

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 17, 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	Alderman Lowell Bertrand
Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette	City Manager Mel Hawley
Alderman Michael Daniels	City Clerk Joan Devine
Alderman Joe Klopfenstein	Gerianne Smart, FVOH
Alderman Lynn Donnelly	Susan Schaefer, FVOH
Alderman Renny Perry	

MINUTES: Grammatical corrections were made in the first paragraph. Alderman Bertrand moved to approve the minutes to the February 10th meeting as corrected, seconded by Senior Alderman Ouellette, with all voting in favor except Mayor Benton who abstained as he was unable to preview them; he was unaware they were distributed with the amended agenda.

LEASE AMENDMENT-FVOH: Gerianne Smart and Susan Schaefer were present in case there was discussion on the proposed Memorandum of Understanding regarding use of the “ticket booth” until such time voters can act on a proposed lease amendment that would expand the premises under the current lease. Manager Hawley advised Mayor Benton and Gerianne have reviewed the document that he prepared. Senior Alderman Ouellette moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City Council and Friends of Vergennes Opera House for use of the “ticket booth” and authorize the City Manager to sign the Memorandum on behalf of the City Council. Alderman Lowell Bertrand seconded the motion with all voting in favor. The Memorandum is recorded as a part of these minutes.

SAM FISHMAN MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL RATES: Manager Hawley advised the rates for the 2015 season need to be set so that the swim team can advise team members of the cost. He recommended a \$5 increase across the board for season passes and lessons which will raise revenues approximately \$2,000. He pointed out that this is the first increase since the City took over the pool in 2010. Senior Alderman Ouellette moved to approve the City Manager’s recommendation, seconded by Alderman Bertrand, with all voting in favor.

WARRANT: The Warrant totaling \$61,491.73 was circulated for review and signatures of approval. Alderman Donnelly inquired if we budgeted for payments to LandWorks for bills associated with the Pre-School Playground and where are they being posted in the budget. Manager Hawley explained the \$21,000 grant from the State has been received and the City Council committed \$2,900 from the Water Tower Fund for preliminary design. Mel thought we had spent about \$5,000 to date. Lynn stated that she understands the referendum on the ballot is non-binding but wanted to clarify that if the voters overwhelmingly say “no”, the project would go back to the City Council for direction. There was agreement around the table. Mayor Benton advised the wording as petitioned is poor on the ballot but he plans to put detailed information on Front Porch Forum and address it at Town Meeting.

COMMUNITY RECREATION SURVEY: Mayor Benton reported he has received feedback from Kathy Rossier and Dustin Hunt regarding the community recreation survey that will be available at the polls on Town Meeting Day. He said he will make some modifications before distributing it so if anyone has any other ideas or corrections they should contact him soon.

DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION GRANT: Manager Hawley advised he would like to apply for funding for another streetscape project and the application is due by March 9th. The project he has in mind, he advised, is on South Maple Street along the Stone Block building and in front of the theater property. He said the project

should also included attention to the sidewalk on the opposite side of South Maple Street along the Basin Block. He requested an allocation from the Water Tower Fund of \$20,000 and authorization to submit the application. Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to authorize the City Manager to submit an application for funding for this project and to allocate an amount not to exceed \$20,000 from the Water Tower Fund. The motion was seconded by Alderman Bertrand with all voting in favor except Lynn Donnelly who abstained due to any perceived conflict of interest as being the realtor involved in the pending sale of the theater property.

REVIEW OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO: Manager Hawley advised he had told the City Council that he would periodically prepare documentation showing how much money the City had in reserve funds and how it was invested. He provided copies of investment documents and explained each account.

COMMON LEVEL OF APPRAISAL: Manager Hawley advised that our tentative common level of appraisal (CLA) was 103.97%. He reported appealing the determination as there were two sales in question. The appeal was successful and our CLA has been adjusted to 104.43% which will save taxpayers about \$12,000 in aggregate.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND GRANT: Manager Hawley announced that Michael Winslow, chair of the Otter Creek Basin Task Force, had advised that they decided it was premature to apply for a grant in light of the planning study that will be undertaken with funding from the Strong Communities, Better Connections grant. He suggested the minutes reflect this decision so the City Council's allocation of \$40,000 from the Water Tower Funds as the local match would be considered void.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:15 p.m. Alderman Bertrand moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Vergennes City Clerk