

City of Vernon Center
8/6/2024
Regular Council Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Dana Ziegler, Wendy Bennett, Emily Edwards, and Lisa Peterson.

Staff Present: Clerk Kara Hansen

Others Present: Engineer Chris Knutson, Kara Caskey, Will Purvis, Faith Kamm from Maple River Messenger, Kelly Juberian, and Devin Blaness.

Public Hearing: Mayor Ziegler opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 PM and briefly explained Ordinance #96, an Ordinance Pertaining to the Discharge of Firearms Within City Limits. Will Purvis said it was a well written ordinance and covered everything that needed to be covered.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Ordinance #96 Pertaining to the discharge of firearms within city limits. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:02 PM.

Mayor Ziegler opened the Regular Council Meeting at 6:02 PM after closing the Public Hearing.

Approve Agenda

Clerk Hansen said a zoning variance was added to Miscellaneous under c. Ordinance #96 was added to Miscellaneous d. Mayor Ziegler said election filing period was added to miscellaneous e. Follow-up from previous meetings was added to Miscellaneous f. Tiny's Park Bench was added to Miscellaneous g.

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

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the 7/8/2024 meeting minutes, Check Reconciliations, June Cash Balance Investment Report, Checks for Month showing in \$1,340,446.59 deposits and \$3,406,103.43 in checks, Savings and Loan Balance, City Revenue Guideline, City Savings Balances, August & September calendar of events, and the BEC Call Log for July.

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

Additional Bills

a). Add'l Bills

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

b). Resolution 2024-16 Funds Transfer

Clerk Hansen said the resolution is for the first payment for the brush truck the fire department purchased. There will be two more payments with the next due when the truck is finished, and the final payment will be due once the truck is delivered. Councilor Peterson asked if the fire department went through a process where there were multiple bids? Clerk Hansen said she would follow up with the fire department.

Councilor Bennett made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-16 Transfer funds from 402 City Savings Public Safety to 101 General Fund. 2nd by Councilor Peterson. All approved. Motion carried.

c). Resolution 2024-17 Funds Transfer

Clerk Hansen said this resolution is to transfer funds for the copier purchase.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-17 Funds Transfer from 101 City Savings to 101 General. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None

Infrastructure Project

a). Pay Application #7

Engineer Knutson said Pay Application #7 was mostly for work done in July, and the cost split shows which portion is the county's responsibility. Some of the USDA-RD loan would be used for this pay application for work performed outside the right-of-way. Councilor Peterson asked if the City paid the RD portion out of pocket. Engineer Knutson said the city would gain the RD funds directly, but the city may have to pay out of pocket and RD refund them. Mayor Zeigler asked for an update on the project finish date for First St E. Engineer Knutson said the contract with the county stated First St E needed to be opened after eight weeks, and that date was August 5th. Engineer Knutson said he would reach out to the county and get an extension date for them as the construction was delayed due to the heavy rains in June and July.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve Pay Application #7 for \$811,342.20. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

b). Change Order

Engineer Knutson said the change order is for more reinforcement on Park Ave N, and portions of Hilltop and East St. The change order is recommended based on a traffic test, and truck traffic is heavier in these portions. Mayor Ziegler said PW Supervisor Willette was concerned if these areas didn't have a good base the roads would deteriorate faster. Councilor Peterson asked if the PFA bonding money would cover the costs of this change order. Engineer Knutson said it should.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve change order for the bases underneath the pavement. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

c). Street Names

Engineer Knutson said he would like someone from the city to look at the street signs to make sure they were all correct. Mayor Ziegler said he and PW Supervisor Willette will look at them and make sure the street names are correct and what the county wants.

