

CITY OF VERGAS  
PUBLIC HEARING  
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM  
Tuesday, September 14, 2021

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at the Vergas Event Center and on Zoom as a hybrid meeting for a public hearing on commercial/residential tax abatement with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn, Council Members: Bruce Albright, Paul Pinke, Logan Dahlgren and Natalie Fischer. Absent: none. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers, Sherri Hanson, Jeff Zitzow, Tyler Schmid, Tara Dressen, Bryan Buhr, Merel Kvam, Attorney Tom Winters and Loren Menz.

Bruhn opened public hearing regarding requests to abate 100% of the increase to the City of Vergas portion of real estate taxes related to the commercial located at 105 East Main Street building improvements on the subject properties for a period of up to 5 years.

Albright reviewed the recommendation of the Vergas EDA/HRA to allow \$5,000 per apartment and \$5,000 for commercial space for a total of \$45,000 or 5 years whichever is less.

Loren Menz questioned how the value is obtained and the effects on the city taxpayers. Merel Kvam questioned how taxed amount is figured.

Bruhn closed the public hearing at 6:45 pm.

CITY OF VERGAS  
COUNCIL MINUTES  
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM  
Tuesday, September 14, 2021

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:45 pm, on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at the Vergas Event Center and on a Zoom hybrid meeting for a regular council meeting with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn, Council Members: Bruce Albright, Paul Pinke, Logan Dahlgren and Natalie Fischer. Absent: none. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers, Sherri Hanson, Merel Kvam, Jeff Zitzow, Tyler Schmid, Tara Dressen, Bryan Buhr, Attorney Tom Winters and Loren Menz.

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

No citizens' concerns were addressed.

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Dahlgren to remove Townline Road from the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the following consent agenda items:

- a. Council Minutes of the July 13 and 22, 2021 and August 10, 2021
- b. Liquor Store bills for August 2021 for a total of \$78,287.65.
- c. Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills for a total of \$39,041.14.
- d. Late water/sewer bills
- e. General Fund/Special Revenue Money Market Account Report
- f. 2021 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule
- h. Certified bills to property taxes.

Motion passed unanimously.

Attorney Tom Winters responded to 1156 Frazee Avenue stating the City has responded with the agreement of building a platform and advised Council no other comments should be addressed. Bryan Buhr stated concern regarding the platform being built as the approval was given months ago. Due to Covid pandemic, the City has had difficulty finding a contractor to build platform. Albright will contact Summers Construction regarding the platform construction which has been approved for \$1,000. Winters will respond to concerns presented.

Motion by Dahlgren, seconded by Fischer to approve resolution regarding tax abatement at 105 Main Street (complete copy of resolution located at the City office) for \$45,000 or 5 years whichever is first for 5 businesses and 8 apartments. Motion passed unanimously.

Kolbinger reviewed the grading down on 88 Park View Drive and the grading which was put in does not follow the plan that was laid out. Appears water will drain around the rock checks and small berm will not complete what was supposed to accomplish. Albright stated the berm was not built per design. Tara Dressen stated there was no plan provided to the landscaper. Dressen requested the City pay the landscaper as they had promised a year ago. Discussed the easement area and how it has not been a problem in the past 20 years. Dressen asked for direction of what the Council wants from them to close this issue and have city pay this bill. Kolbinger will review and get in contact with the landscaper.

Mayor Julie Bruhn requested Council members to RSVP to Lammers if they will be attending the League of MN Cities Fall Forum meeting at the Vergas Event Center on November 4 at 1:30 pm.-7 pm. Council also invited Attorney Tom Winters to attend the event.

Discussed construction permit for 105 E Main St which does not include enough parking spaces per City Ordinance and property owners were asked to apply for a variance for the building. Albright discussed the need for more parking and the Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste committee is discussing ideas for parking within the city. Motion by Dahlgren, seconded by Pinke to waive the variance fee for the building of 105 E Main St. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussed permit for 830 Scharf Avenue for driveway with crushed asphalt and permit was sent to planning and zoning to review.

Bruhn reviewed the proposed budget for 2022 with the main increases with technology support and park capital outlay. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the proposed budget. Motion passed unanimously. Bruhn reviewed the American Rescue Plan funding. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Dahlgren to approve resolution regarding preliminary budget (complete copy of resolution located at the city office) for \$253,655.00. Motion passed unanimously.

