

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 25, 2014
MINUTES

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

Mayor William Benton	Alderman Joe Klopfenstein
Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette	City Manager Mel Hawley
Alderman Renny Perry	City Clerk Joan Devine
Alderman Michael Daniels	Betsy Rippner
Alderman Lowell Bertrand	Sierra Bertrand
Alderman Lynn Donnelly	Reporter Andy Kirkaldy

Mayor Benton thanked Clara Comeau for her 9 years of service to the community where she clearly represented our veterans and the elderly. Next, he welcomed our newest City Council member Michael Daniels.

WARRANTS: The warrant totaling \$303,608.57 was made available for review and was circulated for signatures of approval.

MINUTES: Minutes to the February 25th meeting were presented for approval. Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Alderman Lowell Bertrand, with all voting in favor except Michael Daniels who abstained as he was not yet a member of the City Council

PUBLIC LAND USE LICENSE / KENNEDY BROTHERS, INC.: As discussed in prior meetings, Mayor Benton advised a Public Land Use License has been prepared for Kennedy Brothers, Inc. for their use of the parking area and lawn in the public right-of-way near the property located at 11 Main Street that belongs to the City. He advised the document was prepared by our City Attorney and has been reviewed by Robert Feuerstein and his attorney. Mayor Benton advised we were not abandoning the highway by this action. Alderman Daniels moved to authorize City Manager Hawley to sign the document and add any dimensions if necessary. The motion was seconded by Senior Alderman Ouellette with all voting in favor.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER: Mayor Benton advised we need to adopt rules of order that will be followed at our meetings. Manager Hawley stated that Robert's Rules of Order contains an article that is specific to small boards and executive committees. The rules allow for the Chair to vote on all questions unless there is a conflict of interest. Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to adopt Robert's Rules of Order as discussed, seconded by Alderman Renny Perry with all voting in favor.

SENIOR ALDERMAN: In accordance with the City Charter, Mayor Benton advised a senior alderman from amongst the Board needs to be elected who will perform the duties of the Mayor in his absence. Alderman Lynn Donnelly nominated Randall Ouellette to that position, seconded by Alderman Perry, with all voting in favor.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY: The next item of business is to review and adopt the conflict of interest policy, advised Mayor Benton. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the business of the City is conducted in such a way that no members of the City Council will gain a personal or financial advantage from their decisions. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to re-adopt the Conflict of Interest Policy as presented, seconded by Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette, with all voting in favor.

APPOINTMENTS: Mayor Benton recommended the following annual appointments:

Auditor	– Christopher Lapierre
Tree Warden	– Mel Hawley
Delinquent Tax Collector	– Mel Hawley
Town Service Officer	– Joan Devine
Bixby Library Trustee Desuignee	– Christine Bradford
ACSWMD Board Member	– Cheryl Brinkman
ACSWMD Alternate Member	– Mel Hawley
Green-Up Day Co-Chairs	– Mike Daniels and Craig Miner

Alderman Lynn Donnelly moved to accept the slate as presented, seconded by Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette, with all voting in favor.

2014 LIQUOR LICENSES: 2014 Liquor License Applications were approved for Addison County Eagles, American Legion Post #14, Bar Antidote, Black Sheep Bistro, Champlain Farms, City Limits Nightclub, Kinney Drugs, Park Squid, Shaw’s, Small City Market, Strong House Inn, Three Squares Café, Vergennes Laundry, Vergennes Redemption Center and Vergennes Wine.

2014 TOBACCO LICENSES: 2014 Tobacco Licenses were approved for American Legion Post #14, Champlain Farms, City Limits Nightclub, Kinney Drugs, Shaw’s, Small City Market, Vergennes Redemption Center and Vergennes Wine.

2014 OUTSIDE CONSUMPTION PERMITS: 2014 Outside Consumption Permits were approved for Addison County Eagles, American Legion Post #14, Bar Antidote, Black Sheep Bistro, Park Squid, Strong House Inn, Three Squares Café and Vergennes Laundry. Alderman Mike Daniels moved, acting as the Board of Liquor Control Commissioners, to approve the liquor licenses, tobacco licenses and outside consumption permits as submitted, seconded by Alderman Bertrand, with all voting in favor.