Public Works

a). Updated POS Sewer

Clerk Hansen said she was directed to make a correction to the POS Sewer which is outlined in red. Councilor Peterson said several businesses have their roof leaders to the storm sewers so the council would have to review the document. Mayor Ziegler said the Updated Point-of-Sale documents would be tabled to a further meeting.

b). 102 Oak St N & 101 Poplar St W

Mayor Ziegler had a discussion with Kara Caskey of 102 Oak St N and Devin Blanness and Kelly Juberian of 101 Poplar St W about the sewer lateral connecting their properties. Mayor Ziegler said the city's goal is to separate the sewer lateral between the two houses, and cap them off. The City received a bid from Peterson Motor Grader for \$3,870 to dig down and cap the sewer laterals at both properties. 101 Poplar St W would have a new sewer lateral installed so they could connect to the city sewer system. 102 Oak St N is already connected to the city sewer so their lateral would not be replaced. Mayor Ziegler said they wanted this done because of city ordinance so he thought the city should assume some of the cost. 102

Oak St N is not getting much benefit except having the lateral capped off so they shouldn't incur any cost. However, 101 Poplar St W would be receiving a new and compliant sewer lateral out of it, so he felt they should absorb some of the cost. Kara Caskey asked when the contractor would be able to fix the issue. Mayor Ziegler said he didn't know. The city needs to have two temporary easements drafted before the work can be done, and it will also depend on when the contractor can make time to get to the properties. Clerk Hansen said she would email the city attorney the next day and get the easement process started. Kara Caskey asked if the easements could be signed electronically. Clerk Hansen said she would be in touch with the city attorney about that. Mayor Ziegler said the city would pay the contractor so 101 Poplar St W wouldn't receive the bill from the contractor. Councilor Peterson said the city has a program set up where residents could apply for a loan with the city, and have their sewer lateral replacement assessed to their taxes at a chosen rate. Mayor Ziegler asked if Kelly Juberian and Devin Blanness would be willing to pay \$1500 of the cost, and have the remaining amount assessed to their taxes. Both Devin Blanness and Kelly Juberian agreed to pay \$1500 of the cost to have her sewer lateral replaced.

Mayor Ziegler made a motion for the city to pay \$2370.00 for the capping and replacement of a sewer lateral at 101 Poplar St W, and the homeowner of 101 Poplar St W covers the remaining \$1500. 2nd by Councilor Peterson. All approved. Motion carried.

c). 101 Centre St N Utility Billing

Clerk Hansen said she processed a final bill for the tenants at 101 Centre St N for all of July and Banyon charged the homeowner for July and proceeded to charge them again after the utility bills were processed. Clerk Hansen said the Council needs a motion to waive the fees as they were a mistake, and she will check with Banyon about it not happening again.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to reverse the bill for 101 Centre st N in the amount of 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion carried.

d). Amboy Open House for new WTP

Clerk Hansen said she received this flier from Amboy, and thought the City Council would be interested as they are planning on updating the WTP system in the future.

Miscellaneous

a). Clerk Academy Information

Clerk Hansen said she is interested in attending LMC Clerk's Academy in Staples. The fee would be \$250 dollars, and all the classes she would be taking were on the flier. She would travel up on September 11th, and return after the academy concluded on September 13th.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to send Clerk Hansen to the Clerk's Academy in Staples. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

b). Cooperative Purchasing Agreement

Clerk Hansen said the Cooperative Purchasing Agreement is needed because the city approved the purchase of the new city printer and the price of it was negotiated ahead of time.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve entering into the cooperative purchasing agreement. 2nd by Councilor Edwards. All approved. Motion Carried.

c). Zoning Variance

Clerk Hansen said the Zoning Board had a public hearing to discuss the resident at 101 Centre St S to put in a 5-foot-high fence in the front of their property where their current fence is located. Mayor Ziegler said the city approved the installation of a 4-foot-high fence in the same spot in 2011. The Zoning

Ordinance states a front fence cannot be more than 3.5 feet in height. The resident wants to put a five-foot fence in to keep their dogs in the yard. The Zoning Board made a recommendation that the variance to install a five-foot-high fence be accepted.

