

CITY OF VERGAS  
COUNCIL MINUTES  
Vergas Event Center and Zoom  
Tuesday, June 13, 2023

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:00 pm, on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at the Vergas Event Center for a hybrid public hearing with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn, Council Members: Bruce Albright, Haarstick, Paul Pinke and Natalie Fischer. Absent: none. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers, Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane, Doug Halvorson, Jeff Hattlewick and Meryl Kvam.

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

Introduced gravel pit ordinance.

Doug Halvorson commented "On the road by his shed (Bennett Road) there are 15-20 trucks going in the gravel pit every hour. Who wants to live across the street from a gravel pit which is open 6 days a week for 12 hours. I am proud of what my property looks like, but I will not build a house with a gravel pit across from my property. Concerned about the road, concerned about the traffic and I am pro-business. If I could add onto my building right now I would do it."

Meryl Kvam agreed with Doug Halvorson on the fact that the city is allowing 6 days of work at the gravel pit. Kvam stated "A town with 265 vehicles driving by it is quieter than this with the gravel pit. The council needs to set a limit on speed from city limits to the railroad tracks to 15 miles per hour. Most Mark Sand and Gravel drivers are good, but we have a lot of kids biking around town and we are just waiting for an accident. Trucks can short shift and not make so much noise. With the alarm going off 4 times a day 365 days a year this town needs to think about noise violation." Jeff Hattlewick provided his phone number to Kvam to let him know when trucks were driving inappropriately.

Albright reviewed the proposed gravel permit ordinance explaining this ordinance is for all gravel pits within the city limits. Reviewed the past gravel pits and owners of the pit now owned by Mark Sand and Gravel. If there is violations get ahold of the City and the office will contact companies or sheriff.

Paul Pinke and Natalie Fischer joined the meeting.

Discussed the use of the plant asphalt plant. Bruhn stated the comments are duly noted. Jeff stated to he would pass the information onto the truck supervisor.

Open Burning Ordinance introduced.

Albright reviewed the changes from the past ordinance to the proposed ordinance. Kvam questioned burning and not knowing if the area is going to be dry on a certain day. DNR permit is only good for 72 hours. Kvam stated this ordinance is a little excessive.

Bruhn closed the public hearing at 6:29 pm.

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Tuesday, June 13 2023

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at the Vergas Event Center 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, Engineer Blaine Green, Attorney Tom Winters, Robert Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum, Jeff Hattlewick, and Sherri Hanson.

**Call to Order**

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

**Citizens' Concerns**

None.

**Agenda Additions and Deletions**

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the agenda with the following addition: Glen Street extension. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the following consent agenda with the removal of the claims list:

- A. Council Minutes of the May 9 24, 2023
- B. Bills paid between Council meetings
- C. Liquor Store bills for May 2023
- 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. Certify Dog Licenses to property taxes
- J. Committee Reports - requiring no Council Action
  1. Planning Commission

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussed the claims list regarding the payment to Michael DuFrane for the use of his boat for \$357.00. DuFrane originally wanted to add time to payroll and Lammers informed him he could not add time to his payroll for boat use. Winters stated that the city does not want to make a habit of using employee's personnel property. The council asked DuFrane to consider renting from JK Marine in the future. We may need to discuss a better process for this. Haarstick questioned putting cement blocks in a new boat and Albright stated you just need to be careful.

Bruhn questioned paying out of payroll with a motion. Lammers suggested changing the payment of the invoice as this is not a payroll expense. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to pay DuFrane \$50.00 for boat rental for one day. Yes: none No: Pinke, Haarstick, Albright and Fischer. Motion failed. Motion by Albright, seconded by Fischer to approve payment of \$100.00 to DuFrane and to review the process before fall on rental of boats. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Ordinances**

1. Gravel Pit

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve Ordinance 2023-004 regarding Excavation, Mining and Gravel Pits (complete copy of resolution located at the city office) to approve the ordinance as presented. Motion passed unanimously. Discussed hours of operation.

2. Open Burning

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve Ordinance 2023-005 regarding Open Burning amending Chapter 92 of the Vergas City Code, striking the 48-hour requirement and changing prior to burning notifying the City Clerk's Office. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Otter Tail Lakes County Assn.**

Haarstick reviewed the past Otter Tail County Lake Association meeting.

### **Committee Reports**

#### Parks

Sherri Hanson reviewed the Park Advisory Board meetings of May 25, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke for the City of Vergas to be the fiscal agent for the park advisory board to raise funds for park improvements. Motion passed unanimously. Discussed items Pausch is requesting for the bathhouse such as: lowering toilets and lighting. Albright questioned what was being planned with the new plan proposal of the park. Hanson agreed if we are revamping the bathhouse in the next few years, we may not want to spend money on this now. Hanson expressed frustration with the proposed park plans and does not feel we are close to a workable plan at this point. We may want to look at phases for the park improvements. No recommendations have been made from the park board. The council requested the park advisory review and make a recommendation for the July meeting. The ski team has put their docks in at Long Lake, but they are not placed in the approved area. DuFrane stated the docks are in the way of people taking pictures, and feels the docks look tacky. The docks are for staging areas when practicing and performing in the ski shows. The docks need to be a certain number of feet apart for the performance. The ski team has agreed to move docks if they need to. Council members were asked to go look at the docks. Hanson stated she needed to give the ski show an answer tomorrow. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to table the discussion and have the Council look at docks; in the interim the docks can stay in their current location. Motion passed unanimously. Hanson reviewed the metal loon will be placed in the middle of the fence when the new fence is placed in the next few weeks. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to allow loon to be placed in the middle of the new fencing. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke for the City of Vergas to be the fiscal agent for the park advisory board to raise funds for park improvements. Motion passed unanimously.

