

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 12, 2016
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:

Alderman Mayor William Benton	City Manager Mel Hawley
Alderman Lowell Bertrand	City Clerk Joan Devine
Alderman Jeffrey Fritz	Shannon Haggett
Alderman Mathew Chabot	Brent Rakowski
Alderman Mark Koenig	Andy Kirkaldy
Alderman Lynn Donnelly	Sierra Bertrand

AMENDMENT TO AGENDA: Mayor Benton announced that at the request of Alderman Mark Koenig the agenda would be amended to include discussion about City Council members use of personal email accounts for City business.

VISITOR: City resident Brent Rakowski submitted a letter to the City Council expressing concerns and providing ideas he has regarding the Sam Fishman Memorial Pool. He feels the pool is a valuable asset of the community that impacts nearly all residents through physical education classes at VUES, swim lessons, swim team, summer recreation as well as employment. It is starting to age and is in need of attention and suggested the City Council explore ideas to expand programs and consider having a professional evaluation of the facility as a guide so it remains a valuable and vibrant part of our community. He made comparisons with the Towns of Rutland and Middlebury and what they have done to improve their community pools. He recommended daily, weekly, and seasonal tasks that are aimed at keeping the pool operational and appealing to users. He suggested our insurer, Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT-PACIF), could do a safety evaluation that would reduce our exposure to liability. He also inquired on who confirms that chemicals are stored properly and that health codes are being followed. Mr. Rakowski advised he would like to see the City Council be proactive. Manager Hawley reported the pool was built in the mid 60s with a grant from the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and donations from the American Legion and other community organizations. In the late 80s a new bathhouse was funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund program. He advised the City acquired the pool from the Vergennes Graded School District in 2010 when they dissolved and is currently operating on an approximate \$50,000 budget. Since then individual shower stalls have been erected, the pump was replaced, and two new diving boards will be purchased this year. The pool has basically been self-supporting, he advised, with the exception of the \$6,000 to \$9,000 annually in earnings from the Watershed Recreation Reserve Fund. Mayor Benton thanked Brent for his input and advised the City Council will be reviewing the proposed swimming pool budget at the next meeting.

WARRANT: The Warrant totaling \$79,504.65 was circulated for review and signatures of approval.

MINUTES: The minutes to the meeting of March 22, 2016 were reviewed with a minor correction of punctuation made. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Alderman Koenig, with all voting in favor.

VUHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTMENT: City Manager Hawley advised the notice of vacancy of one of the two Vergennes seats on the VUHS Board of Directors position was duly

posted but no one submitted a letter of interest. He said that by law the appointment must be made forthwith so either someone from the City Council will need to fill this position or we will need to work harder by reaching out into the community to find a candidate. Alderman Lynn Jackson advised Greg Burdick told her that he will take the position if no one else is interested but we would need to see if he could legally hold the position as he is currently the treasurer of VUHS. Alderman Donnelly further advised that if Greg Burdick cannot legally hold both positions, he would continue as the treasurer of VUHS and she would assume the role so that it does not remain vacant. Mayor Benton said this matter will be on the agenda of the next meeting and hopefully a determination as to whether Greg Burdick can legally hold both positions will be made.

VERGENNES FARMERS' MARKET – CITY GREEN REQUEST: A request was made by Vergennes Farmers' Market to use the City Green on Thursdays, between 3:00 and 6:30 p.m., beginning June 16th through September 29th. Also included in the request, should they have sufficient volunteer support, use of the City Green and bandstand on Thursday afternoon and evening, August 25th, to hold their 2016 Community Supper along with the inclusion of the Vergennes Community Supper in marketing and media of Vergennes Day. Alderman Bertrand moved to approve the request, seconded by Alderman Donnelly, with all voting in favor.

