July of this year. Mayor Ziegler asked what the MRC and NRC was. Clerk Hansen said the MRC was the monthly amount of the new phone and internet before taxes and the NRC was a webinar about how to use the phone. Councilor Peterson thought Clerk Hansen could watch a video on YouTube on how to use the phone. She also said the phone will be a voice over IP, and the city's current internet is not good enough for a VOIP phone. She instructed Clerk Hansen to contact Consolidated and let them know the City won't go through with the contract until fiber optics are hooked up to City Hall.

c). Hilltop Assessment Deferral

Councilor Peterson said the council agreed to defer the project assessment for Parcel Number R191726153002 for twenty years as the property did not get a benefit from the project at a previous meeting, and so long as the property wasn't developed. She asked if there was anything formalized for the City that the council could have on file so if the property were sold and then developed in those twenty years than the City would have the assessments paid to it. Mayor Ziegler directed Clerk Hansen to speak to Engineer Knutson about the matter, and table the matter.

Assessments for Parcel Split

a). Engineer's Notes

b). Resolution 2025-09

Clerk Hansen said she contacted Blue Earth County and Burkhardt and Burkhardt about how to properly document the assessment split when the parcel was split. Burkhardt & Burkhardt advised her to draft a resolution. Vickie Wiederhoeft and Karen Lachmiller asked if the resolution was enough for them to be able to finalize a sale on the house and wondered by it was taking so long to finalize everything. Mayor Ziegler said the City only received the information from the engineers, and because it's about assessments, they had to formalize the split at a meeting when a quorum was present.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-09 Assessment Split at 301 and 303 Main St E. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

Next Meeting Scheduled for 3/4/2025

Adjourn

Councilor Peterson made a motion to adjourn. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM.

Kara Hansen, Clerk-Treasurer

Dana Ziegler, Mayor

Date approved