

CITY OF VERGAS  
COUNCIL MINUTES  
Vergas Event Center and Zoom  
Tuesday, July 11, 2023

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:00 pm, on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, at the Vergas Event Center for a hybrid regular council meeting with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn, Council Members: Dean Haarstick, Paul Pinke and Natalie Fischer. Absent: Bruce Albright. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers, Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane, Liquor Store Manager Kyle Theisen, Blaine Green Engineer, Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum, Jill Shipman, Hailey Wallace, Patricia Wallace, Joe Janson of MRWA, Bruce Sonnenberg, Gail Sonnenberg, Shelley Day, Abby Strand, Patrick Hollister, Terri Hanson, Sherri Hanson, Duane Ditterich.

**Call to Order**

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

**Citizens' Concerns**

None.

**Agenda Additions and Deletions**

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the agenda with the following addition: 2 temporary on sale liquor licenses, Vergas HRA, Climate Action Plan and water and sewer budgets added to consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the following consent agenda with the removal of the claims list:

- A. Council Minutes of the June 13, 2023
- B. Bills paid between Council meetings and Council Bills
- C. Liquor Store bills for May 2023
- D. Late water/sewer bills
- E. 2023 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule
- F. General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account
- G. 2023 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances
- H. American Rescue Plan Funding 2021-2026
- I. Small Cities Dev. Request- Conflict of Interest
- J. Committee Reports - requiring no Council Action
  1. Planning Commission
- K. Water and Sewer Budget updates thru June 30, 2023

Motion passed unanimously.

**Heart of the Lakes and Heartland Trail Connection to Vergas Master Plan**

Architect Jillian Reiner reviewed the master plan. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Pinke to approve the Heart of the Lakes to Vergas Master Plan. Motion passed unanimously.

**Event Requests**

Temporary Liquor Licenses

Motion by Fischer, seconded by Pinke to approve temporary 1-4 day permits for Vergas Fishing Event on July 14, 2023 by Spanky's and Looney Days August 11-12, 2023 with Fergus Brewing. Motion passed unanimously.

Ole's Ride

Lammers stated Vanessa Perry representing Billy's and Ole's Ride requested Main Street be closed from 2 pm to 2 am on Aug. 26-27, 2023 and Railway Avenue closed Friday, August 26 from 4 pm to 9 pm and Saturday, August 27 from 7 am to 12 pm. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to allow street closings for Ole's Ride. Motion passed unanimously.

Pickleball Open House – Alcohol on ballfield

Jill Shipman requested permission for the Pickleball Open House on August 17, 2023 from 5 pm -7 pm and to invite the Council to attend. Outstate Brewing will be selling alcohol at the pickleball field with permission from the Council. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to hold pickleball open house in the park and approve the 1-4-day permit for Outstate Brewing when application and fee is received. Motion passed unanimously.

**2022 Audit**

Colleen Hoffman, Auditor, is unable to attend tonight and will be at the August meeting to review the audit.

## **Committee Reports**

### Parks

Sherri Hanson reviewed the Park Advisory Board meetings of June 22, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Discussed bathhouses and the need for them to be improved, they may need to be shut down and replaced with porta potties. The council asked the park advisory board to bring a recommendation. Discussed lighting and the quote provided. DuFrane stated he did not feel they should spend the money on the proposal of updating the park. Discussed adding another camera to the park. Council asked the Park Advisory Board to discuss the lighting and make a clearer recommendation. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the preliminary Park Plan provided by Widseth Engineering. Motion passed unanimously.

The water ski docks in front of the loon may be left for 2023 but in the future, they will need to be moved to another location. No information was available about the fence, still waiting on materials.

### Streets, Sidewalks and Yard Waste

Blaine Green, Engineer reviewed Sunset Strip not being a city road and the city needs to make this a road or discontinue caring (snowplowing) for it. Residents questioned current easements, currently the city only has utility easements. Residents asked about allowing them to just plow the road on their own. The City is looking at requiring right of way to create an official road. Bruhn explained this is the first step and the Council will need to hold a public hearing before they are able to move forward. Residents requested a sign stating not a through street and asked when their street sign would be replaced. DuFrane stated the sign has been ordered but signs are taking 6-8 weeks to receive. Pinke asked for a dead-end street sign, but the city cannot add signs until this is a City street. The Planning Commission has made the recommendation to approve survey and right of way on Sunset Strip. Motion by Haarstick, seconded by Fischer to approve the \$10,000.00 quote for Widseth to proceed with survey and Right of Way on West Sunset Strip. Motion passed unanimously.