#### Personnel

Bruhn reviewed the change to the personnel policies regarding holidays and the updated event center coordinator job

description. Motion by Albright, seconded by Bruhn to update the personnel policy by adding the following two holidays Juneteenth and Indigenous People's Day. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the Event Center Coordinator job description. Motion passed unanimously.

#### EDA/HRA

Lammers reviewed the EDA/HRA committee meeting of June 6, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office).

Proposed the Council allowing for applications for owner-occupied development value gap grants for \$10,000 per lot for a cost of up to \$50,000 per development for up to 5 years of taxes. Otter Tail County would manage the grants for the City. To receive this financing the developer must prove the housing has a gap in expenses to value and property owners will not be able to apply for tax abatement if the developer uses this program. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve owner-occupied development value gap financing in conjunction with Otter Tail County guidelines for \$50,000 per development and \$10,000 per parcel. Motion passed unanimously.

#### CDH-Vergas Fire Board

Bruhn reviewed CDH-Vergas Fire Board meeting of May 15, 2023. Quote for \$4,825.00 for removal of existing asphalt and repaving. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the site's share of parking lot paving for a cost of \$530.75 using the remainder of the American Rescue Funds and using public safety funds for the balance. Motion passed unanimously.

#### Water and Sewer

Fischer reviewed the water and sewer committee meetings of May 22, 2023 and June 5, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office).

##### Internal Grease Traps

This will be discussed at the July 11 Council meeting and Lammers will invite all businesses with food to the meeting as the ordinance may be changed.

##### Cross Contamination

We would be developing a policy to prevent this backflow from happening in the future and will be proposing this be added to construction permits. The wording has not been developed yet and will come to the council when available. Discussed the costs the City incurred for with the emergency due to business not having a back flow. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to bill Recyclose \$2,800.00 to cover the city expenses. Motion passed unanimously.

#### Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste

Albright reviewed the issue of the slops from the 2019 Street project on E Scharf Ave and Diane Avenue. Green has provided bid information and Lammers has posted in neighboring papers, website and emailed local contractors. Discussed changing the date of completion as many contractors are very busy. Discussed the removal of the building located at 140 E Linden and preparing the land for a parking lot. Neighboring property has items on the City property and has been asked to remove items with no action being taken. Haarstick questioned the City removing the building and Council responded with the Comprehensive Plan has requested parking and the decision to remove the building was decided last October. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to have neighboring property remove items by July 15, 2023. Haarstick abstained. Voting yes: Pinke, Albright and Fischer. Voting No: none. Motion passed.

##### Glen Street

Albright reviewed the pre-construction meeting information for the extension of Glenn Street. There is a power pole that will need to be moved, the water line may need to be moved cost estimates have not yet been determined. Streetlights for the area are being discussed including decorative lighting. The streets/sidewalks/yard waste committee will be looking at lighting. Currently Otter Tail Power has stated they do not want us to put Christmas lights on the current poles.

##### Sunset Strip

Green explained they have looked at the current right-of-way in this area. There has been a gravel road going in here for years, but it is not a city street. Council asked Lammers to invite property owners to the July meeting before proceeding with this project. Our first step is to make this an official city street. The quote will be looked at in July.

#### **Staff Reports**

##### City Clerk-Treasurer

Lammers provided a written report on IIMC Conference and informed the Council of web-based program available for cities. GOVOS forms would provide citizens the opportunity to apply online. This program would provide recordkeeping technology and tracking systems for all forms. The cost of the system is \$13,000.00 and asked the Council to consider the program to decrease the amount of time employees spend working on forms.

##### Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent

Mike DuFrane provided the following report to the Council for May 2023.

1. Parks – Beach buoy system was installed today.
2. Wastewater-grease issue at ponds.
3. Water-handled water emergency
4. Streets -will be patched soon.

**Information & Announcements**

## Trainings:

- a. League of MN Cities Annual Conference, June 21-23, 2023 (Bruhn, Haarstick, Albright)
- b. Clerks Advanced Academy- Sept 14-15, 2023, Bemidji, MN (Lammers)

## Events:

- a. Otter Tail County Board of Review, June 14, 2023.
- b. Household Hazardous Waste Day, Thursday, June 29, 2023 10:00 - 2:00

**Adjournment**

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Submitted by,

Julie Lammers, CMC

Vergas City Clerk-Treasurer