

CITY OF VERGAS
Event Center Advisory Minutes
Vergas Event Center & Zoom Teleconference
5:30 P.M. on Tuesday, August 26, 2025

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
James Stenger, Council Appointment	P	P	P	N/A	P	P	P	P	N/A	P		
Vanessa Perry, Member	P	P	P	N/A	P	A	A	A	N/A	P		
Rachel Nustad, Member						P	P	P	N/A	P		
Deb Jacoby, Member	P	P	A	N/A	P	P	P	P	N/A			
Robert Jacoby, Member	P	P	P	N/A	P	P	P	P	N/A	P		

P: Present. A: Absent N/A: No meeting

Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Stenger at 5:30 PM. He noted he was attending via Zoom from Fergus Falls.

Additions and Deletions

Nustad requested adding a discussion item about potentially waiving security fees for benefits held for local residents.

Minutes

Motion by R. Jacoby, seconded by Nustad, to approve the minutes from August 26, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Status of Recommendations to City Council

Resignation

Stenger reported that the City Council accepted Deb Jacoby's resignation.

Projector

Stenger informed the board that the Council accepted the proposal for the new projector, which was installed last week and used for the fireman's banquet. He noted it was a major improvement from the previous projector and people were very happy with it. Stenger mentioned that he would like to get pictures of the projector in a meeting setup for promotional purposes and would coordinate that with Nustad in the near future.

Income and Expense

2025 Income and Expense

Nustad presented the 2025 income and expense and asked if there were any questions from the board.

R. Jacoby inquired about the significant increase in insurance costs, noting it appeared to have gone up from \$3,900 to \$5,900. Perry explained that insurance rates have increased dramatically across the board in the past year for both residential and commercial properties. Stenger added that the city had changed some insurance details, including deductibles that were no longer available, though he wasn't sure if those changes specifically affected the Event Center. Nustad offered to get more details from Clerk Treasurer Julie Lammers for the next meeting.

Rental

Free and Reduced Rental Form

Stenger reported that Lammers had searched through past council meetings for references to free and reduced rental policies. He explained that they found very little documentation, but noted that the current metric system used for determining eligibility doesn't work effectively for some events.

The only clear guidance from previous council meetings was that the former council did not want to provide free or reduced rent for any organizations except the fire department, Lions, and Community Club. Perry added historical context, noting that there was significant pushback from the council even for those organizations, and they had to argue that their substantial donations to the Event Center justified their reduced rates.

The board agreed that the current metric system for determining eligibility is confusing. Nustad offered to research how other event centers handle free and reduced rentals. The board decided to revisit this issue at the next meeting after gathering more information.

Stenger also mentioned an issue with the rental form from the previous weekend, noting that the form contains a confusing line about contacting Spanky's Stone Hearth for bar services. The form wasn't filled out at all. It was mentioned that the Lions, Community Club, and fire department are consistently the most difficult to get completed forms from. The board agreed that the form needed clarification and emphasized the importance of all groups filling out the required paperwork.

Schedule of Events

Nustad reported increasing rental activity with numerous bookings for birthday parties, an upcoming insurance company event, and another wedding. She mentioned that rentals are already being booked for 2026, including high school reunions and family reunions. Nustad noted she's been encouraging renters to pay the full amount upfront to streamline the process.

She also reported that information about graduation party rentals is in the newsletter and would remain there for the next month. She mentioned that she could create another Facebook post specifically targeting graduation parties.

Building Review

A. Kitchen

1. Window/Door Closure

The board discussed the window/door closure issue that has been on the agenda for several months. Perry recalled that a company (believed to be Overhead Door Company) had visited to measure the area but encountered issues because it's a load-bearing wall with concrete on top. Nustad agreed to follow up with Lammers to determine the current status and whether this issue should be removed from future agendas if it's not feasible to address.

