

VERGAS COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
VERGAS EVENT CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, December 13, 2022

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, at the Vergas Event Center and on a Zoom for a hybrid regular council meeting with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn, Council Members: Bruce Albright, Natalie Fischer and Rebecca Hasse. Absent: Paul Pinke. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers, Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane, Attorney Tom Winters, Robert Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum, Engineer Brian Green, Sherri Hanson, Patrick Hollister, Shane Poss, Jeff Hattlewick, Paul Pinke and Logan Dahlgren.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the City Council meeting to order.

Citizens' Concerns

None.

Agenda Additions and Deletions

Motion by Albright, seconded by Hasse to approve the agenda with the following additions: Resolutions for Veteran's Memorial and Pickleball and Snow removal policy. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by Albright, seconded by Fischer to approve the following consent agenda items removing American Rescue Plan Funding:

1. Council Minutes of the November 10, 2022
2. Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$93,683.28.
3. Liquor Store bills for November 2022 totaling \$46,463.19.
4. Late water/sewer bills
5. 2022 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule
7. Polling Place Designation
8. LG220 Lion's Calendar Raffle - Feb. 1, 2023
9. Removal of Covid-19 Preparedness Plan
10. Update Policy - Proposals involving permanent(s) and/or activity on City property.
10. 2023 Licenses
 1. Liquor
 - a. Billy's Corner Bar
 - b. Skal
 2. Cigarette
 - a. Vergas Liquor Store
 - b. Olson Oil
 - c. Lakes Area Co-op
11. Employee Training
 - a. MN Rural Water Conference – March 7-9, 2023 (DuFrane) St Cloud
 - b. MN Clerks and Finance Officers – March 21 -24, 2023 (Lammers) St Cloud
 - c. IIMC Conference - May 14-17, 2023 (Lammers) Minneapolis
 - d. Clerks Advanced Academy- (Lammers)Waite Park
 - e. LMC, Loss Control Workshop (DuFrane, Engebretson, Lammers)
 - f. League of MN Cities Annual Conference (Mayor, Council & Lammers)
 - g. Municipal Beverage Association (MMBA) (Theisen) Arrowwood

Motion passed unanimously.

Bruhn reviewed American Rescue Plan Funding 2021-2026, stating she feels we should not complete the spending by dedicating funds to the parks and event center as large purchases are being discussed with water and sewer. Motion by Albright, seconded by Hasse to approve the American Rescue Plan Funding

2021-2026 report with the removal of dedicated spending for event center and parks moving them to the identified community need grid. Motion passed unanimously.

Lawrence Lake Acres Variance

Application has been received from Josh Hanson for a variance from Ordinance 52.06 and 51.08 requiring utilities to be hooked up to municipal service. Hanson is requesting wells and drain fields at each of his lots. Albright reviewed planning commission recommendations in which they requested the Council have a public hearing for the variance, discussed a feasibility study regarding size of lots and amount of lots but the ordinance does not require this information. Fischer reviewed water and sewer committee recommendations and their recommendation to have a public hearing for the variance as they have looked into ordinance and feasibility for the city, and it is not feasible for the city to fund any part of this project. Josh Hanson stated it is not feasible for him to hook up to municipal water and sewer. Winters stated we needed to have a reason for the variance and the cost being unfeasible for this development is not the sole reason to grant variance. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Hasse to hold a public hearing on Thursday, December 29, 2022 at 6:30 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Bruhn thanked Logan Dahlgren for his service to the City of Vergas and presented him a plaque for his service. Dahlgren stated he had a great time serving the City of Vergas. Bruhn thanked Rebecca Hasse for completing Dahlgren's turn and stated she looked forward to having her serve on the Planning Commission.

