

City of Vernon Center
8/11/2025
Regular Council Meeting

Council Present: Acting-Mayor Lisa Peterson, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, & Adam Finney
Staff Present: Clerk Kara Hansen & PW Supervisor Willette
Others Present: Engineer Chris Knutson, Wayne Krosch, Calvin Baarts

Acting-Mayor Peterson opened the regular council meeting at 6:00 PM.

Approve Agenda

Acting Mayor Peterson asked to move MN Rod & Gun Club from 9 to Public Comment. Councilor Bennett asked to add Park Gazebo to Follow-up From Previous Meeting.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the 7/2/2025 Meeting Minutes, June bank reconciliations, Checks for the Month showing \$865,356.28 in deposits and \$883,268.11 in checks, City Expenditure Guideline, City Revenue Guideline, 2020-23 Project Balance Excel Spreadsheet, August & September calendar of events, the July Public Safety Report, the July FD Report, SSS Replacement Participants, & the FD PPE list.

Councilor Finney made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

Additional Bills

a. Add'l Bills

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

b. Resolution 2025-21

Clerk Hansen explained the city took out an interfund loan for engineering invoices in 2022 and they were on a schedule to repay those funds in June of 2025. She submitted multiple invoices to USDA-RD in May and June, and Ed Gilmore said it would be in either September or October before the city could see those invoices reimbursed. Based on the verbiage in Resolution 2022-19, the City needs to forgive the loan, as there is not enough in the 410 fund to repay the interfund loan.

Councilor Finney made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-21 to make the repay of an interfund loan 0. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

c. Resolution 2025-22

Clerk Hansen said this is an Amazon gift card donation from Immense Impact when she recommended the website business to another city.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approved Resolution 2025-22 to accept an Amazon gift card in the amount of \$25.00 to be used by the city clerk. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

d. Resolution 2025-23

Clerk Hansen said the 420 Account had a balance of (\$5,012.16). She said work was recently done at 301 West St N to make the sewer lateral compliant and they had applied for SSS Financing. The quote for the sewer replacement was \$11,068.61, but she hasn't received the invoice for it. There are two more sewer lateral replacements whose residents signed up for SSS Financing, and their quotes total \$20,362.00. That added to the work done on 301 West St N totals to \$31,433.61. With the negative balance applied, the account would be (\$36,445.77) by the end of the year. Clerk Hansen recommended a transfer of \$40,000.00 from the 607 Sewer Reserves Fund to keep the account positive.

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Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-23 to transfer \$40,000.00 from the 607 Sewer Reserves to the 420 Sewer Service Line Project Fund. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Wayne Krosch said the Garden City Rod and Gun club is upgrading their license so they can raffle away more items. Right now, \$5,000.00 is their limit, and the new license would allow them to give away up to \$50,000.00.

Garden City 10/7/2025

Councilor Bennett made a motion to authorize the Rod and Gun Club to have their Gambling Event in Vernon Center on March 21st, 2026. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

Infrastructure Project

a. Pay Application #16

Engineer Knutson said this should be the final pay application except for retainage which should be 1%. Councilor Finney made a motion to approve Pay Application #16 in the amount of \$22,942.34 once funds are received by bonding and Blue Earth County and MRWA. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

b. MRWA #11

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve MRWA #11 in the amount of \$25,509.23. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

c. Well Project

Engineer Knutson said the bid opening occurred on Tuesday, July 29th, 2025 for improvements to the WTP and WWTP. Two bids were received and the lowest was from Rubin Construction out of Tyler Minnesota for \$1,216,310.00. Both bids were over the amount the engineer estimated.

Clerk Hansen reviewed the meeting notes from USDA-RD and David Drown Associates from January of this year. She said that Ed Gilmore gave the City two sets of numbers they needed to achieve to get the full RD loan. The first number was for sewer which came out \$210,000.00 and the second was for water which came out to \$475,000.00 Those two numbers were combined for the well project, but as the well project is over that number, Ed Gilmore of USDA RD will need to figure what the City owes in regards to the Northland Trust Loan and the two PFA loans, and put that number against what the City has already borrowed from RD. Clerk Hansen said that number, for now, is \$1,364,000.00. Ed Gilmore told her he would need those numbers for June of 2026, and that changes to \$1,260,978. She said Ed Gilmore will need to figure how much money the city would have left of the USDA-RD loan to use against the well project. Ed Gilmore told her the City can approve the bid on contingency of RD concurrence, but not publish the Notice to Aware to Rubin Construction. Otherwise, if RD discovered there is enough funding for the well project, there will need to be a Special Meeting to approve the bid and notice to award. The council decided to table the well project until more information from USDA RD was gathered.

d. 103 Oak St N

PW Supervisor Willette said the contractor left 3-4 feet of transit pipe in the cleanout and he was told that it would be replaced during the project. Engineer Chris Knuton said he would talk to Holtmeier to see what they could do. Clerk Hansen said the property owner at 103 Oak St N passed away recently so she doesn't know who she would contact about that. The council directed Clerk Hansen to send a letter to the estate of the individual letting them know the transit pipe would be replaced by the contractor soon and at no expense to them.

e. Notice of Acceptability of Work

Engineer Knutson said the notice basically states the contractors fulfilled their requirements on the project. PW Supervisor Willette said there are a few items that need to be addressed: concrete at 100 West St N has popped up, a cleanout at 204 East St N was never glued, and the manholes on 169 are loose again. Engineer Knutson said the above items are considered warranty items, but otherwise the contract is complete.

