

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 20, 2013
MINUTES

Mayor William Benton called the regular meeting to order at 6 p.m. at the Vergennes Fire Station on Green Street. Those in attendance were:

Mayor William Benton
Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette
Alderman Lynn Donnelly
Alderman Clara Comeau
Alderman Lowell Bertrand

Alderman Renny Perry
Alderman Joe Klopfenstein
City Clerk Joan Devine
City Manager Mel Hawley

WARRANTS: The warrant, totaling \$219,639.14, was presented to the Board for review and signatures of approval.

PETITION FOR SPEED ENFORCEMENT: A petition filed by Bill Herrington signed by a number of residents on South Maple Street was distributed. The petition requests increased enforcement of the speed limit. Mayor Benton reported he and City Manager Hawley have discussed the petition and both feel it is likely an enforcement issue. Manager Hawley advised he has spoken with the Chief about the petition and recommended involving the police explorers to gather data for the City Council. Alderman Renny Perry reported Addison County Regional Planning Commission has a few counters they lend to communities that also detect the rate of speed and time of day. In the past, he advised, our police officers have run radar detectors and wrote the information down. That exercise showed vehicles were not speeding as fast or as often as expected. The City did install speed bumps that are usually used for parking lots on South Maple Street in an attempt to slow vehicles down year ago. Those were eventually removed, he advised, and signs were erected up and down the street advising motorists to slow down for children in the neighborhood. Alderman Perry advised he could support most of the suggested recommendations on the petition but he cannot support the installation of a STOP sign at the intersection of King Street as they are not meant to control speed. Manager Hawley agreed and advised to install STOP signs you must meet the 70-30 threshold which it will not. Alderman Donnelly stated that she also would be against STOP signs and speed bumps but would support a speed study. She also stated she felt vehicles may appear to be going faster than they actually are in reality. Senior Alderman Ouellette felt the narrow road also makes it appear that vehicles are going much faster. It was the consensus of the Board to try to get some speed counters from ACRPC or have officers or explorers use the radar unit. City Manager Hawley advised the speed limit is 25 mph on South Maple Street which is the lowest speed allowed by law. Further discussion on this topic will occur at the September 17th meeting.

MINUTES: Two sets of minutes were presented to the Board for approval; a meeting held July 23rd and the special meeting held August 13th. Alderman Joe Klopfenstein asked for the minutes to the July 23rd meeting to be corrected to read that the Vergennes Recreation Committee has finished their "preliminary" design for the toddler park adjacent to the City pool. Alderman Comeau moved to accept both sets of the minutes as written and corrected, seconded by Alderman Bertrand, with all voting in favor.

DECLARATION OF OFFICIAL INTENT: Needing adoption by the City Council was a Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse Certain Expenditures from Proceeds of Indebtedness related to the bond issued for construction of a public safety building. This declaration allows for reimbursement of all capital expenditures covered by the resolution that were made within 60 days of the date of the declaration. At this point there are two expenditures that do not qualify for reimbursement as they were made over sixty days ago. Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to adopt the Declaration as presented, seconded by Alderman Renny Perry, with all voting in favor.

DOG COMPLAINT: A letter was received from resident Karen Florucci regarding dogs running loose and defecating everywhere and their owners not picking up after them. She requested more effort in enforcing the City's Dog Ordinance. Mayor Benton advised that when the Council reviews all the ordinances we can look at this area more closely.

MANAGER'S REPORT: City Manager Hawley reported we are just into the budget a month and half and many of the expenditures reflected in this budget need to be posted back to last year's budget as they cover expenses incurred during the month of June. Mayor Benton questioned the legal fees. Manager Hawley advised he will check them tomorrow as it appears that there is something wrong there. He went on to report that a clean asbestos report was received on the

prior Vergennes Auto building so that will be torn down after Labor Day. The bids of subcontractors are in for the project but Bread Loaf Corporation hasn't done their analysis yet. He made mention that the City Council has authorized \$100,000 from the Water Tower Fund for this project; \$27,000 in interest is due in March with zero funds budgeted.

The agreement for the solar panels at the wastewater treatment plant has been signed, advised Manager Hawley. They have been here and things are moving along but they also need to talk once everyone is done vacation. A Certificate of Public Good has been issued by the Public Service Board.

TRAIN STATION SEWER EXTENSION PROJECT: Manager Hawley advised it is his understanding that the City Council had previously approved sewer extension to the train station project in Ferrisburgh. The original design proposed a force main that runs from the train station to Amy's Hair Design. He reported that pump stations at the end can keep the line clean. He has offered up bringing the force main from the train station to the manhole behind the police station lot. The sewer line behind Precision Print & Copy will be replaced and run along the back to the police station lot to Main Street. The train station sewer extension project went to bid and six bids have been received and have been awarded to the low bidder. The State needs a formal agreement with the City for this sewer line outside of the City, he advised. Any restrictions on the train station will be included in this agreement.

VERMONT GAS SYSTEMS: Mayor Benton advised there will be a public meeting on August 21st from 5:00-8:00 p.m. put on by Vermont Gas Systems at the American Legion Post. The purpose of the meeting is for them to provide information and answers questions from the community. Mayor Benton stated he has received one email from a resident asking what the City was doing to stop Vermont Gas Systems from going through the City.

DELINQUENT TAXES: Delinquent Tax Collector Mel Hawley reported that delinquent taxes last year were at \$25,508 as of August 30th. This year, he advised, we are at just over \$40,000 so we have a ways to go before the deadline. Hopefully we will not lose ground on our fund balance, he stated.

A 1272 Order was issued to us by the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources dealing with the sewer overflows. He advised we no longer have overflows at Northlands Job Corps but the MacDonough Drive pump station occasionally goes over with flash rains. The draft Order wants metering capabilities at the MacDonough Drive pump station. Money in the Sewer Capital Improvements Fund will cover these corrections.

OTHER TOPICS: Mayor Benton reported Susan Ferland is looking for bids on fencing for the Vergennes Burial Ground. They have also discussed putting up a 3' by 2' sign with wordage identifying the cemetery and circa 1790.

Recreation Committee Chair Joe Klopfenstein reported his Committee met August 9th and they are moving forward with the proposed toddler park on East Street. They will also be meeting with Vergennes Partnership later this month. He advised the rail trail has been put on hold for now.

Lynn Jackson, the Council's liaison to the Friends of Vergennes Opera House Board, reported they have been very well covered in the press for their fundraiser this evening. She felt the FVOH will be in a good place in a year from now.

ADJOURNMENT: As there was no more business to come before the Board, Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. The motion was seconded by Alderman Lowell Bertrand with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan T. Devine
Vergennes City Clerk