

City of Vernon Center  
6-1-23 Reg. Council Meeting  
Meeting Minutes

Council Present: Mayor Dana Ziegler, Lisa Peterson, Adam Finney, Emily Edwards, Wendy Bennett  
Staff Present: PW Supervisor Mark Willette, Clerk Diane Roelofs  
Others Present: WM-Jason Niesen, LJP-Amanda Schwanke, Pat Krosch, Karen Swenson, Eng. Chris Knutson, Cathy Kietzer, Lori Spence

Mayor Ziegler called the meeting to order at 6pm.

**Agenda:** Addition of Zoning Recommendation, 7. Ord. review will be moved to 12a, 10a, c, e, g moved up to #9 infrastructure project, Sump Pump to 10.i. Councilor Peterson made a motion approve the agenda with the additions and edits. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried.

**Consent Agenda:** The consent agenda included the 5-2-23 & 5-17-23 minutes, Checks for Month of May report showing \$71,391.64 deposits & \$73,028.10 checks, May Cash Investments report, City Savings & Loan excel report including interfund loans, 20-23 Project rebid balance, June calendar of events, Points of Sale report, sewer lateral report, FD June report, and Arbitrage letter from David Drown Assoc. Councilor Finney made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

**Citizen Concern:** Council asked if this resident had formerly submitted citizen concerns prior to this one about the dogs. Clerk verified that the resident had submitted them but they were concerning dogs barking and our ordinance requires 2 citizen complaints in order to be brought before the council as a violation. Clerk was directed to send out a letter of violation to 101 Park Ave. S. requiring them to clean up the dog feces.

**Fireworks:** Cathy Kietzer gave an update to Council about the activities they have lined up for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. They will have \$10,000 to donate to the City for payment of fireworks. The agreement with J&M Displays will be executed for \$10,000 and submitted to them by the city. There will be a band at the bar from 8pm to 9:30pm, the portable restrooms are ordered and the area of fireworks spectators will be roped off to keep people off private property.

**Zoning Recommendation:** The Public Hearing of the Planning Commission resulted in a recommendation to Council of a variance at 202 N West St. The commission recommends to approve the variance to allow a cement addition extending partially into the city alley on the condition that any damage done to the cement will be the property owner's responsibility (city will retain ownership of the alley portion). An agreement between the City and the property owners will be drawn up with the recommendation details. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the zoning recommendation with conditions requiring any future damage to the cement will be the responsibility of the property owner/s. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney, all approved, motion carried.

**RFP for Garbage & Recycling:** Mayor Ziegler thanked both Waste Management and L J P Waste Solutions for submitting Requests for Proposals. Councilor Peterson stated that WM has a slightly lower cost for annual costs. Differences between the 2 companies would be that WM would pickup recycling every 2 weeks instead of weekly as LJP included weekly pickup of recycling. Jason Niesen of WM stated that the city would have a local person handling communication between the city or residents. WM submitted curbside while LJP Waste Solutions submitted drop site City clean-up but Amanda Schwanke of LJP said they would be willing to do curb side pickup in the future. Mayor Ziegler commended both companies as

they both received very good comments from cities they service. He also stated they are both good companies. Councilor Bennett stated the costs are about the same but would recommend staying with LJP. Councilor Peterson made a motion to accept LJP Waste Solutions RFP. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried. Amanda will get a contract to the City for approval.

**Infrastructure Project:** Engineer Chris Knutson gave an update on the DEED Project showing that the city fell approximately \$1600 short of spending the total grants allowable. Council asked him to contact Holtmeier Const. to deliver gravel to use up the available grant dollars. The local funding ended up being more due to one more service than what was in the plans. Pay app #5 was presented to Council along with the Cost Split showing \$42,983.83 for Sanitary Sewer Grant, \$68,458.56 for Water Main Grant and \$11,090.74 for local funding share resulting in a total of \$122,533.13 due to Holtmeier Const. A 1% retainage in the amount of \$6,122.21 will be considered for approval after a punch list of items are completed by Holtmeier Const. and satisfied by Council. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Pay App#5. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney, all approved, motion carried.

Legislature did approve the language change; therefore **Res. 2023-11 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids** was presented to Council. The resolution has an addendum delaying the bid opening time and date if USDA-RD concurrence has not been obtained prior to the June 22, 2023. Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve Res. 2023-11. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

**Water Service:** Currently there is no water main on 1<sup>st</sup> St. W and was discovered that the water must come from Hwy 169. The plans will be kept without adding a water main on the west half of First St. and will be a change order if decided if it is needed.

**East St. Alley:** 201 Center Street property will be able to hook up to the stub for both water and sewer that will be placed in the alley as confirmed by the Eng. Knutson.

**Stormwater off Hilltop:** PW Supervisor Willette brought up the concern of the storm water overrun that runs over to the wastewater plant. A couple of catch basins by Hilltop St. where Vernon Center Market was is in the plans to help with this but that the storm sewer could be extended. The plan is sufficient for a 3-year storm incident as required by the State. The grade of the road is currently set to be 1% grade towards the WWTP. Many intakes are placed on East Street to alleviate the ground storm water that comes from the north and west. It would cost 100ft of pipe @ \$50 ft=\$5000 to extend the storm sewer further down Hilltop St. and Council agreed it would be money well spent. This will be added as an addendum.

**New Well:** No bonding money can be used for a new well. A new well could be considered later if bids come back lower than expected.

