

City of Vernon Center
Council Meeting
9-6-22

Council Present: Mayor Dana Ziegler, Eric Pederson, Lisa Peterson, Emily Edwards, Wendy Bennett
Staff Present: PW Supervisor Mark Willette, Clerk Diane Roelofs
Others: Calvin Baarts, MR Messenger Hannah Hackler, Engineer Chris Knutson

Mayor Ziegler called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Agenda: Add EAP agreement to Add'l bills, correct agenda wording from Res. 2020-30 to Res 2022-30, Bills & Fund Balances will be pulled out of the Consent agenda. Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the agenda with the additions and corrections. 2nd by Councilor Pederson, all approved, motion carried.

Public Safety: Call log for August was reviewed showing a weekly average of 10 hours per week.
304 Hilltop St.—No report was submitted

Public Works: Supervisor Willette covered his report including the Deed project, Water treatment plant, water tower inspection procedures with the inspection showing exterior needing touching up, Wastewater updates about possible pilot study, streets tree trimming and other. It was suggested by council to look into the cost of a bucket for the tractor or how much to rent a lift for the city per use.
The need for storage is great and Supervisor Willette supplied the council with dimensions of a storage unit as well as the costs for such. It was stated that whether it is this year or next, it should come from capital funds.

102 West St. N: Resident Calvin Baarts was present and reported that he slipped and fell on the wet sidewalk outside of 102 West St. N. He had x-rays and an MRI done showing a torn rotator cuff. Surgery will have a 6-month recovery and he will lose time from work. The sump water has been pumped out on the sidewalk for 1 ½ to 2 years. Reply to Mr. Baarts was that the property owner fixed the sewer inside the building with the clear water being either sent to the sanitary sewer or out of the building. The city had sent the property owner a letter dating 2/5/20 stating that the property was still non-compliant and gave notice that it would be in violation if not fixed by Nov. 15, 2022. A letter was also sent in early 2022 to have the valve turned so that the clear water would go to the sewer to avoid an ice slick on the sidewalk. Clerk was directed to call the renter of the property to change the valve to go to the sewer and send a letter to the owner acknowledging this for an immediate diversion of the clear water. The letter should also give options for the property owner to follow to become compliant at owner's expense. It was noted that the DEED Project will involve capping off the "old" sewer line.

Consent Agenda: the consent agenda included the 8/2/22 minutes, calendar of Events, Gov. Walz-Executive Order 22-20, Mayor/Clerk Meeting flyer, and a letter from MDH removing VC requirement to collect drinking water WQP samples. With the Bills and Fund Balances pulled out of the consent agenda, Councilor Edwards made a motion to approve the agenda. 2nd by Councilor Bennett, all approved, motion carried.

Additional Bills: Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the additional bills. 2nd by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried. Energy Assistance Program renewal of agreement was reviewed, clerk was directed to sign the agreement online. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the EAP agreement for another year. 2nd by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried. **Bills and Fund Balances** were reviewed with Councilor Peterson questioning why there was a negative balance in the 200 Fund of \$14,889.55 and a negative balance in the 411 Fund of \$5433.25. Clerk replied that there should not be a negative balance in the 200 Fund SCDP because the money comes in and goes out—she will check on it to determine why it shows a negative balance. The 411 Fund is a new fund set up for the DEED small project as directed by auditor Greg Burkhardt. The first engineer bill was paid from this making a negative balance. Councilor Peterson and Councilor Edwards will work together to determine which

capital savings will need to be transferred to keep this account positive. A resolution will be presented at the next Council meeting.

Infrastructure Project: Engineer Knutson introduced his information through a memo, stating that the lowest base bid was \$556,255.70 from Holtmeier and a total of \$596,350.70 with the alternates added. Eng. Knutson had contacted Jim Voda of Holtmeier to inquire what his construction time would be. If he can acquire the manholes now, it will be in the fall; otherwise, next spring. All bids were reviewed. The engineer's recommendation would be to approve Res. 2022-31 Accepting Bid and award the contract to Holtmeier Construction, Inc. out of Mankato, MN. The award will be contingent upon the extension of the Small Cities Development Program grant that would otherwise expire at the end of Sept. 2022. Upon reviewing the funding, assessable improvements cannot be funded through the grant. The non-eligible costs total \$32,478.55. The engineer review of the DEED grant funding showed \$713.10 in water and \$15,414.75 in sewer of unused grant. The city could consider purchasing sanitary manholes as a change order addition to the project after award to use these remaining grant funds. With the expected extension to September 2023, only materials that could be installed prior to that time should be considered. Res 2022-31 Accepting Bid was reviewed, Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Res. 2022-31 awarding the contract to Holtmeier Construction, Inc. contingent on the extension of the Small Cities Development grant through DEED. 2nd by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried.

Construction Services: Discussion took place about the need for engineer services during construction of the DEED project. This will need to be determined after the construction schedule has been set. A lot of the work will be trenchless and pipe bursting which may not have the need for full-time. The answer as to when the project will be started should be known by the October meeting.

Senate and House candidates: Council agreed that a letter should be written to let the candidates know about the need for the city to receive either the bonding increase or rewording bills to be passed. Councilor Peterson and Edwards will help review and construct a letter to them with the clerk.

Fireworks Survey Results: The results showed there were 166 forms sent out with 22 returning to agree spending tax dollars and 23 that disagree to spend tax dollars. Council will have until December budget to make a decision.

Election: City offices will have 2 candidates running for council and 1 for mayor.

Zoning: Council reviewed the resignation letter from Barb Glynn from the zoning board. Councilor Peterson made a motion to accept the resignation and to thank her for her years of service. 2nd by Councilor Edwards, all approved, motion carried. Council will need to appoint a new member to the board.

203 S. Centre St.: the zoning board recommended approving a utility shed for 203 S Centre St. A public hearing was held for a variance to be closer than 10' to the main building (garage attached to house) and closer than 5' to the north property line. Resident Calvin Baarts was present as a neighbor stating that there is a survey marker in the northeast corner of the lot to help determine the north property line. Council held off approving the variance/permit recommendation for more information and verification the shed will not be over the property line.

Fire Department: Councilor Pederson reported 2 medicals, 3 fires in August. FD Joint Committee minutes were reviewed.

VC Cemetery: Nate Sowers requested that the digitized cemetery link be added to the city website. Council directed the clerk to check for security risks of adding a link to our website.

Preliminary Budget: Mayor Ziegler asked council what percentage they would want to end up with. Discussion included possible reductions as fireworks, and capital funds future projects. The fire department will need to have soffit repair for the entire building added to the budget. An estimate has been requested from Dale Schmidt and it was suggested to also include Kopischke Seamless gutters. The preliminary budget showed \$5000 for a water debt levy and council decided to lower the expenses resulting in no water debt levy. Council wants to know if the storage container was included in the preliminary budget by next meeting.

Res. 2022-30 Resolution Adopting Proposed Tax Levy Collectible in 2023 was set at \$286,721.22 and 2015 Utility Imp. Debt Levy for \$24,806 with no water debt levy. Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Res. 2022-30 adopting a tax levy for 2023 of \$286,721.22 and a sewer debt levy of \$24,806. 2nd by Councilor Pederson, all approved, motion carried.

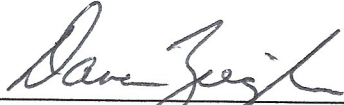
Next Meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 4th, 2022

Adjourn: Councilor Peterson made a motion to adjourn at 8:39pm. 2nd by Councilor Pederson, all approved, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:



Diane Roelofs, Clerk-Treasurer



Dana Ziegler, Mayor



Date Approved