Public Works

a. PW Supervisor Notes

PW Supervisor Willette said he's had some health struggles, and thanked the council for their understanding in him taking time off. He said several trees fell with the wind storm in town including one in the park. There were a couple parts in town where the asphalt was torn up due to the high heat. He asked if the council wanted to have a street sweeper come through, the council said they thought it wasn't needed this year. He also reviewed the notice of violation from MPCA and the corrective steps the City took, including a meeting Clerk Hansen, Mayor Ziegler, and PW Supervisor Willette had with Pam Rodewald and Terri Roth of MPCA. They MPCA accepted the City's response and work for the NOV. He said a contractor from MDH came to town to test for PFAS in July, and that sample revealed no PFAS in the city water.

b. Sewer Laterals

Clerk Hansen stated she is working on PW Supervisor Willette's notes and organized them by street and address. She then updated the spreadsheet she has which shows which properties are compliant, non-compliant, needing council direction, or need to be re-televised. In the meantime, the council needs to schedule a work study for the sewer laterals this year. Acting-Mayor Peterson directed PW Supervisor Willette to send her a copy of his findings once they are all complete and she will go over them before they schedule a work study.

c. Nero Engineering

The Council decided to table the matter until the next meeting.

d. Car Wash

PW Supervisor Willette said the property owner of 100 West St N came to City Hall asking what it would take to not have to pay the water bill on the property. Acting Mayor Peterson said if the homeowner doesn't want to pay the water and sewer bill, they owner would have to foot the bill to have their water and sewer capped off, and if the new road needs to be dug up, then he will need to put it back in the condition it was previously at. Councilor Peterson directed Clerk Hansen to send a letter to the property owner.

e. 101 Oak St S

Clerk Hansen said she and PW Supervisor Willette have reached out to the homeowners several times about needing to inspect and possibly repair their water meter as it is not transmitting data properly, but their calls go to voicemail and they haven't received a call back in over a month. She said she sent a letter asking them to call her, and they have not. The council advised Clerk Hansen to send the residents of 101 Oak St S a certified letter letting them know they have two weeks to have Public Works come into their house to inspect their water meter or their water will be shut off.

f. Seasonal Help Extension

PW Supervisor Willette asked the council for an extension on Fay Butson's seasonal hours. Clerk Hansen said she reviewed the budget and there are enough funds to keep Fay working at 25 hours a week to

September 20th or until October 4th if she stays at 4 hours a week.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve extending Fay Butson on as Seasonal help until September 20th with the possibility of extension to October 4th depending on hours used. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

g. Water Filter Rehab Cost

PW Supervisor Willette said he's reached out to Rubin Construction twice about the cost to rehab the water filters, and hadn't heard back. He asked for the council to step in and get the numbers for him.

Follow up From Previous Meeting

a. LJP

Clerk Hansen said she found the entire contract for LJP, and also the reasoning behind the Fuel Surcharge. She also provided what both the Fuel Surcharge and Environmental Fee cost the city per month. Acting-Mayor Peterson said LJP only assess a Fuel Surcharge if diesel is above \$3.50 a gallon. Councilor Bennett asked what the criteria was to change the charges as some were different and some were the same. Councilor Finney said per the City's contract with LJP, the City can negotiate. The council directed Clerk Hansen to contact LJP and have a representative come into the September meeting to explain the Fuel Surcharge and Environmental Fee.

b. 412 Account Balance

Clerk Hansen said she researched the money the City received from the county, and found the county had paid all their invoices by what Engineer Knutson submitted. She then reached out to the auditors about the journal entry, and the auditors provided her a journal entry to make the account 0 out.

c. Resolution 2025-20 Donation

Clerk Hansen explained this was a donation by Walmart for PW Supervisor Willette and Fay Butson. Councilor Bennett made a motion to accept the donation from Walmart. 2nd by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried. Councilor Edwards abstained.

d. Weed Ordinance

Clerk Hansen said Mayor Ziegler asked her to research what was considered a "weed" when a resident said they had milkweed in their garden. She said the ordinance is open for interpretation based on the definition for a "weed." But by law, anything considered a noxious weed by the MN DNR needs to be eliminated.

e. Sewer Lateral Workshop

PW Supervisor Willette and Clerk Hansen said the council should schedule the sewer lateral workshop for September. Clerk Hansen said the deadline for having sewer lines replaced is December 31st, 2025, and she would like to get the residents letters about the state of their sewer lateral.

f. Park Gazebo

Councilor Bennett said Faith Bergemann contacted her asking about the bench. Councilor Bennett said once the project was done, and the church was done raising money for it. Faith offered to pay for the remaining balance of the gazebo. Calvin Baarts asked what materials the council would like the Gazebo built out of whether they want it to be maintenance free or made of cedar. Councilor Bennett directed him to get a quote for both and get back to the council.

Consolidated Communications Contract

Clerk Hansen said the currently schedule for Consolidated to come into town and install fiber optics is

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now the end of August or the beginning of September. The council will wait for the fiber to be installed before the contract is approved.

Citizen Concern 2025-07

Clerk Hansen said the homeowner lives around the snowmobile trail on the south side of town. There is a new house where the trail comes out, and this homeowner doesn't want the snowmobile trail to go through his property, and wants it documented. Clerk Hansen provided a map where the snowmobile trail exists from the property where the new home is located. The council advised the information be passed on to the Amboy Snowbirds, notifying them of the change and that they are not to go on said property and they would need to get the land owners to sign off on the property.

Next Regular Scheduled meeting 9/4/2025

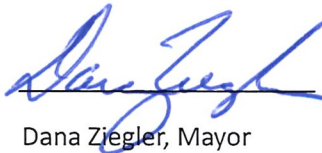
Adjourn

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

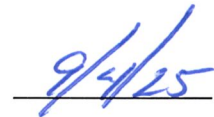
Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.



Kara Hansen, Clerk-Treasurer



Dana Ziegler, Mayor



Date approved

