

CITY OF VERGAS
COUNCIL MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, May 14, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday, May 14, 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; and Citizen Marcia Huddleson.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

Citizens' Concerns

None.

Agenda Additions and Deletions

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve the agenda with the following item moved to consent agenda: Parks Advisory Board. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the following consent agenda:

Council Minutes of the April 9, 2024 and April 10, 2024

Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$73,342.30.

Liquor Store bills for April 2024 totaling \$66,063.98.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Planning Commission

Albright reviewed the Planning Commission meeting held April 22, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to accept Shane Hasse as member of planning commission. Motion passed unanimously. 339 E Frazee Avenue has been given notice numerous times by the city. Albright and DuFrane have tried to contact the resident many times over the past couple of months and resident will not open the door. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve having the Attorney send letter and prosecute Ben Lankow for nuisance property. Motion passed unanimously.

Event Center Advisory Committee

Pinke reviewed the Event Center Advisory Committee meeting held April 23, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Requested a bulletin board to be placed in the entrance hallway for information regarding events in the community. Discussed roof leakage and the proposal for a new roof. There may be another option and DuFrane will continue to look at options. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve purchase of bulletin board. Motion passed unanimously.

Street/Sidewalk/Yard Waste Committee

Albright reviewed the Street Committee meeting held April 29, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Albright stated the committee recommends engineering surveying the 3 parking lots, the 2 alleys and examining drainage problems. It does not make any sense to pave these parking lots without a topographic map to address drainage. Cost \$3,000 for topographic map, and then a second phase of \$14,000 with refund of \$3,000 for a cost of \$11,000 to complete the project. Marsha Huddleson questioned if Vergas Hardware would be assessed due to the paving of this. Albright explained that we do not know. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the \$3,000 quote from Widseth. Motion passed unanimously.

EDA/HRA

Albright reviewed the Vergas EDA/HRA meeting held May 8, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Albright noted the lots on Diane and Eva have special assessments. The Council has forgiven the specials for the County lots and now the Vergas HRA has \$14,388.66 a year in special assessments. HRA is requesting special assessments be held until the lots are sold. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to delay special assessments to 2025 until the lots are sold. Motion passed unanimously.

Lawrence Lake Acres Development – name of cul-de-sac

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to name the cul-de-sac in Lawrence Lake Acres Development Oak Circle. Motion passed unanimously.

Ringdahl Ambulance

Ambulances' financial request was discussed as they are not an essential service. 25 years ago, ambulances were run by volunteers, but volunteerism is dying. Discussed reasons for financial situation: If they do not transport someone, they receive no pay. Medicare has not increased their rates since 2003. The Medicare fix is 5-8 years away. There is a one-time emergency aid funding being discussed at the state level which would help for 2024. Jordan Rasmussen has introduced another bill to help with the crisis. Ambulances on the Iron Range are already closing. Ringdahl had 4 crews, they now have 2. Vergas request is for either \$5,163.78 if we are figuring by household or \$6,652.96 if we are figuring by person. This information is based on all parcels with structures. If funding is not received, they will be decreasing their services from ALS (full ambulance) to BLS Basic Life Support. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to pay Ringdahl \$5,163.78 for ambulance service in the Vergas area to be paid out of public safety funds. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Liquor Store Manager

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to accept the resignation of Sara Stone. Motion passed unanimously.

Utilities Superintendent

DuFrane stated the following:

Water: Ace Electric is in the process of hooking up the generator pigtails.

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

Widseth will be in town identifying shut off locations over the next week.

Parks: Parks are open. Weeds at the beach will be treated in June .

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Written report provided by Lammers. Discussed the trail being compromised by vehicles driving on the trail. The sign stating no motorized vehicles on trail is missing and DuFrane has ordered a new one. Albright stated the county is working with owner regarding the no permit for work in the county right of way. The council tabled the issue of the trail being compromised until further examination can be done. Arvig and S & S Security both provided camera quotes for the ballfield shed. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the purchase of a camera from S & S Security for \$833.00 for the ballfield shed. Motion passed unanimously. Lammers was asked to get quotes to replace all of our current cameras as DuFrane has numerous complaints regarding the camera at yard waste. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve resolution 2024-004 (a complete text of the resolution is part of permanent public record in the City Clerk's office.) approving the donation of parcel 82-000-990-306-000 located in Lawrence Lake Acres to be used for a park. 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 7:35 pm.

Vergas Clerk-Treasurer

Julie Lammers, CMC