

CITY OF VERGAS
COUNCIL MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, June 11, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at the Vergas Event Center and on Zoom for a hybrid regular council meeting with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn; Council Members: Bruce Albright, Paul Pinke, Dean Haarstick and Natalie Fischer. Absent: none. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers; Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; Editor Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum; Engineer Blaine Green; Mark Sand and Gravel Employees Jeff Hattlewick, Brandon Brusven and Brianne Balcer and Citizens Alex Ohman, Scott Goodman, Marcia Huddleson and 2 people who did not sign in; and zoom attender who did not give last name: Glen.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

Citizens' Concerns

Scott Goodman, Vergas Baseball Committee Member, requested the scoreboard have a sign stating Fred Meyer Complex and to name the ballfield Jerry Johnson Field. Bruhn requested this go to the park board for a recommendation and the Council will discuss it in July.

Agenda Additions and Deletions

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the following consent agenda (removing Hydrant Policy, Looney Days employee request, Event Center and Council minutes):

Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$48,526.05.

Liquor Store bills for May 2024 totaling \$101,509.05.

Late water/sewer bills

2024 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule

General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account

2024 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances

American Rescue Plan Funding 2021-2026

Committee Report: Park Advisory Board; Water and Sewer; EDA/HRA

Motion passed unanimously.

Bruhn reviewed changes she had contacted Lammers about regarding the Council Minutes of May 14, 2024 which had already been updated and included in packet.

Discussed Event Center Advisory Board minutes not having consistency regarding names, all city minutes must use last names and first letter of first name if more than one person with the last name is attending the meeting.

Discussed hydrant flushing policy and the policy needs 2024 added before approval.

Discussed Looney Days employee request form. The Vergas Community Club has requested a city employee be available Saturday and Sunday. DuFrane stated he tries to be available as much as possible; as someone is always calling him. Bruhn questioned if an employee would not work a day in the week to lower the amount of overtime. DuFrane stated they have not done that. DuFrane stated they work Saturday most of the day and Sunday in the morning. Fisher stated that we could provide this if the employees could flex their hours. DuFrane stated he only wanted to discuss this in a closed meeting. Goodman stated that there are many duties throughout the Looney Days week. Albright suggested allowing them to take comp time which would need to be taken within 30 days. DuFrane stated he just tries to make both the townspeople and the Council happy. DuFrane stated he does not mind working extra hours and enjoys it. Fisher stated workers need to work on city work and not items that should be done by volunteers. DuFrane questioned what that entails for him and Engebretson. Bruhn stated that work can be done such as moving tables, placing barricades, picking up garbage; but not event volunteer items, such as painting lines for bean bags. It is not City employee's jobs to fill in for jobs no one else wants to do. DuFrane stated he would volunteer if he could use the city equipment. Bruhn noted cannot use city equipment as a volunteer, only when on official duty. This is a city liability issue. Discussed how to track City employees time and work during Looney Days Albright suggested not using the timeclock during Looney Days. Lammers noted the pay system is linked to the time clock. Fisher stated we need to know what is being done during this time. DuFrane stated that he just does whatever community club members ask him to do. Bruhn stated last year there was considerable overtime and community club was still not happy. We need to be clear, so everyone knows the expectations. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to allow both Engebretson and DuFrane to work up to 8 hours of overtime on Saturday and Sunday and to work on Friday night to assist Looney Days events. Comp time earned over Looney Days must be taken within 30 days of occurring (by September 10, 2024). Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve Council minutes, hydrants policy, event center minutes and how names are recorded, and Looney Days request form. Motion passed unanimously.

Right of Way (Located by 110 W Elm St)

Laura Osborn asked this to be put on the agenda and there was no one in attendance to discuss. Item removed.

Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (CRSDP) Grant Empowering Small MN Communities Program

Bruhn explained that after the 2023 League of Mn Conference the Council had discussion regarding funding opportunities for energy climate at the July 2023 council meeting. She was granted authority to pursue funding opportunities and has been pursuing for the last 10 months. Bruhn wrote 3 grants and received 2. Both of these programs (ESMC and CRDSP) are aligned with the University of MN. Grants start July 1, 2024 and goes to June 30, 2025. The grants entail doing energy and building audits on municipal buildings; conducting review of energy consumption; and doing an analysis of the data to compile an energy climate action plan. There will also be community outreach and education. This will position Vergas to seek additional funds to make the improvements to municipal buildings, that will result in cost savings for residents. Have also joined the WCI municipal solar cohort.

Committee Reports

Planning Commission

Albright reviewed the Planning Commission meeting held May 20, 2024 and June 11, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to issue an interim use permit for Mark Sand and Gravel. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the Bunkowski Gravel Pit Report of 2024. Motion passed unanimously. Currently the fee for not purchasing a permit before work begins on projects is to double the permit cost. Discussed the request to add a \$1,000 fee to commercial construction permits when work begins before construction permit is approved. Bruhn asked what other communities are doing. Lammers stated she has not currently looked into what other communities are doing, all communities she is aware of has a double the permit as a fee. Ohman stated the planning commission would waive the fee for businesses for financial reasons. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to be tabled until after the next planning commission meeting and asked Lammers to find out how many commercial businesses have paid late fees and what the neighboring communities are doing for late fees. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Utilities Superintendent

DuFrane stated the following:

Water: The SCADA system is waiting on a part to be installed.

Requested permission for DuFrane and Engebretson to attend Operator Expo in Waconia Mn on August 29, 2024 . DuFrane stated cost would be \$150.00 each for attending, mileage on city vehicle and overtime as they would be working from 3 am to 8 p.m. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to allow DuFrane and Engebretson to attend the Operator Expo. Motion passed unanimously.

Parks: Buoys are out in the beach area in a u-shape with no ropes. Council asked Lammers to check on the legal requirements of ropes to block and secure the swim area. Lammers will contact Otter Tail County Water Patrol and city attorney.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Written report provided by Lammers.

Discussed date of August Council meeting. The council asked Lammers to send out dates for council members to consider. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve LMC liability coverage waiver form waiving the monetary limits. Motion passed unanimously.

Information & Announcements

Trainings:

1. League of MN Cities Annual Conference June 26-28, 2024, in Rochester (Bruhn & Albright)
2. Clerks Advanced Academy- September 19-20, 2024 (Lammers)

Events:

1. Household Hazardous Waste Day, Thursday, June 20, 2024, 10:00 - 2:00

Adjournment

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Vergas Clerk-Treasurer
Julie Lammers, CMC