

City of Vernon Center  
7/8/2024  
Regular Council Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, Adam Finney, and Lisa Peterson.  
Staff Present: Clerk Kara Hansen, PW Supervisor Mark Willette  
Others Present: Deb Hohenstein, Todd Schwarz, Kara Caskey and friend.

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

### **Approve Agenda**

Deb Hohenstein and Kara Caskey at 102 Oak St N were added to Infrastructure Project item d. Todd Schwarz asked to be put in Infrastructure Project item e.

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

### **Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda included the 6/10/2024 meeting minutes, Check Reconciliations, May Cash Balance Investment Report, Checks for Month showing in \$1,415,549.90 deposits and \$1,429,681.32 in checks, Savings and Loan Balance, City Revenue Guideline, City Savings Balances, July & August calendar of events, and the BEC Call Log for June.

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

#### **b). 2023B Bond Update**

Clerk Hansen said the City currently does not have the funds in the checking account to pay off the 2023B Bond, but the county has not paid their portion of Pay Application #5, which is \$320,089.70. When the city receives the county's portion for Pay Application #5, they will have enough money in the checking account to pay the bond off. Mayor Ziegler asked Clerk Hansen to reach out to Engineer Chris Knutson about why the county hasn't paid their portion of Pay Application #5.

#### **c). DropBox**

Councilor Finney said PW Supervisor Willette's Dropbox is full, and the city council's Dropbox is getting full. The city has a lot of files in the shared folder from previous years' council meetings that do not need to be there. Councilor Peterson asked if there are copies of the agenda packets elsewhere. Clerk Hansen said there was. Mayor Ziegler directed Clerk Hansen to free up space in Dropbox by removing all agenda packets older than 2024.

#### **d). Resolution 2024-15 Funds Transfer**

Clerk Hansen said this transfer was approved from the previous meeting, but she accidentally transferred the funds from the City Savings account and not the Water Savings account. After speaking with the auditors about the mistake, they gave her a couple options and deduced a new resolution was the easiest method of fixing the mistake.

Councilor Finney made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-15 Funds Transfer from Water City Savings to Checking Water Fund. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion Carried.

### **Public Comment**

## **Infrastructure Project**

### **a). Pay Application #6**

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Pay Application #6 for \$896,559.58. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

### **b). 107 West St N**

Clerk Hansen said a motion was made at the previous regular meeting to approve the cost share at 107 West St N, but there was not a 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Ziegler made a motion to approve a cost share to install a storm sewer line into 107 West St N with 1/3 being property owner's share and 2/3 being the city's cost. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Finney. All approved. Motion carried.

### **c). Data Request**

Clerk Hansen said the City received a data request for "hardcopies of all annual, scheduled and unscheduled, intermittent Water Quality Reports from 01/01/2017 to 06/19/2024; and all random, planned and unplanned during construction of waterline and roadways. Also for the installation of the sewer lines-before and after installation." She and PW Supervisor Willette are finalizing the data request, and want to make the council aware that it was a lot data to sift through.

### **d). 102 Oak St N**

Resident Kara Caskey reported she cannot live in her house at 102 Oak St N because of an issue with the tiling. She hired a company to jet out her sewer line, and discovered a piece of drain tile which broke off where a tree used to be which was taken down due to the project. PW Supervisor Willette camera'd from the new cleanout at 102 Oak St N in the right-of-way to the east and west, and verified that it was not a contractor's error due to the project. When he camera'd to the east, it was dry for a couple of feet and then the camera was submerged. PW Supervisor Willette said he didn't push the camera further as he was past the foundation. He said the sewer lateral is connected with the resident at 101 Poplar St W, and the lateral runs both ways. He advised the lateral should be cut off and capped off, but it couldn't happen until 101 Poplar St W had an outlet. Mayor Ziegler said the lateral is not the city's responsibility as it's owned by the homeowners, but the city would look into the matter. PW Supervisor Willette, was directed to get a quote to cut and cap between 101 Poplar St W and 102 Oak St N, and redirect 101 Poplar St W's sewer to the sewer main. Mayor Ziegler said the City would contact the homeowner at 101 Poplar St W and have a special meeting with them and the residents at 102 Oak St N once the city received a quote to fix the issue with the properties.