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve the variance for 101 Centre St S for raising the fence one foot. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

d). Ordinance #96

Councilor Peterson made a motion to approve ordinance #96 an Ordinance Pertaining to the Discharge of Firearms within City Limits. 2nd by Councilor Bennett. All approved. Motion carried.

e). Filing period

Clerk Hansen said the filing period for the mayor and two city council positions starts on August 6th, and goes until 5:00 PM on August 13th. Clerk Hansen said she is required by law to remain open until 5:00 PM on Tuesday, August 13th.

f). Follow up items from previous meetings

Mayor Ziegler said Railroad St had 4 loads of gravel delivered, and the properties on Railroad St have received the go ahead to have their sewer lateral replaced. Clerk Hansen said the new trash pump was ordered, and it has been delivered. Clerk Hansen made sure a municipal liquor store was removed from the Property and Casualty Insurance. Mayor Ziegler said all the fire trucks are back in the fire hall so the agreement with Schwarz Grain, LLC has been finalized, though they're waiting on the electric bill so the final payment for the fire truck storage is waiting for that. Mayor Ziegler said Wash Wizard power washed the fire truck hangar and the bill would be sent back to the townships at the end of the year. Mayor Ziegler asked if the new fire truck was added to the insurance. Clerk Hansen said the new Tanker was added to the insurance when it arrived, but the brush truck wouldn't be added until the city takes ownership of it. PW Supervisor Willette had to open up the bypass gate on Monday, August 5th due to the high amount of rain. Mayor Ziegler said the infrastructure project has made good progress with reducing I&I to the WWTP. The next phase of the project will be to get residents with non-compliant sewer laterals to become compliant. Mayor Ziegler talked to a resident on County Rd 10 about their driveway. Mayor Ziegler and Councilor Edwards are still working on FLSA requirements. Councilor Edwards said she will forward a questionnaire about clerk responsibilities to the whole council and Clerk Hansen to see if she qualifies to be classified as non-exempt or should remain exempt. The personnel committee will meet on a later date to discuss it.

g). Tiny's Park Bench

Clerk Hansen said the bench for Tiny's Park arrived last week and she and Seasonal Hire Fay Butson moved it to her breakroom to keep it out of the elements until it was ready to be installed. PW Supervisor Willette will have to see if it can be bolted into a slab to prevent a theft. Mayor Ziegler said the council should look into having a pavilion installed now that the infrastructure project is done with that area of town, and have the bench incorporated there.

Budget

Clerk Hansen said she would like some direction with the upcoming budget. Councilor Peterson said the 402 City Savings has plenty of money in it to cover costs associated with the tornado siren so there was no need to start a fund for it. Councilor Peterson said the city wanted to keep the schedule to raise water rates by 2% every year in effect until the issues with the WTP are fixed and a rate study done. Councilor Peterson said the city doesn't need to transfer money for the easements and it will show up as a negative balance in the budget. Mayor Ziegler asked Clerk Hansen to get a breakdown of the cost to do

work in the city shop and get back to them. Clerk Hansen said the city received a public safety grant and hasn't used it yet, and the auditors would want to know what the funds are to be used for. Mayor Ziegler instructed Clerk Hansen to find out if the funds were used and if not, where they were deposited. Clerk Hansen said PW Supervisor Willette initiated a conversation with Metering and Technology Solutions about updating the meter reading software for the city and possibly purchasing a new meter. A sales representative from Metering and Technology Solutions came and spoke to both Clerk Hansen and PW Supervisor Willette, and said he didn't think the city's meter reader needed to be replaced, but recommended updating their software to beacon. The cost for it would be \$10,213.00 and the additional cost to update Banyon would be \$1500.00. Mayor Ziegler said to add the cost to the budget, but asked Clerk Hansen to reach out to the sales associated at Metering and Technology Solutions to see if they would come to a council meeting or have a conference call, and explain how the software would benefit the city.

Ordinance #93 Changes

Clerk Hansen said Mayor Ziegler and Councilor Bennett met last week to discuss changes to Ordinance #93 before a public hearing could be held for it. Mayor Ziegler said the topic should be tabled as changes need to be made to the roof leader verbiage.

Next Meeting Scheduled for 9/5/2024

Adjourn

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.

Kara Hansen, Clerk-Treasurer

Dana Ziegler, Mayor

Date approved