Heart of the Lakes Trail Connection to Vergas

Patrick Hollister, Clay County Public Health and Partnership for Health provided an agreement for a grant for the City of Vergas to engineer a trail to the Heartland Trail (trail to Frazee) and the Heart and the Lakes Trail (Pelican-Maplewood-Perham). The City will need to hire a consultant for the purpose of writing the plan, provide Clerk-Treasurer staff time, meeting space, an advisory committee to work with consultant and 2 public meetings. Public meetings will hold in 2 locations one being in Vergas and one by the trail may be in Frazee. Hollister recommended the following for the committee: MN DOT Mary Saffron, Otter Tail County representative either Highway Charles Grotte or Deb Sjostrom, and himself. Two public hearings will need to be held one in Vergas and one in Frazee. Clay County will reimburse the City of Vergas for up to \$15,000 in expenses. Albright questioned if Hollister had recommendations for a consultant. Hollister stated he would not make recommendations, but the following have worked on projects he has worked with: APEX, Ulteig, SRF and KLJ. City Engineer Green stated Widseth has worked on numerous projects, and this is a sufficient amount for a trail plan. Motion by Albright, seconded by Hasse to enter into an agreement with Clay County. Motion passed unanimously.

Easements – Townline Road

Attorney Tom Winters has received signatures on agreements, and they are sent off to Otter Tail County Recorder.

Resolutions

Veteran's Memorial & Pickleball

Resolutions were provided to the Council, Albright stated he has met with the pickleball committee, and they still need signage, and something placed on the gravel located around the pickleball courts. This resolution has not been discussed with the pickleball committee and Albright asked to talk with them before approving the resolution. Pickleball is looking at adding a sign, doing work around the fences and may need a building. The Council noted addition of allowing veteran's memorial to use city water and electricity. Resolutions will be updated and shared with committees and discussed at the January meeting.

Policy Updates

Proposals involving permanent(s) and/or activity on City property.

Bruhn explained the change is adding outlines of future goals and responsibilities to the resolution. Motion by Albright, seconded by Fisher to approve policy as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Policy Use and Maintenance of City Vehicles

Bruhn explained the change of taking home city vehicles and addition of no passengers in the plow truck. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Hasse to approve policy as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy

Reviewed policy changes and moved to ordinance discussion.

Committee Reports

Park Board

Sherri Hanson reviewed the Park Board meeting held on November 17, 2022, (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Recommended Council approve quote from Widseth for \$6,830 and replace fence for \$17,000.00 and removing existing fence for \$2,875.00 with American Rescue Funds. Bruhn explained the Council decided at the beginning of the meeting to not dedicated funds from the American Rescue Funds and asked park board to supply quotes. Quotes will be in packet for January meeting. Discussed who to be in contact with for who is using the baseball diamond. Requested transfer of capital outlay unspent amount of \$9,500. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Albright to transfer \$9,500.00 to the City money market account. Motion passed unanimously.

EDA/HRA

EDA/HRA meeting minutes of December 6, 2022 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). No recommendations.

Streets/Sidewalks/Yard Waste

Albright reviewed meeting of December 8, 2022 (minutes not yet available). Complete streets presentation will be provided at the January meeting as Green was unable to attend in person due to weather. Discussed three ordinances: 71.04 Declaring snow emergency, parking requirements, 72.03-72.07 Snowmobiles and 91.02 Cats and Dogs have been updated and we need to have a public hearing to update. Discussed the need to add a cat license fee if we add cats to ordinance. Discussed the issue of enforcing the cat ordinance and live traps being rented from the City. Reason for ordinance is to protect the public. Council asked Attorney Winters if Council can require apartment owners to add to their lease agreements to have their pets licensed. Winters stated we cannot require apartment owners to put certain information in their lease. Discussed temporary dogs needing licenses if they are here more than 14 days – does that mean consecutive. Council decided we are not going to keep track it must add consecutive. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Hasse to update fee schedule to include cats \$10.00 for unaltered and \$8.00 for altered cats. Motion passed unanimously. Snowmobile ordinance cleaned up the wording from past ordinances. Snow emergency discussed cleaning up the wording. County is having difficulty plowing 1st Ave and DuFrane is unable to remove snow from road due to parked vehicles. Discussed right of way and the tractors parked in the county easement area which will be enforced by the county. Planning Commission will be reviewing ordinance regarding residential and commercial parking on property. Motion by Albright, seconded by Hasse to approve resolution including no parking from 12 am to 6 am when snow removal is required. Motion passed unanimously. Discussed courtesy notices on orange tags for cars to be removed for snow removal.

Ordinances

Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy and Ordinance 71.04 Declaration of Snow Emergency; Parking Prohibited.