Green stated the same process as Sunset Strip need to happen on W Lake Street Survey and Right of Way and Lammers was asked to invite property owners to the Aug 8, 2023 Council meeting. The City has not received any bids for slope work on E Scharf and Diane Avenue. DuFrane has spoken with a few companies, but no bids have been received. There has been no progress on the property being cleared from the neighboring property owner.

## **Water and Sewer**

### Internal Grease Traps

Joe Janson of MRWA reviewed the concerns with the grease mass located in our ponds. Mother Nature is not able to treat all of the grease located in the ponds. Janson complimented DuFrane for finding this concern and getting on before it got out of hand. Beneficial to have sewer lines cleaned more often by pulling grease to manhole and or get a head of the issue before something deteriorates in the lagoons. City may need to check on grease traps in restaurants, communication with residents and receiving logs of grease dumpsters. There are 3 things to treat lagoons: warm water, sunlight and wind. The problem with grease is it cuts off sunlight and prevents the wind from working in the lagoon. Something needs to be done before something major happens. Bruhn asked for recommendations. Janson stated the lines need to be cleaned and get on a regular cleaning schedule, chat with businesses that are using a lot of grease, and then get to the point where the fat, oil and grease is out of the lagoon. DuFrane stated we clean 1/3 of the lines every 4 years as required by insurance. Janson stated we could use either steam or a vacuum truck to remove. Janson also stated we can require grease traps and grease dumpsters with records of pickup being given to the City. Discussed bugs DuFrane has been putting in the lagoons and he can add bugs to business lines once the lines have been cleaned. 1) The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase (area from Skal to JK Marine) and Railway Avenue jetting of the city sewer pipes will occur the end of August; 2) Fact sheet placed in the water bill to outline the issues with grease going into the wastewater system; 3) Grease traps and/or grease bins be used if already in place; 4) Place a poster regarding grease going into the wastewater system and the implications next to where grease is sold. Ditterich Mercantile offered support to have the poster placed in the store; and lastly 5) Look for available grants that could assist the City in addressing the wastewater issue.

### Vergas HRA

Julie Lammers reviewed the HRA status of lots on Eva Street and Diane Avenue. The Vergas HRA has purchased 8 of the lots for \$1.00 each and Otter Tail County HRA has received 3 of the lots.

## **Climate Action Plan**

Bruhn reviewed the process for applying for money from the state. There is a group who will conduct assessment for the City. The charge to do the climate action plan can be paid for with a grant. Bruhn requested for approval for her to look into having a plan for the city of Vergas. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Pinke to move forward with the climate action plan for the City of Vergas. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Pinke to allow Bruhn to follow up on the climate action plan. Motion passed unanimously. Theisen stated that there is a city where their liquor store is entirely solar and volunteered to look into more information on this.

## **Staff Reports**

### Council Members attending LMC Conference

Bruhn and Haarstick provided written reports.

### Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent

Mike DuFrane provided the following report to the Council for June 2023.

1. Parks – DuFrane has met with the MN DNR (Mandy Erickson with Trails and Waterways) regarding weeds and the beach area. The beach area has moss, not weeds. Our current permit allows the city to treat weed in a 100x100 area and she encouraged us to enlarge the area to 150x150 area. Alongside the pier there is weeds that need to be removed by Looney Days Fishing event. Erickson stated we could treat 25 feet on each side. \$2420.00 to have combine remove weeds or for \$450.00 we could treat weeds by the pier. DuFrane stated the pier will need to be closed for 3 days but the beach will be able to stay open.
2. Wastewater - grease issue at ponds.
3. Streets - spoke with 2 contractors on the slopes and they will bid once they get hydroseeding costs. Patching was done around town, but it has not been completed and they will be back in 2 weeks. Gravel roads will be graded next week.
4. Water - generator should be here in September. Requested permission to attend the Mn Rural Water 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Operator Expo in Waconia Mn on August 31, 2023 for \$150.00. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to allow DuFrane and Engebretson to attend Mn Rural Water 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Operator Expo for a cost of \$300.00. Motion passed unanimously.

### Liquor Store Manager Report

Theisen reviewed liquor store activity. He has discontinued online ordering due to price increase. The new POS system has increased speed and efficiency. The quote from Widseth has been returned and we may have a liquor committee discussion in the future.

### **Information & Announcements**

Trainings:

- a. Mn Rural Water 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Operator Expo in Waconia Mn on August 31, 2023 (DuFrane and Engebretson)
- b. Clerks Advanced Academy- Sept 14-15, 2023, Bemidji, MN (Lammers)

Events.

### **Adjournment**

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by,  
Julie Lammers, CMC  
Vergas City Clerk-Treasurer