Albright reviewed EDA/HRA meeting minutes of September 1, 2021 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Discussed City property at 310 W Lake Street which EDA/HRA members requested Council to turn over the farm to the EDA/HRA for the purpose of selling the property. Albright stated he feels we should review all options and wait for the comprehensive plan to be developed.

Lammers reviewed the Vergas Event Center meeting held on August 11, 2021 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office).

Sherri Hanson reviewed the Park Board meeting held on August 26, 2021 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Stated the Hairyman event for 2021 has been cancelled. Reviewed the enforcement of no motorized vehicles on the trail. Looking at putting a swing set by the loon.

Albright reviewed Planning Commission meeting minutes of August 23, 2021 (minutes available at the

Vergas City Office). Albright reviewed the changes being discussed for our grass and nuisance ordinances. Discussed the dedication and purchases of the easements on Townline Road. Tabled action until Hobart Township discusses road with the planning commission at the end of the month.

Bruhn reviewed personnel committee minutes of August 16, 2021 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Motion by Albright, seconded by Dahlgren to accept the resignation of Gail from the liquor store as both manager and clerk. Motion passed unanimously. Discussed the need for 5-day coverage with the streets and parks department. Motion by Dahlgren, seconded by Pinke to move Matt Engebretson as Maintenance Operator to a fulltime position as of January 1, 2021. Motion passed unanimously. Bruhn reviewed the need for a fulltime position at the liquor store and the change in the manager position to include help with city office work. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Dahlgren to approve the updated liquor store manager position. Motion passed unanimously. Bruhn reviewed the policy to pay employees time and a half from midnight to 6 am and proposed the change to making a \$2.00 differential pay. Motion by Dahlgren, seconded by Pinke to approve the change from time and half to \$2.00 differential rate for hours between midnight and 6 am. Motion passed unanimously. Bruhn reviewed the change from having employees receiving overtime to have them receive comprehensive time. Bruhn stated employees need to leave early if they come in early, they do not need to stay and get extra hours. Personnel recommends for the employees receive comp time instead of overtime unless there are extenuating circumstances. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the policy for employees to receive comp time for over 40 hours unless personnel committee approves receiving overtime. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Dahlgren, seconded by Pinke to allow the Liquor Store to have a fulltime employee. Motion passed unanimously.

Albright reviewed street/sidewalks/yard waste committee meeting minutes of September 7-8, 2021 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to allow the purchase of a sander for \$5,600 and be installed by City staff. Motion passed unanimously. Lammers stated we have 11 permits left for 2021. Does the Council want more purchased or would you like 2022 permits sold before January 1, 2022? Council advised Lammers to print up additional 2021 permits and not sell 2022 permits.

Dahlgren reviewed water/sewer meeting minutes of September 8, 2021 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Motion by Fischer, seconded by Pinke to purchase a Quest 120/UP graded Hi-E Dry 100 dehumidifier for the water plant for \$2,470.00. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the water rate increase from \$3.50 to \$3.75 per 1,000 gallons of water used and increasing the sewer rates from \$2.50 to \$2.75 per 1,000 gallons of water used on January 1, 2022. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Dahlgren, seconded by Pinke to approve the 2022 water and sewer budgets as provided. Motion passed unanimously.

Lammers reviewed information from Corporate Technology regarding computer monitoring for \$200.00 a month. Motion by Dahlgren, seconded by Fischer to enter a contract with Corporate Technologies for a one-year contract using the American Rescue Funds. Motion passed unanimously.

Lammers reviewed unpaid licenses and certified letters to dog owners. Two options the City has used in the past are having Attorney send letters to dog owners or add the amount to the owner's property taxes. Motion by Dahlgren, seconded by Fischer to add the dog license expenses to the owner's property taxes. Motion passed unanimously.

Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane provided the following:

Josh Hanson reviewed the purchase of his purchase of land by the City property on W Lake Street. Hanson will be providing a plat to planning commission for approval. Hanson requested information

regarding tax exclusions or programs. Lammers explained the current tax abatement program with the City and County. Hanson requested the city property along W Lake Street be sold. Dahlgren requested planning commission make a recommendation regarding the W Lake Street for October Council meeting.

The following City meetings were mentioned:

1. MN Rural Water Conference – Aug.24-26, 2021 (DuFrane) St Cloud
2. Clerks Advanced Academy-September 23-24, 2021 (Lammers) Waite Park
3. Municipal Beverage Association (MMBA), September 25-28, 2021 (Lammers)  
Arrowwood

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Clerk-Treasurer Julie Lammers, CMC