Discussed how many inches need to fall for cars to not be parked on the street. This policy needs to be reviewed after the ordinance 71.04 is completed so they stay uniform. Discussed plowing and the issues of snow on county roads. According to the snow emergency ordinance there is an emergency at 2 inches. Issues are coming from businesses shoveling snow on the street at different times of the day and the County putting the snow as far off to the side as they can. Fischer stated city employees need to remove snow from edge to edge on the one block on Main Street. DuFrane stated he could only do this if he started at 2 am due to parked vehicles on Main Street. Council stated this needs to be addressed with policy and not snow emergency. The streets committee will address the city snow removal policy. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Hasse to make change of after over two inches of snow to enough snow has accumulated to plow. Discussed having a card to put on cars to warn them they need to move their car. Discussed notifying the residents regarding a snow emergency. Clerk will notify media, add to Facebook and website and signs at area businesses.

Ordinance 91.02 Dogs and Cats

Motion by Fisher, seconded by Hasse to add cats to the ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 72.031-72.07 Snowmobiles

Motion by Fischer, seconded by Albright to accept the recommended changes from the Vergas Planning Commission for ordinances 72.031-72.07. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Hasse to have public hearing on all three ordinances as part of the public hearing on Thursday, December 28, 2022. Motion passed unanimously.

CDH-Vergas Fire Board

Bruhn reviewed the budget meeting of the CDH-Vergas Fire Board. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Hasse to approve a 10% increase of the 2023 budget, increasing the city portion of the budget to \$1,196.00. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to hold public hearing on the following ordinances immediately following the public hearing for the variance on December 29, 2022. Motion passed unanimously.

Planning Commission

Albright reviewed Planning Commission meeting minutes of October 24, 2022 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). No recommendations.

Water and Sewer Committee

Fischer reviewed Water/Sewer Committee meeting minutes of November 15, 2022, November 22, 2022 and December 5, 2022 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Lammers has been asked to educate the citizens on grease traps and send letter to area food businesses.

Event Center

Lammers reviewed Event Center meeting of December 7, 2022 (minutes not yet available). No recommendations.

Staff Report

Utility Superintendent

DuFrane stated the snowplow is back from repairs and currently operational. Bruhn questioned needing to go for bid on backup snow plowing as policy states city will use a contractor when assistance is needed. Motion by Fischer, seconded by Albright to proceed with a bid for contractor when snow removal backup is needed. Motion passed unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Lammers reviewed liquor store financial status of CD 20097 maturing on December 9, 2022 for \$71,467.95. Lammers proposed cashing the CD and purchasing a CD with funds and adding additional \$75,000 for previous years profits of the liquor store. CDs are currently 12 months for 1.75% and 24 months for 2%. Council Members discussed remodeling or building plans that have been mentioned by the Liquor Store Manager and raising interest rates. Motion by Albright, seconded by Hasse to cash CD 20097 and purchase a CD for \$146,469.95 from Vergas State Bank for 12 months at 1.75% interest. Motion passed unanimously. Lammers reviewed special revenue money market account and the transfer of capital outlay not spent from the 2022 budget. Motion by Albright, seconded by Hasse to transfer \$5,000 for City Shop, \$16,000 for Event Center, \$10,000 for event center sign, \$1,000 for general fund, \$9,500 for parks, \$7,500 for sand sealing, \$3,000 for sidewalk, and \$18,000 for street improvements and equipment for a total of \$70,000.00 Motion passed unanimously.

2023 Budgets

General Fund

Bruhn reviewed budget committee recommendations of the proposed budget numbers for 2023. Motion by Albright, seconded by Fisher to approve the resolution 2022-10 (complete copy of resolution located at the

city office and on the city web page) for the proposed 2023 budget of \$429,608.00. Motion passed unanimously.

Sewer and Water Fund

Fischer reviewed water and sewer committee recommendations of the proposed budget numbers for 2023 water and sewer budgets. Motion by Hasse, seconded by Fisher to approve the 2023 sewer budget for \$125,925.00 and the water budget of \$133,700.00. Motion passed unanimously

Information & Announcements

Board of Review Training, available until Feb. 1, 2023, encourage all Council Members to complete. Mayor Bruhn has completed the training.

Local Board of Review is scheduled for April 5, 2023 at the Vergas Event Center Council Chambers at 1:00 pm. Meeting for Mayor, Council Members, and Clerk-Treasurer Lammers.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Julie Lammers, CMC
Vergas Clerk-Treasurer