

CITY OF VERGAS
PUBLIC HEARING
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, March 26, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 for a hybrid Public Hearing at the Vergas Event Center and on a Zoom 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; Editor Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum; and Citizens Marcia Huddleson, Josh Hanson, Paul Sonnenberg, Sherri Hanson, Chris Leclair and Kyle Westergard.

Mayor Julie Bruhn opened the public hearing to discuss Community Partnership Grant for JRMH Holdings.

Josh Hanson reviewed the request for a grant to build a home with gap financing. The process regarding developers receiving funds to make up the difference between cost of materials and amount house can sell for was reviewed.

Public Hearing Closed at 6:35 p.m.

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Mayor Julie Bruhn opened the public hearing to discuss Tax Abatement for Paul & Deb Sonnenberg.

The Hearing including information regarding the tax abatement encouraging homes to be built by citizens wanting to homestead in Vergas. This program gives a tax incentive of up to \$5,000 in tax refund for up to 5 years on the home built on property. This will increase the tax market value of Vergas for years to come.

Public Hearing Closed at 6:38 p.m.

CITY OF VERGAS
COUNCIL MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, March 26, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:39 pm, on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 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; Editor Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum; Otter Tail County Land and Resource Management Director Chris LeClair and Assistant Director Kyle Westergard; and Citizens Marcia Huddleson, Josh Hanson, Paul Sonnenberg and Sherri Hanson.

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 Albright to approve the agenda with the following item added: MN Rural Water Award. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve the following consent agenda

1. Council Minutes of the February 13, 2024 and February 27, 2024
2. Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills for \$38,907.41
3. Liquor Store bills for February 2024 for \$57,835.06
4. Late water/sewer bills
5. 2024 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule
6. General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account
7. 2024 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances
8. American Rescue Plan Funding 2021-2026
9. Committee Reports - requiring no Council Action
 1. Budget Committee
 2. EDA/HRA
 3. Planning Commission
 4. Park Advisory Board
 5. Vergas Event Center Advisory Board
 6. CDH-Vergas Fire Board Report

Motion passed unanimously.

MN Rural Water Award

Bruhn explained the city has received the Dave Neiman Source Water Protection Award. DuFrane received the award at the MRWA 40th Annual Water and Wastewater Technical Conference. The City has had a very effective campaign to educate private well owners in the area on the importance of properly managing their wells via the city's website, regular newsletters and by installing a glass display case which holds wellhead protection educational materials in a prominent location in town. Bruhn thanked the city employees for their hard work regarding water in Vergas.

Public Hearing Topics

Community Partnership Grant

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve resolution 2024-003 (complete copy of resolution located at the city office and on the city web page) regarding the Community Partnership Grant applied for by JRMH Holdings for \$10,000.00 in abatement to be received within 10 years. Motion passed unanimously.

Tax Abatement

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve resolution 2024-003 (complete copy of resolution located at the city office and on the city web page) regarding the Tax Abatement applied for by Paul & Deb Sonnenberg for \$5,000.00 in abatement to be received within 5 years. Motion passed unanimously.

Ottertail County Shoreline Management Ordinance and Agreement

Otter Tail County Land & Resource management Director Christopher LeClair reviewed the discussion between Lammers and himself regarding the County overseeing the Shoreline Management permits for the City of Vergas. The Planning Commission asked Lammers to look into the County reviewing permits as they do not feel they are qualified to do so. Albright explained the planning commission requested for permits to be run through the county to keep them consistent and having someone who deals with the laws daily. Otter Tail County Land & Resource Management Assistant Director Kyle Westergard explained there are some differences between our current Lake Shore Management Ordinance and the County Ordinance Lammers, Albright, LeClair and Westergard will review differences and bring back a recommendation for the Council. LeClair stated he sees this as a joint powers agreement and would like to see a 2-year agreement. This could take up to a year to develop and make a reality.

Conditional Use Permits, Variances and enforcement will need to be handled by the city but the county will issue day to day permits.

Vergas Community Club

Sherrri Hanson, President of the Vergas Community Club (VCC) provided a list of duties for employees to do during the events put on by the VCC. Bruhn explained the city employees have requested a point of contact including a phone number for duties requested, council would like to look at each event separately as more items tend to come up for city employees to do and the list did not have enough detail. Hanson requested the city waive the fee for beer vendors and VCC to sell beer during Shops and Hops. Motion by Albright, seconded by Fisher to waive the \$125.00 fee for the 1-to-4-day state permit per vendor for Shops and Hops and the VCC 1-to-4-day permit fee of \$125.00. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Utilities Superintendent

DuFrane explained the part from Ace Electric (pigtails for generator hook up at the water plant) has been placed on back order again.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to allow Lammers and DuFrane to attend Loss Control Conference in St. Cloud on August 23, 2024 as the conference in both Alexandria and Mahanomen were canceled due to weather. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to hold an open house at the government services center on Saturday, April 13 from 10 am to 1 pm for the public to see the new building and for the employees to sell yard waste permits, dog licenses and golf cart permits. Motion passed unanimously.

Lammers reviewed a boundary line change requested from Josh Hanson. Hanson stated that he would like to put this on hold as a lot may sell with the current boundary lines. Tabled until next meeting.

Information & Announcements

Trainings:

1. MN Clerks and Finance Officers – March 19 -22, 2024 in St Cloud (Lammers)
2. LMC, Loss Control Workshop March 26 in Mahanomen or March 27 in Alexandria (DuFrane, Engebretson, Lammers)
3. Municipal Beverage Association (MMBA-)April 20-23, 2024 (Theisen) Arrowwood
4. League of MN Cities Annual Conference June 26-28, 2024 in Rochester (Mayor, Council & Lammers)
5. Clerks Advanced Academy- September 19-20, 2024 (Lammers)

Events:

- Local Board of Review, April 10, 2023 Vergas Event Center Council Chambers, 1:00 pm (Mayor, Council and Lammers)
- Ottertail County, Workforce Summit, Wednesday, April 24, 2024
- Household Hazardous Waste Day, Thursday, June 20, 2024 10:00-2:00 (Volunteers Needed)

Adjournment

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Vergas Clerk-Treasurer
Julie Lammers, CMC