RESOLUTION – SITING OF RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS: The Town of Rutland requests the City of Vergennes join them in adopting a Resolution (a copy was available) to increase input from municipalities regarding the siting of renewable energy projects in Certificate of Public Good proceedings before the Public Service Board. City Manager Hawley advised many other communities have joined them. He said that the Public Service Board has given little respect to local municipalities to have a say in the procedure. Planning Commission Chair Shannon Haggett advised the planning commission has been working on language in the municipal development plan that will allow some local control on the location of large solar arrays. He did support the goal of the resolution but did not like the tone. City Council members expressed similar sentiments. Mayor Benton stated the Legislature is trying to deal with this matter. Consensus was to not take action on the request by the Town of Rutland to adopt their resolution.

WATERSHED RECREATION RESERVE FUND REQUEST – DIVING BOARDS: City Manager Hawley reported the diving boards at the Sam Fishman Memorial Pool need replacement. He advised one of the boards was taken out of operation last year but both need to be replaced. The research has been done on replacement costs with the best deal available through Pool World. Manager Hawley advised Tom Booska, owner of Pool World, quoted him a retail value of \$3,249.63 each but that he would sell them to the City at his cost which is about \$2,600 each. The Watershed Recreation Reserve Fund Policy was available and explains the \$350,000 base investment with 75 percent of earnings available for recreational expenditures; the remaining 25 percent of earnings is retained in the reserve fund to increase the fund and associated annual earnings. City Manager Hawley advised the annual earnings on this account are about \$13,000 of which the City appropriated \$9,000 to the operation of the Sam Fishman Memorial Pool in the current fiscal year. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to authorize a special allocation of \$5,200 from the Watershed Recreation Reserve Fund to purchase two diving boards for the pool. The motion was seconded by Alderman Matt Chabot with all voting in favor.

ADDISON COUNTY COMMUNITY TRUST SIDEWALK EXTENSION PROPOSAL: City Manager Hawley advised that Addison County Community Trust did not deliver the engineered plans for the sidewalk extension project on South Maple Street. Their request for the City to share in the cost of the project was deferred to the next meeting.

CITY COUNCIL CALENDAR: Manager Hawley advised that the City Council Calendar presented at the last meeting needs to be formally adopted as required by law. In light of the General Election, the City Council will meet on November 15th and 29th. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to adopt the calendar as amended, seconded by Alderman Jeff Fritz, with all voting in favor.

CITY COUNCIL EMAIL DISCUSSION: City Manager Hawley reported Alderman Mark Koenig expressed concerns with him and other City Council members using their personal or business email accounts for City business. Mark felt his personal information could be at risk claiming that all of his email correspondence might have to be made available to the public and suggested that City Council members be provided with a @vergenne.org email account. Manager Hawley reported checking with Vermont League of Cities and Towns for guidance and was told they have not developed a “best practice” policy. Manager Hawley advised he also contacted SymQuest, our network provider, who said additional email addresses could be established at a cost of \$30 per month per email address. Mayor Benton recommended further investigation and the matter was deferred to the next meeting.

MANAGER’S REPORT: City Manager Mel Hawley reported a request for an allocation from the Water Tower Fund for costs associated with the City Hall renovations will come at a later date when the project is completed. The 1974 mini-pumper was sold for \$2,016. This truck was transferred from the Fire Department to the Sewer Department several years ago and used at the treatment plant. Those funds were put back into the Sewer Capital Improvement Fund. He went on to advise they are experiencing a serious rag problem at the Macdonough Drive pump station. A better flow rate can be established with the installation of an alternative volute designed to pass rags that will cost \$3,700 per pump.

He also advised VV II Associates, LLC has appealed the Board of Civil Authority decision to the State appraisers. That appeal will be heard on May 19th at 10 a.m. at City Hall.

MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Benton reported Jay Stetzel and a group of volunteers have put together a map and written documentation on sidewalks in the City that need improvement or installation. Shannon Haggett advised the Planning Commission will be looking at the report at their next meeting. The Mayor suggested there were things we could be doing this year, like signage, that would help with the adverse affects of truck traffic on Main Street (Route 22A).

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:20 p.m. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Mathew Chabot, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



City Clerk