2014 LIVE ENTERTAINMENT PERMITS: 2014 Live Entertainment Permits were approved for Addison County Eagles, American Legion Post #14, Bar Antidote, City Limits Nightclub, and Three Squares Café. Each permit has a restriction that exterior doors to the establishment must remain closed during time periods of live entertainment. Alderman Renny Perry moved to approve the permits as submitted, seconded by Alderman Bertrand, with all voting in favor.

REPEAL TAXI LICENSE ORDINANCE: Manager Hawley advised he would recommend repealing the Taxi License Ordinance due to changes in State law. A person in Vermont does not need a so-called state “taxi license” anymore but are required to carry “jitney” insurance that is based on the number of passengers the vehicle for hire can carry. Alderman Renny Perry did not support this move as it would eliminate someone on the local level monitoring licenses and insurances. He advised the City Charter even speaks to the authority to license owners and drivers of cabs or carriages. Manager Hawley pointed out that many cabs drive through Vergennes in route

to other locations but are not necessarily serving our residents and that enforcement of licensing would be inconsistent. Alderman Perry advised he would like to do some research on this before the City Council takes any action.

RECREATION COMMITTEE: Mayor Benton questioned whether it was time to create a formal recreation committee offering programs in addition to the committee making recommendations to the City Council on how to spend dollars for maintenance of our facilities. Recreation committee chair Joe Klopfenstein advised they have been focusing on the creation of a toddler park and acquired a \$21,000 grant to assist in building this park. They have also been looking at more transparency for themselves and now offer an agenda and minutes to their meetings. They currently have seven members on the committee, he advised, who have expressed interest to expand into offering recreational activities. Alderman Renny Perry felt it might be time to investigate models other communities are using. Alderman Klopfenstein advised the City Council also needs to decide if we are going to go forward with the toddler park or not. Betsy Rippner felt we needed to step back until April 16th when the report from VT Council on Rural Development will be available and we can determine what direction to follow. Alderman Daniels advised one thing he picked up on at the March Community Forum was the severe lack of communication. Manager Hawley advised he liked Alderman Perry's recommendation to gather other mission statements and governance ideas from other communities. Ours was very narrow, he advised, and basically about finances.

COMMUNITY VISIT: Mayor Benton felt the "Community Visit" organized by the Vermont Council on Rural Development was fascinating. Its purpose was to produce a number of concrete proposals to improve the city, he advised. There were 111 people who signed up for nine different workshops that were offered by state officials as well as private-sector experts; 90 of those people attended the community dinner. Moderators encouraged brainstorming throughout the day and collected ideas that will be shared at the follow-up community meeting scheduled to be held April 16th. Mayor Benton encouraged everyone to attend that meeting.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Hawley advised he has paid another quarter of insurances, paid all the salt bills to date, and paid out plenty in overtime but we still appear to be in good shape so apparently we budgeted appropriately. The police station budget is also in good shape, he advised. Everything has been paid at 100 percent except the landscaping. We have \$40,000 left in the contingency line with an expected \$32,000 landscaping bill. He advised he has hired a new Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant operator. Victor "Rick" Chaput is a Level V operator and will begin on April 7th. The last submittal has been made for reimbursement of bills paid to repair the Main Street pumping station that was damaged in a vehicle accident. The insurance company has agreed to the last submittal so we should be reimbursed soon. Aldrich & Elliott have designed a metering system for the Macdonough Drive pump station that is being ordered by the State due to our overflows in the past. He advised the application for the City Hall curbing grant has been submitted and apparently will face some competition this time. Brad Castillo will be coming back again this year as pool director. Prior pool employees have also been invited to return. This year we should be able to offer life guarding courses as Brad is working on his certification.

ADJOURNMENT: Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. The motion was seconded by Alderman Lowell Bertrand with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

, Vergennes City Clerk