### **e). Sewer Laterals and Railroad St**

Resident Todd Schwarz said he would like to replace the sewer laterals on Railroad St and at his personal property at East St N. PW Supervisor Willette said as of July 15<sup>th</sup>, certain parts of town would be opened up for contractors to come in and dig, including parts of Railroad St and East St so long as the contractor didn't come in on roads that were under construction. Mr. Schwarz reported Railroad needs more gravel due to the trucks traveling on the roads. Mayor Ziegler directed PW Supervisor Willette to bring in four loads of gravel for Railroad St. Mr. Schwarz asked when the drain tile work was going to begin on Railroad St. PW Supervisor Willette said the contractor will begin work on the drain tile on Railroad St as soon as their schedule opens up.

## **Public Works**

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

PW Supervisor Willette reported the city had 14.03 inches of rain of rain in June. A pump on Main Street was stolen and a replacement has been reordered. Because of all the rain, the ground is very saturated

and the flows at the WWTP are very high. He said he will start working on getting First St E camera'd from the cleanouts to the main and documenting clear water flow.

**b). 100 Oak St S Utility Bill**

Clerk Hansen said she reviewed the utility billing for the resident at 100 Oak St S as they stated their utility bill had doubled at the last council meeting. Clerk Hansen calculated the resident's 2023 average for the months of March, April, and May and deduced they were due a credit of \$4.10. There was a past due amount on the resident's utility bill last month which is probably why it appeared as if it had doubled. Mayor Ziegler directed her to refund the resident the \$4.10.

**c). MPCA Grant Opportunity**

PW Supervisor Willette said the MPCA have opened up grants for improvements to WWTP facilities. Mayor Ziegler directed PW Supervisor Willette to reach out to Engineer Eric Meestner for more information.

**d). Flushable Wipes**

Clerk Hansen said she received this in the mail the day after PW Supervisor Willette said there was a clog in the sewer main and flushable wipes were the cause of it. Mayor Ziegler directed PW Supervisor Willette to reach out to Engineer Eric Meestner for more information on the lawsuit.

**Miscellaneous**

**a). ESST Legislative Update**

Clerk Hansen said paid-on call firefighters and first responders are exempt from earning ESST which is why the FD hours were excluded from the consent agenda.

**b). Website Review**

Clerk Hansen said the website is running as normal, and they received a favorable review by their website provider with minor corrections needed on her part. She has already corrected the mistakes pointed out by the review.

**c). Fire Invoice Update**

Clerk Hansen said she was unable to get ahold of one party as there was no provided address and the phone number went to a voicemail box which was full. The second invoice she mailed to the resident but it was returned with "Unable to send" on the envelope. Mayor Ziegler directed Clerk Hansen to reach out to the fire department and ask them to make sure they are taking down the contact information for future fire calls.

**Budget**

Clerk Hansen said she would like some direction with the upcoming budget. Mayor Ziegler asked her to find out where the public safety grant from 2023 came from. A discussion was held on fireworks for the city and the council decided that unless someone stepped up to run next year's fourth of July celebration, no money will be allocated to fireworks for the 2025 budget. PW Supervisor Willette said the city should look into estimates for new water meter readers for the 2025 budget. Clerk Hansen said there is a hole in the soffits behind the fire station. Mayor Ziegler directed her to get quotes to fix it. Councilor Edwards said she will look into raises for the council members. Mayor Ziegler said if they needed to raise their rates it needed to happen this year as it is an election year. Clerk Hansen said the Personnel Committee will need to meet to change the personnel policy if they want to switch the clerk from exempt to non-exempt.

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**Property and Casualty Coverage Review**

Clerk Hansen said she needs to get this information back to M&M Insurance. Mayor Ziegler asked for clarification about if off sale liquor is being assessed to the fire department. Off sale liquor also needs clarification as the city receives no money for liquor sales.

**State of MN CPV Agreement**

Clerk Hansen said this was sent in by the Minnesota State administration. Mayor Ziegler said the City doesn't use Purchase Orders so this agreement does not apply to them.

**Drug and Alcohol Awareness Video**

The City Council, Clerk Hansen, and PW Supervisor Willette all watched the required yearly Drug and Alcohol Awareness video chosen by the city clerk.

**Next Meeting Scheduled for 7/8/2024**

**Adjourn**

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.

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Kara Hansen, Clerk-Treasurer

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Dana Ziegler, Mayor

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Date approved