

City of Vernon Center  
9/4/2025  
Regular Council Meeting

Council Present: Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, Adam Finney, & Lisa Peterson  
Staff Present: Clerk Kara Hansen & PW Supervisor Willette  
Others Present: Chris Knutson & Ed Gilmore

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

### **Approve Agenda**

Councilor Finney made a motion to approve the agenda. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Peterson. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda included the 8/11/2025 Meeting Minutes, July bank reconciliations, July & August Cap Funds, July & August Cash Balance Investments Checks for the Month showing \$86,404.22 in deposits and \$68,912.30 in checks, City Expenditure Guideline, City Revenue Guideline, 2020-23 Project Balance Excel Spreadsheet, September & October calendar of events, the August Public Safety Report, the August FD Report, SSS Replacement Participants, & the FD PPE list.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Additional Bills**

#### **a. Add'l Bills**

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the additional bills. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

#### **b. Resolution 2025-24**

Clerk Hansen explained the PW Supervisor Willette will not have time this year to add more pea rock to the park. The City already budgeted money in for the pea rock, and she was advised by the finance committee to make a resolution to transfer the money to savings for next year instead of budget an additional \$1,000.00 for 2026.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-24 to transfer funds from the 404 General Checking account to the 404 Savings account in the amount of \$1,000.00. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **Infrastructure Project**

#### **a. Well Project**

Engineer Knutson and Ed Gilmore of USDA-RD were present to discuss how the City stood in terms of funds and funding for the Well Project. Clerk Hansen said she went over the remaining loans the City owes for the 2015 Project and both loans from PFA. She said the City currently owes \$895,000.00 to Northland Trust for the 2015 Project, 277,000.00 to PFA for a Drinking Water loan, & 192,000.00 to PFA for a Clean Water loan. This totals \$1,364,000.00. She said she spoke with Ed Gilmore and he thought the City might close their loan with USDA-RD in June, and there will be one principal payment to Northland Trust in June totaling \$80,025.00 which will bring the total amount of loans the City will owe in June of 2026 to \$1,278,975.00. Ed Gilmore said he and Engineer Knutson spoke at length and after the cost of the well project plus engineering fees, the City will come short about \$72,750.00. Ed Gilmore said

there is still some state bonding money they could use for engineering invoices and it would alleviate some of the cost. Councilor Peterson said the city could potentially use funds from the 2015 Project Savings, the Reserve Future Projects Fund, or the Undesignated Funds to cover the \$72,750.00. Engineer Knutson said A1 Spare Blower and A2 Ultraviolet Equipment will need to be eliminated from the award as there are not enough funds for it.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to award the bid from Rubin Construction for 1,216,310.00 and eliminating A1 & A2 Ultraviolet Equipment and the spare blower for the WWTP. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

PW Supervisor Willette said the manholes on HWY 169 are still rattling when semi-trucks drive over it. Mayor Ziegler asked if the manhole covers were new. Engineer Knutson said they were, but some of the old manhole covers were used around town. Mayor Ziegler asked if one of the new manhole covers on HWY 169 can be swapped with one of the old ones and see if they are still rattling when a semi drives over them. PW Supervisor Willette said there was a sewer that didn't receive a cleanout during the DEED project that needs to be addressed, and there is also another house on the 2015 Project looks to have a footing tile attached to their sewer service. Mayor Ziegler said there should be a conversation with Holtmeier to give them the opportunity to fix the issues. Engineer Knutson said SEH policy has a 2-year warranty from the final payment and the final payment for the DEED Project has not been made yet as Holtmeier still has to file paperwork to submit for the final payment.

## **Public Works**

### **a. PW Supervisor Notes**

Mayor Ziegler said he had a conversation with the owner of 100 West St N and it was his recommendation to have his water shut off. PW Supervisor Willette said he spoke with Chad Wilde of Blue Earth County Public Works department about the handicap parking on Parker Place Apartments and he's investigating it.

### **b. Sewer Laterals**

### **c. Precision Lining Dig Permission**

Clerk Hansen said Precision Lining reached out to her for what was needed in order to dig in the City. She had them send over the following information for the council to approve.

Councilor Finney made a motion to approve Precision Lining as an approved contractor to dig in the City of Vernon Center. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Peterson. All approved. Motion carried.

### **d. CMR Plumbing Dig Permission**

Clerk Hansen said a Gopher Call came in from CMR Plumbing, and she contacted the contractor and informed them of the City's dig policy. The contractor understood and provided the council what they need to receive approval to dig in the city.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve CMR Plumbing as an approved contractor to dig in the City of Vernon Center. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

## **Follow up From Previous Meeting**

### **a. LJP**

Clerk Hansen said she contact LJP about having a representative come to a meeting to discuss the Fuel Surcharge and Environmental Fees. LJP looked into the matter, and it was discovered the City was being incorrectly billed the environmental fee. LJP has been charging the environmental fee since April of

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2024, and they will credit each month the city was billed for the environmental fees. The credit comes to around \$8,000.00. Clerk Hansen said the City shouldn't receive a bill from LJP until October/November, and the credit amount should keep the 603 Refuse Fund in the black for 2025. In order to offset the fuel surcharge in the future, she and Mayor Ziegler and the finance committee thought it was best to add a charge to the monthly utility bills for the Fuel Surcharge. It would need to be included on the fee schedule, and Clerk Hansen has it in the budget as an expense and revenue.

**b. 101 Oak St S**

Clerk Hansen said she sent a certified letter to the residents on August 17, 2025 and they never picked their letter up. They were told in the letter they had until 9/2/2025 to make an appointment to have their water meter inspected or they would be shut off. She asked for council direction on the matter. Mayor Ziegler instructed Clerk Hansen to have a letter taped to their door and back gate on Friday September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and give them until 7:00 AM on Monday September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 to make an appointment with City Hall to have their water meter inspected or their water will be shut off.

**Preliminary Budget & Resolution**

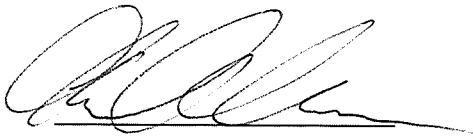
Mayor Ziegler reminded the council that the final budget in December could not be more than what the council set for today, and the amount set today would not be final. Councilor Peterson asked if more of PW Supervisor Willette's salary could be allocated to streets. Clerk Hansen made the adjustment showing 50% of PW Supervisor Willette's salary coming from streets, 10% from water, and 40% from sewer. \$1000.00 was added to each of the transfer accounts for the city tractor, truck, and mower. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-25 Adopting prosed debt levy collectable setting general tax levy at \$310,203.59 and 2015 improvement debt levy at \$23,231.00. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

**Next Regular Scheduled meeting 10/7/2025**

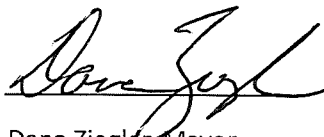
**Adjourn**

Councilor Peterson made a motion to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.



Kara Hansen, Clerk-Treasurer



Dana Ziegler, Mayor

10-7-25

Date approved

