

CITY OF VERGAS  
COUNCIL MINUTES  
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM  
Tuesday, July 9, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at the Vergas Event Center and on 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 and Liquor Store Manager Kyle Theisen; Editor Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum; Engineer Blaine Green; Auditor Colleen Hoffman and Citizens Scott Goodman and Marcia Huddleson.

**Call to Order**

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

**Citizens' Concerns**

None.

**Agenda Additions and Deletions**

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

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

Council Minutes of June 11, 2024

Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$59,384.41.

Liquor Store bills for May 2024 totaling \$105,587.80.

Late water/sewer bills

2024 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule

General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account

2024 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances

August Council Meeting moved to Aug. 14, 2024

Budgets: General, Water, Sewer

Motion passed unanimously.

**Public Safety Request**

Lammers reviewed a request from the CDH-Vergas Fire department for 23 new helmets. Public Safety account currently has \$10,108.22 and 23 helmets cost \$9,959. Pinke questioned when the last time helmets were purchased; no one present could recall that data. Pinke questioned if townships would be paying a portion of the helmets. Public Safety money was not given to townships, the complete cost would come from the city. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve payment of \$9,959 for helmets. Motion passed unanimously.

**2023 Audit**

Colleen Hoffman, Hoffman, Phillip & Knutson, PLLC presented the 2023 audit. Hoffman stated it is a pleasure working with Vergas and enjoys working with Julie Lammers and stated she gives the Council accurate information. Hoffman reviewed the budget and how to change the budgets within the year by always adding revenue if we add an expense. Hoffman reviewed the liquor store and enjoys working with Theisen. Huddleston questioned why the government funds decrease was not explained on page 5 and wondered if this is sustainable for the city. Hoffman stated the state auditor's office does not like the city to have too much money so yes, we spent down our savings, and the city is within the 35-60% of budget amount the state recommends. Discussed EDA/HRA

board and Hoffman stated she could add the EDA/HRA board to the audit. Bruhn stated the council is aware we spent beyond the budget last year and some taxes were not paid and we will be getting the funds in the future. Bruhn thanked Hoffman for coming and sharing the audit with the Council. Discussed the concerns of not having enough auditors for the state of MN. Cities that are looking for auditors will be paying triple what the City of Vergas is paying.

## **Committee Reports**

### Event Center Advisory Board

Pinke reviewed the Event Center Advisory Board meeting held June 24, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the resignation of Paul Haarstick. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to appoint James Stenger to the Event Center Advisory Board. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Pinke, Seconded by Albright to sell coke cooler if it cannot be used by the liquor store. Motion passed unanimously. Pinke discussed railings needed on the front of the event center and to have the step painted. Motion by Albright seconded by Fischer to get cost estimates for a railing and for DuFrane to paint the step. Motion passed unanimously.

### Park Advisory Board

Haarstick reviewed the Park Advisory Board meeting held June 27, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Goodman stated the ballfield would like to recognize those who donated land, money and time to the ballfield. They would like recognition on the backstop. Goodman stated he has been getting offers for donations for the signs and he will give the Council both layout of signs and costs when complete. Lammers stated the Vergas Community Club has requested to have Hairy Man Event held on the ballfield. The ballfield committee is talking about overseeding the infield after Looney Days and if that proceeds, they will need to stay off the infield. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to allow Hairy Man Event on the ballfield without using the infield or if it is wet. Motion passed unanimously. Bruhn questioned who would have oversight. Tony Sailer is working with Hairy Man and is on the ballfield committee, we will look to him for recommendation.

### Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste

Albright reviewed the Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste meeting held June 17, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Green reviewed Phase I engineering feasibility report for alley/parking lot. Haarstick questioned water design and if storm sewer could be lengthened. We may want to change the storm pipe from 6 inches to 12 inches and drains dropped and we may want to consider insulation of the pipes. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to accept preliminary report and schedule public hearing for Wednesday, Aug. 14 at 6 pm. Motion passed unanimously. Albright noted the request for daily permits for the yard waste permit. Daily permits would cause more work for Liquor Store and City employees, this would allow more brush. One day MPCA may come and clean up the ash which will be expensive, so the committee recommends no daily permits. Discussed dust guard on gravel roads. DuFrane has gotten estimates of 99 cents a foot. The largest requests have come in for Glenn Street and W Lake Street. There is no money in the budget currently for dust guard. There is \$10,000 in seal coating this year which we will not be using so \$2,500 could be transferred to dust control. The Committee will look to have a policy before next summer regarding paying for and applying dust control. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to spend up to \$2,500 coming out of seal coating portion of the 2024 budget on dust control on Glenn Street and W Lake Street and committee will review any other requests for dust control. Motion passed unanimously. DuFrane stated once they come into town to lay the dust guard they will not be coming back to town. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to amend the motion to only include Glenn Street and W Lake Street. Motion passed unanimously.

### Grants

Bruhn reviewed grant proceedings and the following city employees will be a part of the committee:

Kyle Theisen, Mike DuFrane, Jezmae Burkett and Julie Lammers. There will be energy audits done on all city buildings. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve resolution authorizing the City of Vergas to participate in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program (complete copy of resolution located at the city office). Motion passed unanimously.

### Planning Commission

Albright reviewed the Planning Commission meeting held June 24, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Shoreline Ordinance is being updated. Otter Tail County has been talking with us about taking over the permits within the shoreline ordinance for the next two years. Memorandum could be adopted after holding a public hearing. The Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing to enter into an agreement with the County. Lammers reviewed construction permits and the low amount of commercial permits. Fischer stated she does not understand how the commercial permits are being pinpointed. The council appreciates the planning commission reviewing permits but there is not a need to have a larger fine. The Planning Commission has completed their section of the ordinance, and we are hoping to have a new ordinance book by the end of the year.

### **Staff Reports**

#### Mayor Bruhn and Council Member Albright recap of League of MN Cities Conference

Bruhn provided a written summary. Albright stated he felt this has great networking and attended a mobile tour. Park space is limited, and we need to try to design it correctly as it is hard to change. In Rochester the parks are paid for by sales tax. Attended a good session on building state local government working with goals for housing. Attended a good session on communication when things get tough. We need to be sensitive to citizens' concerns.

#### Utilities Superintendent

DuFrane stated the following:

Parks: Flag has been replaced. Closed off a section to grow grass. Discussed buoys in the swimming area. Lammers has applied for a designated beach area with Otter Tail County. Permit it for 5 years at no cost. Attorney Tom Winters has advised the city to get County permit and to have buoys with ropes to keep boats out of the swimming area.

Sewer: Reviewed the Government Center sewer line with a video camera. The Government Services Center look good.

Water: Sweeny's will be putting in the computerized system in at the water treatment plant and lift stations next week.

#### Liquor Store Manager

Written report provided by Theisen. Theisen reviewed the replacement of the sewer line to the liquor store building. The first week of July is some of the highest sales the liquor store has ever had. The Liquor Store has sold roughly \$15,000 in THC.

#### Clerk-Treasurer Report

Written report provided by Lammers. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to update the peddlers and solicitors registration form. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to allow Dennis Poach to sell ice cream at the beach during the water ski shows with the profits going to the ski show. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Information & Announcements**

Trainings:

1. Clerks Advanced Academy- September 19-20, 2024 (Lammers)

Events:

Council Members serve for a four-year term. The Mayor serves for a two-year term. Filings for these positions will begin on Tuesday, July 30, 2024 and runs through Tuesday, August 13, 2024. Anyone

interested in running for one of the positions must file for office between these dates. File at the Vergas City Office 131 Main Street Vergas. MN (Cost to file is \$2.00)

Looney Days, August 8-11, 2024

Primary Election, August 13, 2024

### **Adjournment**

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Marcia Huddleston started questioning Council.

Mayor Julie Bruhn reopened the meeting.

Huddleston stated information from Otter Tail County regarding the County putting in crosswalks if the City would agree to keeping them painted. Albright stated this is the exact same information Lammers has provided to the street/sidewalk/yard waste committee, and they would be making a recommendation at next month's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Vergas Clerk-Treasurer

Julie Lammers, CMC