

# City of Vernon Center – Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## Attendance

**Council Present:** Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, Lisa Peterson

**Staff Present:** Clerk Kara Hansen, Public Works Supervisor Mark Willette

**Others Present:** Tamara Dicks of MRM and Engineer Chris Knutson

## Call to Order

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

## Approve Agenda

Councilor Peterson asked to pull the Cash Balances and place it under Additional Bills Item D. She asked to pull the SSS Financing and place it under Additional Bills item E.

- Motion: Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the agenda with the additions; seconded by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

## Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the 1/6/2026 meeting minutes, bank reconciliations, savings and loan balances, checks for the month showing \$20,401.20 in deposits and \$139,845.06 in checks, January expenditure and revenue guidelines, 20-23 Project Excel Spreadsheet, February & March calendar of events, & the January Fire Department Report.

- Motion: Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the consent agenda; 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

## Additional Bills

### Additional Bills

Clerk Hansen said two items from the credit card would need to be reimbursed by the fire department as she did not have receipts for either of them. One was for Crystal Valley in the amount of \$35.26 and another was from Harbor Freight in the amount of \$81.84. Councilor Peterson asked how it would affect their audit. Clerk Hansen said she had a similar situation in years past and she contacted Burkhardt & Burkhardt. They city is not penalized as long as the receipts are reimbursed, and they will let her know how to code it.

- Motion: Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the additional bills; seconded by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

## PFA Loan Interest Payment

Clerk Hansen said a motion is needed as it is a payment for a loan.

- Motion: Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the Public Facilities Authority interest payment in the amount of \$2,345.00; seconded by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Resolution 2026-06 Fire Relief Donation**

- Motion: Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-06 Fire Relief Donation in the amount of \$15,000.00; seconded by Councilor Peterson. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Cash Balance Investments**

Councilor Peterson said there was a negative balance on the Cash NO Investments on the 403 Public Works Cap Reserves. Clerk Hansen said she would research the reason why and get back to the council during the March Meeting.

### **SSS Financing**

Councilor Peterson said there were changes that needed to be made to the SSS Financing as some residents had paid their loan balance off at the end of 2025. Clerk Hansen said she would review the form and make the changes in time for the March meeting.

### **Public Comment**

#### **Infrastructure Project**

##### **Engineer Notes**

Engineer Knutson said the street and utility side of the project was near completion as he had received the closeout documents from the contractor, and needed to review them. Councilor Peterson asked if the retainage would be due upon the council approving the completion documents. Engineer Knutson said yes, and noted there is still a warranty period on the WWTP. Mayor Ziegler asked about the manhole covers. Engineer Knutson said he asked the contractor for a resolution on those, and they have not found a solution yet. PW Supervisor Willette asked if the City paid the retainage, does it lose leverage with the contractor about fixing the manholes. Engineer Knutson said the retainage is usually paid before the warranty period is up, and the contractor would be responsible for repairs during the warranty period. Clerk Hansen said a resident came to her today with concerns about their driveway that the contractor did, and she saw issues with her own driveway. Mayor Ziegler said he would like to look at the driveways after the frost has thawed.

Engineer Knutson said USDA-RD had an issue with Rubin Construction's insurance that is getting worked on. He said the attorney looked at the contractor and approved it, and the Rubin Construction said they believe they meet the requirement because they have \$6 million in insurance and USDA-RD requested they have at least \$2 million. The attorney is reviewing the contract again and will see if the contractor needs to increase their insurance.

## **MRWA #13 Draw Correction**

Clerk Hansen said she spoke with Ed Gilmore of USDA-RD, and he said he needed to change the draw amount of MRWA #13 due to an issue with the contractor's insurance. The amount that is now being approved are invoice reimbursements and the pay application to the contractor has been removed.

- Motion: Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve MRWA #13 amendment for \$26,336.75; seconded by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

## **Public Works**

### **Supervisor Notes**

PW Supervisor Willette said he is working on the WWTP permit with MPCA and plans to have it done before the April meeting. He said he received an inquiry about the sewer lateral at 101 Park Ave S. The council reviewed it and directed Clerk Hansen to send it to the resident.

### **Fire Debris Statute**

Clerk Hansen said she was contacted by Chad Ostermann of M&M Insurance with this information. Mayor Ziegler directed her to contact the city attorney and ask if the city needs to adopt an ordinance or amend an ordinance for this to go into effect.

### **Fire Department**

Clerk Hansen said the fire department has recommended hiring John Smith to Vernon Center Fire and Rescue. Mayor Ziegler said a member of the fire department would need to be present at a city council meeting and explain why they are recommending this individual to be hired.

## **Next Meeting**

Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## **Adjourn**

- Motion: Councilor Bennett motioned to adjourn; seconded by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:44 PM.

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Kara Hansen, Clerk-Treasurer

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Dana Ziegler, Mayor

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Date approved