2. Stove Top

Stenger reported that the stove top project is on hold until after the solar panel installation, which is scheduled to begin on November 10th. Nustad added that the maintenance room is ready for installation, but they need to wait until after the next benefit to move the griddles and other large equipment to the bar area. She noted there's a wedding scheduled just two days before the installation begins, and they've been working to organize the space.

B. Large Meeting Room

1. Tables (donation from Lion's)

The board discussed the need to clarify exactly which tables need to be replaced through the Lions' donation. There appeared to be confusion about which specific tables were being referenced. The board identified heavy, non-folding rectangular tables with laminate tops as likely candidates for replacement. R. Jacoby offered to bring a specific request to the Lions once the board clarifies exactly what is needed. The preference was for folding tables that could be easily stored when not in use.

C. Committee: "To-Do" List

The board discussed adding the cooler behind the bar to the to-do list. Stenger noted that during the Fireman's Banquet, the cooler froze up and had to be unplugged. The board debated whether to replace it with a more energy-efficient model or consider alternatives.

R. Jacoby suggested consulting with the bar service providers about their preferences, noting that some venues simply use ice rather than refrigerators. Perry expressed concerns about using ice, citing potential health code issues, messiness, and practical considerations for bartending. The board agreed to research costs for replacement options, with Stenger offering to look into cooler costs and Nustad agreeing to measure the space.

Members

Lions Member

The board noted that they were still waiting for the Lions to designate a representative for the Event Center Advisory Board. Nustad offered to email the Lions president to follow up.

Member Terms - Robert Jacoby

Stenger informed Robert Jacoby that his term is ending at the end of the year and asked if he would like to continue for another three-year term. R. Jacoby stated he would provide his decision at the next meeting.

Digital Sign Upgrade

Stenger reported that the company that maintains the digital sign outside had contacted Lammers about potentially upgrading the nine-year-old sign to a color version. Stenger noted there is approximately \$16,000 in an account for sign maintenance/replacement, funded by businesses that advertise on the sign.

The board discussed the sign's current performance, noting it has worked well with no issues. They agreed there was no need to upgrade at this time, preferring to wait until there are problems before considering a replacement. Stenger will inform Lammers of this decision as she prepares to renew advertising agreements with local businesses.

Meeting Date and Time

The board discussed potentially changing the meeting date and time. Perry expressed a preference for daytime meetings rather than evening sessions if possible. The board noted that the current meeting date occurs nearly 3.5 weeks before the next city council meeting and considered moving it closer to the council meetings.

After discussion, the board decided to wait until they know who the new Lions representative will be and whether R. Jacoby will continue on the board before making any changes to the schedule.

Nustad brought up her earlier suggestion about waiving security fees for benefits for local residents. The board discussed the challenges of determining eligibility, such as how to handle requests from those who live just outside city limits or for fundraisers that aren't for specific individuals. They agreed to add this topic to the discussion of free and reduced rental policies at the next meeting.

The board also discussed confusion with the current rental form, noting issues with pricing structure, inconsistencies in the fees, and unclear language. Nustad suggested working with Lammers to redesign the form to make it more user-friendly, and the board agreed to review this at the next meeting as well.

Adjournment

Motion by R. Jacoby, seconded by Perry, to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Nustad, Deputy Clerk
Event Center Coordinator
(Assisted by ClerkMinutes)

Council Recommendations

None.

Follow Up Actions

- Nustad to find out why insurance went up so much.
- Nustad to contact surrounding towns with Event Centers to see what they do for Free and Reduced Rent events.
- Nustad to measure the space where the cooler currently is in the bar area so Stenger can research potential replacements.
- Nustad to check with Otter Tail Power about possible grants or rebates for replacing the cooler in the bar area.
- Nustad to talk with Lammers about the company that came to look at the window/door closure.
- Nustad to find out which tables need to be replaced and get that to R. Jacoby to present to the lions.
- Nustad to review current Event Center rental form with Lammers to see if it can be revised and more user friendly.