

CITY OF VERGAS  
COUNCIL MINUTES  
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM  
Tuesday, December 12, 2023

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at the Vergas Event Center and on a Zoom for a hybrid regular council meeting with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn, Council Members: Bruce Albright, Paul Pinke, Dean Haarstick and Natalie Fischer. Absent: none. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers; Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; Attorney Tom Winters; and Citizens Marcia Huddleson and Joy Summers.

**Call to Order**

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

**Citizens' Concerns**

No concerns addressed.

**Agenda Additions and Deletions**

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve the agenda with the following item added to the consent agenda: Liquor Store transfer of \$15,000. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the following consent agenda with the general fund pulled and Albright had minor corrections to the minutes:

- A. Council Minutes of the November 14, 2023 meeting
- B. Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$96,915.37.
- C. Liquor Store bills for November 2023 totaling \$54,390.64.
- D. Late water/sewer bills
- E. 2023 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule
- F. General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account
- G. 2023 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances
- H. American Rescue Plan Funding 2021-2026
- I. 2023 Year to Date
  1. Water Fund
  2. Sewer Fund
- J. 2024 Licenses
  1. Cigarette
    - a. Lakes Community Co-op
    - b. Olson Oil
  2. Liquor on-sale
    - a. Billy's Corner Bar
    - b. Skal
- K. Employee Training
  1. MN Rural Water Conference – March 5-7, 2024 in St Cloud (DuFrane)
  2. MN Clerks and Finance Officers – March 19 -22, 2024 in St Cloud (Lammers)
  3. Clerks Advanced Academy- (Lammers)
  4. LMC, Loss Control Workshop March 26 in Mahnomen or March 27 in Alexandria (DuFrane, Engebretson, Lammers)
  5. League of MN Cities Annual Conference June 26-28, 2024 in Rochester (Mayor, Council & Lammers)
  6. Municipal Beverage Association (MMBA) (Theisen) Arrowwood
- L. 2024 Elections
  1. Resolution 2023-018 Polling Place Designation
  2. Hire Election Judges for 2024
- M. Resolution 2023-017 Community Growth Partnership Grant
- N. Resolution 2023-019 Accepting Donation - Picnic Table

- O. Resolution 2023-020 Accepting Parcel for Park
- P. Committee Reports - requiring no Council Action
  - 1. EDA/HRA

Motion passed unanimously.

Lammers reviewed income and expenses of the General Fund with general fund expenditures higher than the 2023 budget forecast. Expecting approximately \$30,000.00 less in revenue. Expenses over the budget were mainly in the streets department; repairs, maintenance and engineering.

## **Committee Reports**

### Planning Commission

Albright reviewed the planning commission meeting held November 27, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Discussed property at 339 E Frazee Avenue being a habitual nuisance property. The process is to send a letter, send a certified letter and recommend to Council to turn over to City Attorney for misdemeanor. Albright suggested DuFrane and a council member go and speak with the property owner. Winters stated it would be okay to meet with property owner before sending to Attorney. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to allow Albright and DuFrane to go speak with property owner at 339 E Frazee Avenue before proceeding with attorney action. Motion passed unanimously.

### CDH-Vergas Fire Board

Bruhn reviewed the CDH-Vergas Fire Board meeting held November 28, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). They are looking to replace a fire truck in 2025. They are requesting a 10% increase in funding, an increase of \$1,316.00 for the City of Vergas. The City is 11% of the CDH-Vergas fire budget. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve 10% increase. Motion passed unanimously.

### Park Advisory Board

Reviewed the park advisory board meeting held November 16, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Discussed a sign at Peterson Park and the planning commission needs to approve the sign construction permit. If the sign is placed, we need to remember the Vergas Community Club pays for all the plants. Discussed plaque by donated memorial trees and the process for this is if someone would like to have a plaque by trees they may purchase. The bench by ball diamond will be replaced by Goodman bench which is currently located at the shop. Discussed adding a Ball Diamond contract. Albright suggested a ball diamond committee. Bruhn stated we could add this to our city portfolio. DuFrane stated they are replacing and repairing picnic tables over the winter. Discussed communication with park board, there is a council representative, and it is their responsibility for communication, we need to ask them about what they would like. Fischer stated that the main concern is not getting information regarding the budget. Lammers will start giving a more detailed budget report. DuFrane stated he has spoken with DNR, and the pier cannot be extended. It was engineered to the current length. DuFrane stated Jason Schrupp called him and said flushable toilets are against state code in the current location. Pinke requested DuFrane speak with Schrupp about what is allowable.

### Personnel

Bruhn reviewed the personnel committee meeting held December 4, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Data has been taken for the League of Mn Cities pay data to make a new pay table. Table has been adjusted to 3% increases at every step and all employees would be on the current pay table. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the proposed 2024 pay table. Motion passed unanimously. The earned sick and safe time (ESST) proposed by the State of MN was proposed to the Council which legally needs to be into effect January 1, 2024. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the ESST effective January 1, 2024. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Staff Reports**

### Utilities Superintendent

DuFrane informed the Council a deer has run into the side of the pickup and there is \$2,000 worth of damage and has been turned into insurance and 2 quotes have been received. DuFrane is attending MNWarn training on December 13, 2023.

## **2024 Budget**

Bruhn reviewed the preliminary budget which was approved in September at 3%. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve resolution 2023-21 (complete copy of resolution located at the city office and on the city web page) for the final 2024 budget of \$488,398.00. Motion passed unanimously.

**Information & Announcements**

Bruhn asked Council Members and Employees to provide surveys and input on the employees being reviewed at the end of December.

**Trainings:**

None scheduled.

**Events:**

Local Board of Review, April 10, 2024 Vergas Event Center Council Chambers, 1:00 pm (Mayor, Council and Lammers)

**Adjournment**

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Vergas Clerk-Treasurer  
Julie Lammers, CMC