

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL  
JANUARY 27, 2015  
MINUTES

Mayor William Benton called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Vergennes Fire Station meeting room located at 50 Green Street. Those in attendance were:

Mayor William Benton	City Clerk Joan Devine
Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette	Reporter Andy Kirkaldy
Alderman Michael Daniels	Susan Rakowski
Alderman Joe Klopfenstein	Michelle Eckels
Alderman Lynn Donnelly	Matt Whitten
Alderman Renny Perry	Marty Illick
City Manager Mel Hawley	

WARRANT: The Warrant totaling \$82,267.07 was circulated for review and signatures of approval.

VERGENNES SWIM TEAM: Michelle Eckels and Susan Rakowski were present to create discussion on rates for pool passes for the upcoming season. As members of the swim team each swimmer has to acquire a season pool pass (\$45 or \$60) in order to use the pool daily for their practices in addition to their swim team fee of \$70. Michelle stated that they are looking at possibly increasing the team fee this year. She went on to report they did quite well in their fundraising efforts last year and were able to acquire some much needed safety equipment but they also saw decreased enrollment from approximately 110 to 85 swimmers. That decrease reduced their revenue which resulted in them owing the City over \$1,800 at the end of the season for wages paid out to coaches, she advised. Because they never know how many kids will participate from year to year makes it difficult for them to estimate their revenues. She was in hopes that perhaps season pool passes for students on the swim team could be one flat rate which might increase participation from out-of-town swimmers. Currently Middlebury's out of town swimmers pay \$150 and residents pay \$140; they would like to remain competitive, she advised. City Manager Hawley advised the success of the pool is directly linked to the number of swimmers on the swim team that are buying season passes. He will run some numbers based on prior year's information and present that information at the next meeting so rates can be established for this season.

ADDISON COUNTY RIVER WATCH COLLABORATIVE: Matt Whitten and Marty Illick were present to discuss and answer questions related to the quality-assured sample results from the lower Otter Creek watershed during 2014. Mr. Whitten advised water quality tests were performed for turbidity, E. coli and phosphorus that were compared to the Vermont Water Quality Standards in effect as of October 2014. Mr. Whitten explained the river watch collaborative is a network of 50-80 trained volunteers who go out 6 to 8 times a summer to monitor the rivers. The two rivers they focused on this year (2014) were Middlebury River and Otter Creek, he advised. They have been monitoring the Otter Creek since 1992 and it basically complies with water standards for turbidity and phosphorus. The E. coli is impaired so there is a problem there, he advised, which most likely is being caused by the farmers. Manager Hawley reported the wastewater plant does not discharge E. coli but we do export chlorine. Mr. Whitten advised overflows at the plant do allow E. coli into the river. He went on to explain that September was a very dry month but the sampling showed the E. coli to be very high because there was not a lot of water for dilution. Marty Illick advised in 2011 the State prepared a total maximum daily load (tmdl) plan for Otter Creek. Since then the standards for phosphorus have changed as well as the E. coli. When you are looking at phosphorus, she advised, you need to look for total and dissolved numbers. Dissolved phosphorus is in the soil and comes from the farms. Matt spoke of a farmers' group out of Burlington who are working towards improving their impact on our rivers.

MINUTES: Minutes to the January 13th meeting were amended on the first page. Under Wastewater System Presentation, "The treatment plant was upgraded in 2001 and is designed for 1.30 million gallons per day" was corrected to read "and is designed for an average daily flow of 750,000 gallons". Further down in the same

paragraph the words “has limited users and” were deleted. Alderman Michael Daniels moved to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette, with all voting in favor.

ANNUAL CITY MEETING WARNING: The proposed Warning for the Annual City Meeting to be held March 2<sup>nd</sup> was presented to the Board. Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to adopt the Warning as presented, seconded by Alderman Daniels, with all voting in favor. The Warning was circulated for signatures from the Board and is filed as a part of these minutes.

SAM FISHMAN POOL RATES: City Manager Hawley advised 2011 was our peak year operating the pool and it left us with a surplus of \$10,464. A new pump was purchased that year which also reduced the consumption of electricity. In 2012 we substantially upgraded the changing rooms. This year we are down to fumes so he proposing a \$5 increase across the board for pool passes. At the end of the day, he advised, he needs \$50,000 to run the pool for the season. Both diving boards need replacing so he needs another \$4,000 for one board this year and perhaps add a slide rather than a second diving board next year. He pointed out that this is the first increase he has recommended since the City took over the pool in 2010.

COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION PLAN: Mayor Benton prepared a composite plan for recreation that he would like to see a group tackle over a 3-month period and get a feel of what residents want. Ideally he would like to see 5 to 7 people develop this plan. Alderman Klopfenstein suggested adding some type of outlet to get the information to the public. Alderman Donnelly recommended that a survey be available at the polling place. Both Aldermen Ouellette and Klopfenstein felt it would be easier to work with a smaller group developing the plan. Alderman Daniels announced an informational meeting could be scheduled when finished with time set aside for public comment.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Manager Hawley announced Alex Larrow is working part-time in the office and has been doing various projects for him. They recently spent 16 hours recording map book and page numbers for the digitalized maps in the grand list book. She is currently working on a compilation of the city ordinances.

BUDGET REPORT: We are half way through the year and Public Works has spent \$48,000 on salt, sand and brine that they budgeted \$45,000 for. In the spring they also purchased 280 yards of salt but probably didn’t need any. We need to build a salt shed so we are trying to get a handle on our sand need in a year, he advised. We are also beginning to see what it costs to run a wastewater treatment plant, he stated.

SOLOR GENERATION PROJECT: Manager Hawley dispersed a spreadsheet detailing the KWH charges at the wastewater treatment plant for 2014 versus the KWH generated from the solar array. At year end the City saved between \$3,600 and \$3,700; less than what was anticipated due to the reduced KWH generated. Our \$3,100 monthly payment will now go down to \$2,744 in accordance with our contract with Sun Common.

PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUND PROJECT: City Manager Hawley reported announced the Development Review Board will hold a public hearing regarding the playground on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 7:35 p.m. Alderman Mike Daniels moved to go into an executive session to discuss a potential land purchase option from L.F. Benton Company. The motion was seconded by Alderman Renny Perry. Mayor Benton departed at this time and Senior Alderman Ouellette took over the meeting. At 7:50 p.m. Alderman Perry moved to adjourn the executive session, seconded by Alderman Klopfenstein, with all voting in favor.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:50 p.m. Alderman Mike Daniels moved to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Joe Klopfenstein, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Vergennes City Clerk