

CITY OF VERGAS
COUNCIL MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Monday, July 14, 2025

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, July 14, 2025, at the Vergas Event Center via Zoom for a hybrid regular council meeting, with the following members present: Acting Mayor James Stenger, Council Members Paul Pinke and Dean Haarstick; and Absent: Bruce Albright. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers; Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; Liquor Store Manager Kyle Theisen; Engineer Blaine Green; Citizens Marsha Huddleston, Paul Bruhn, Dixie Stauffacher, Vanessa Perry, Griffin Peck, Ben Holsen, Rebecca Peterson, Karen Skoyles, and Nicole Weldon.

Public Input Meeting -Parking Lot and Alley Project

Acting Mayor James Stenger opened the meeting at 6 pm.

Engineer Blaine Green reviewed the parking lot and alley project. Paul Bruhn questioned the project's procedures and processes.

Acting Mayor James Stenger closed the public input meeting at 6:15 pm.

Call to Order

Acting Mayor James Stenger called the meeting to order.

Citizens' Concerns

None.

Agenda Additions and Deletions

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick, to approve the agenda with the following deletion: General Fund Budget from the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

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

- A. Council Minutes of June 9 and July 2, 2025
 - B. Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$104,384.71.
 - C. Liquor Store bills for June 2025 totaling. \$135,185.37.
 - D. Late water/sewer bills
 - E. 2025 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule
 - F. General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account
 - G. 2025 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements, and Balances
 - H. Water and Sewer second quarter budget comparison
 - I. Committee Reports: EDA/HRA and Planning Commission
- The motion passed unanimously.

West Central Initiative (WCI) Energy

Griffin Peck, Energy and Adaptation Planner for West Central Initiative, provided two quotes for solar panels, one with a battery backup for the event center and one without. Ben Holsen presented the solar system design, warranty and maintenance terms, operation and maintenance agreement, equipment specifications, and project estimates. Construction is scheduled to begin in September, pending approval. Peck explained a 0% loan program available through the West Central Initiative to cover the upfront costs of this system. The loan payments will be repaid as we receive grants and savings from this program. The West Central Initiative will hire a company to apply for tax credits. When the city receives these tax credits, it will reimburse the West Central Initiative for the loan payment. Motion by Stenger, seconded by Haarstick, to approve the purchase of solar and storage analysis for a cost of \$104,280.00. The Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Stenger, seconded by Pinke, to approve resolution 2025-004 regarding the purchase of solar and giving Lammers authority to apply for and sign for a loan with West Central Initiative for solar panels and storage (complete copy of resolution located at the city office) for \$104,280.00. The motion passed unanimously.

West Central Initiative (WCI)

Rebecca Peterson, Director of Development at West Central Initiative, reviewed the programs offered by WCI and the funding they have helped provide in Vergas. West Central Initiative will be celebrating 40 years of funding this summer.

Scharf 3rd Edition

City Engineer Blaine Green stated he has provided a punch list to Keith and Shelley Bunkowski and is waiting for a response from them. DuFrane noted that they have located tracer wire and filmed the sewer. Green will inform the Council when the punch list items are complete.

Cannabis Application

Lammers informed the Council that the city has received an application from Full Spectrum Wellness, LLC. for a cannabis dispensary at 235 E Frazee Ave from Vanessa Perry. Full Spectrum Wellness has received permission from the State of MN for a cannabis dispensary. Motion by Stenger, seconded by Haarstick, to approve application from Full Spectrum Wellness, L.L.C. The motion passed unanimously.

City Attorney

Ramstad, Skoyles, Winters & Bakken, P.A. provided a letter to the City regarding Tom Winters' departure from the firm. The City has the option to remain represented by the current law firm, with Karen Skoyles representing the City, or to leave the law firm and hire Tom Winters as City Attorney, or to hire entirely new legal counsel. Karen Skoyles introduced herself and reviewed other attorneys at the law firm. The firm represents many cities in the area and would like to continue to represent Vergas. Skoyles has excelled in representing cities with nuisance properties. Tom Winters stated that he enjoyed working with the City of Vergas and would like to continue representing the city. Marsha Huddleston asked attorney Skoyles about Council members abstaining from motions when they are employed by the person requesting the item. Skoyles informed Huddleston that there is no conflict of interest unless the Council Member and applicant are related or involved. The council was told that if they make no decision tonight, the city will stay with Ramstad, Skoyles, and Bakken, P.A., as they have a contract with them. Pinke stated he wanted to table the item.

Staff Reports

Utilities Superintendent

DuFrane stated that he has received the work request order from the Vergas Community Club for Looney Days, and his department can fulfill all items on the request except for working from 7 am to 6 pm on Saturday and 8 am to 3 pm on Sunday. The chair of the Looney Days Committee, Vanessa Perry, and DuFrane have discussed the hours. City employees will not be working assigned hours but will complete other duties on the work order.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Written report provided by Lammers. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick, to transfer \$8,700 from the sidewalk portion of the money market account to the general fund checking account. The motion passed unanimously. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Stenger, to enter into a 3-year contract with Hoffman, Philipp, & Martell, PLLC. The motion passed unanimously.

Liquor Store Manager Report

Written report provided by Theisen regarding 2nd quarter sales. Stenger questioned why the liquor store still had a negative balance for 2025, and Theisen explained that July and August were the busiest months for the liquor store, and they should have a profit by the end of July.

Information & Announcements

Training:

- A. 16th Annual Operator Expo (MN Rural Water) August 20, 2025, DuFrane, Engebretson)
- B. Clerks Advanced Academy- September 18-19, 2025 (Lammers)

Events:

Looney Days, July 31-Aug 2, 2025

Adjournment

Motion by Haarstick, seconded by Pinke, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The business for which the meeting was called was completed and adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Julie Lammers, CMC
Vergas Clerk-Treasurer