

City of Vergas

Liquor Store, Municipal Buildings, License Committee Meeting

The Liquor Store/Municipal Building/License Committee was called to order on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 1:30 pm at 131 E Main St at the Government Services Center.

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kyle Theisen, Liquor Store Manager	P											
James Stenger, Council Appointment	P											
Dean Haarstick, Council Appointment	P											
Julie Lammers, Clerk-Treasurer	P											
Mike Dufrane, Utilities Superintendent	P											

P: Present A: Absent N/A: No Meeting

Call to order

Lammers called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM.

Additions and Deletions

None.

Step Up Signage

Stenger reported that the Step Up Boutique sign next to the door was not approved by the council. Theisen explained that there might have been a miscommunication after their last meeting when he told the business owner there should be no screws or nails for decorations and signage, but didn't specifically prohibit all signage. The committee agreed that the current sign was inappropriate and not approved. Theisen mentioned that a sign for the liquor store roof was still in process. He also pointed out that Step Up already has more signage than any other business in town history, including a digital billboard.

The committee recommended that council direct Step Up to remove the sign by the entrance, with the option for them to present an alternative design for approval. Theisen volunteered to speak with the business owner to explain the reasoning for the removal.

Municipal Building

Front remodel

Roof

The committee briefly discussed the roof, with Theisen reporting that although there was a leak two days after installation, it was promptly fixed and there have been no issues since.

Signage

Lammers reported that something for the sign was still on backorder, and J&H Signs would schedule installation once the part arrived. No specific timeline was provided despite Lammers follow-up inquiries.

Gutters

DuFrane expressed serious concerns about the current gutter installation, noting it creates a slip hazard where water runs across the sidewalk. He explained that when snow melts and freezes, it will create dangerous conditions on the colored concrete surface, which becomes extremely slippery when wet.

The committee discussed several options:

1. Rerouting the gutter across the old city office building and down into the alley drain
2. Redirecting it into the grass with a splash pad
3. Revisiting the original plan to connect to the storm drain despite height concerns

Haarstick shared that his own building has a similar gutter system with no problems. The committee debated whether the height issue with the original storm drain plan could be resolved with a different elbow design or gutter route.

After extensive discussion about safety concerns and potential liability, the committee decided Theisen would obtain quotes for:

1. Moving the gutter to direct water to the grass area
2. Exploring options to connect to the storm drain as originally planned

Sewer Line

Lammers reported that Sonnenberg Excavating had completed their portion of the work. The committee discussed that Hanson's would be handling the inside work, which would require shutting down the bathrooms for approximately two weeks. DuFrane would contact them for scheduling information. The committee determined they would need a porta potty during the bathroom closure period, to be placed behind the building to avoid interfering with deliveries. They estimated costs at approximately \$65 per week. The committee also agreed to provide adequate notice to the upstairs tenant.

THC

Under 21 in Store

Theisen brought up concerns about losing customers due to the requirement that no one under 21 be allowed in the store when THC products are sold. He noted that some customers leave when they learn their children can't accompany them. The committee discussed the legal requirements and the interpretation of "access" to THC products. They determined that because THC products are accessible on shelves throughout the store (not just behind the counter), they would maintain the current policy of no one under 21 in the store, in line with the adult nature of a liquor store. Lammers also informed the committee about a trademark issue. The state requires "Vergas Municipal Liquor Store" to be trademarked, and they had 15 days to provide proof of trademark or they would not be able to sell THC products after March 1st. Lammers had submitted the application but hadn't received confirmation yet.

Financial Update

Lammers reported that the liquor store ended the year with a \$12,075.91 profit, which includes the transfer to the city. She noted that depreciation costs (historically around \$12,000) had not yet been calculated, so the final net result might be close to breakeven.

Event Center

Ash Tray

DuFrane addressed concerns about the ashtrays at the Event Center, acknowledging that they had not been emptied regularly, resulting in four reported fires. He explained he was unaware of the issue but found the ashtrays packed solid when he checked.

Stenger noted two main concerns: the fire hazard from the current fixed ashtrays and their proximity to doors, which violates the 20-foot smoking distance requirement and encourages people to smoke near entrances.

The committee discussed options including:

1. Removing the current mounted ashtrays
2. Replacing them with movable ashtrays that have water reservoirs
3. The concern about cigarette butts being discarded on the ground if no receptacles were available

DuFrane took responsibility for the oversight and committed to checking and emptying the ashtrays weekly going forward, while also looking into better options for replacements.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM.

Council Recommendations

- Recommend to City Council to remove Step Up sign by entrance.

Follow Up Actions

- Theisen: Get quotes for gutter to go across City Hall Gutter to grass
- DuFrane: Get porta Potty to be set behind the building
- DuFrane: Look into moving ash tray away from Event Center Building