All Street signs are included in the project. When Eng. Knutson was asked "Can the valves on Hwy 169 be done during the first part of the project." He replied that traffic control will determine the timing of the valves as they will all be done at the same time. Mayor Ziegler asked for a new time schedule for the resident's benefit. The project could possibly start in September if awarded by Aug. 30<sup>th</sup>. If a street is started, they will be gravel over the winter. A Public Hearing "Neighborhood Meeting" will be held after July or August after the bid.

**104 Railroad St.** property owner was present and stated that she does not think there is a water leak as suspected. The pile of snow created water and the dip in the ground and has not changed. The property owner dug up the water line and said she discovered someone installed the water line that was brought over towards and underneath the sewer lateral and then back. PW Supervisor said 9 feet was not dug up. Property owner said she will not dig it up again and will not pay for anything. Eng. Knutson did come out to review the site at the time with PW Supervisor and reported he did not see any work that showed

the construction company damaged the water line. Property owner will level off the dirt and suggested that the city wait a month to see if any water leak shows up. Council will discuss next month.

**DEED Project:** A punch list will be put together and presented to engineer. Railroad will take a lot to get back into the shape it was prior to the project.

RD will not pay for televising and pressure testing therefore it was taken out—but the streets for lining will be televised (1 blk on Hilltop and 2 blks on Park Ave. N). These will have clean-outs. No services should be missed as they will be seen during the required televising. The city will present a bill to Short Elliot Hendrikson for Holtmeier totaling the digs and supervisor hours. As requested by Mayor Ziegler, Engineer will get electronic copies of the WTP & WWTP from the first bid of the project to the city.

**Easements:** All easements have been approved by PW, clerk, city engineer and attorney. Councilor Finney made a motion to approve the easements. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

**Res. 2023-12 Authorizing Transfer of 607 Capital Reserves to 411 Fund:** The resolution presents a needed transfer of \$6411.11 of funds to the DEED 411 Project Fund to cover additional expenses with funds coming for the 607 Capital Reserves. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Res. 2023-12 authorizing \$6411.11 be transferred from 607 Cap Reserves to 411 Fund. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney, all approved, motion carried.

#### **Public Works:**

**Rushmore Equipment:** Eric Meester was present and explained to the Council the details of purchasing the Rushmore water plant equipment. A revision in the proposal was an additional \$7000 making the cost to be \$50,000 plus \$6200 for the equipment for a total of \$56,200. The revision amount accounts for cutting an opening in the door to remove the salvage equipment and remove/repair conduits. A local resident will put in a garage door paid by Rushmore. Council wants to make sure the project is covered by insurance. A contract should be drawn up if Rushmore approves and presented to the city attorney. A down deposit could be possible.

**High Rain Events Help:** The city received 8.88 inches of rain over the past couple of weeks resulting in bypassing, many hours of public works pay. Mayor Ziegler asked council if they can consider a plan to get some help for PW Supervisor during high rain events or gone on vacation. He did not feel that the public works employee should work 24 hours and sleep in his truck to fill trash pumps with gas. A possible city hire could be done and preferably someone that would be licensed or experienced in water and wastewater treatment. Council should bring back a back-up plan to next month's meeting. PW Supervisor should also provide a list of work that has to be done.

**Jetter Clean:** A Jetter Clean bill was presented to council in the amount of \$876 for work done on the Post Office sewer lateral. A discussion resulted in directing the clerk to send a bill for Jetter Clean and Mark's time to the Post Office for reimbursement. Councilor Finney made a motion to approve the Jetter Clean bill in the amount of \$876. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried. Cameras installed in the post office will be potentially addressed by the post office. Their office hours will remain the same until they fix their furnace. A letter should be sent to them with a deadline to correct their sewer lateral.

**2015 Project Laterals:** These laterals are considered compliant until they sell. Point-of-sale inspections will determine if it continues to be compliant for both water and sewer.

**103 Kendall St.:** This project has been completed with the old sewer lateral capped and the residents seem happy.

**Sump Pump Letter:** Council discussed the necessity of letting the residents know they will need sump pumps. It was decided to put it in the newsletter and website. Google a list for sump pump checklist.

**Additional Bills:** Additional bills were reviewed. Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the additional bills. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

**Amendment to Personnel Policy:** State legislature passed a bill making Juneteenth as a state holiday and no public work can be done on this day. LMC suggested that all personnel policies should be amended to read it as a holiday. Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve the amendment to the Personnel Policy making eleven holidays. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney, all approved, motion carried.

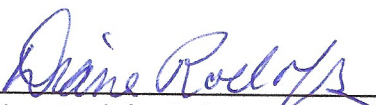
**Ord. Violations Updates:** All of the properties were reviewed and any that did not complete their violations will be either dealt with by Deputy Blakesley or some new letters of new violations.

**Clerk-Treasurer Job Documents:** Council reviewed both the Job Description and the Job Application. Council Finney made a motion to approve the documents. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

**Misc.-BEC:** **Captain Paul Barta** contacted City Hall to let the city know the siren will be fixed at a cost of \$2500 being paid by a grant BEC Sheriff Dept. received. The updating of sirens is county-wide for a new system installed. The rate of \$75 per hour for patrols will be increased to \$80 for 2024. Councilor Edwards asked Council if they are okay with her coming in to City Hall and observing clerk financial duties and to potentially help with deposits. Clerk was directed to check with the attorney for any possible conflicts but that the Council was okay with it if no conflicts.

**Adjourn:** Councilor Edwards made a motion to adjourn at 8:33pm. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney, all approved, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:

  
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Diane Roelofs, Clerk-Treasurer

  
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Dana Ziegler, Mayor

7/10/23  
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Date Approved