

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL  
APRIL 26, 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	Police Chief George Merkel
Senior Alderman Renny Perry	Det. Sergeant Jason Ouellette
Alderman Lowell Bertrand	Sergeant Brett Perkins
Alderman Jeffrey Fritz	Officer Patrick Greenslet
Alderman Mathew Chabot	Officer Adam O'Neill
Alderman Mark Koenig	Officer Mark Barber
Alderman Lynn Donnelly	Officer William Wager
City Manager Mel Hawley	Officer Brittany Clark
City Clerk Joan Devine	Officer Mason Coleman
James Larrow, PW Supervisor	Brent Rakowski
Patrick Crowley, PW	Elise Shanbacker, ACCT
Dan Flynn, Jr., PW	Scott Gaines
Greg Burdick	Mary Gaines

POLICE DEPARTMENT SERVICE RECOGNITION: Police Chief George Merkel advised his Department has been in their new headquarters for two years now and thanked the City for supporting the new police station. He reported the Department consists of 6 full-time officers and 3 part-time officers. Each officer was introduced and their specific skill area was acknowledged. Chief Merkel said he is very proud of his Department and their reputation in the community. Each officer was given a blue rose which they presented to a family member as a token of appreciation for their support. Department of Public Works employees James Larrow, Patrick Crowley and Dan Flynn, Jr. were also recognized by the Chief for their dedication and assistance to the Police Department.

VUHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTMENT: City Manager Hawley read the law as it relates to incompatible offices. At the last meeting, he advised, there was discussion regarding Greg Burdick being the treasurer for the Vergennes Union High School and an appointment as a member of the VUHS Board of Directors. City Manager Hawley advised it was his opinion and that of the Secretary of State's Office that the City Council can appoint Mr. Burdick as a member of the VUHS Board of Directors. Alderman Donnelly moved to appoint Greg Burdick as a member of the VUHS Board of Directors with a term expiring March 7, 2017. The motion was seconded by Alderman Bertrand with all voting in favor.

WARRANT: The Warrant totaling \$36,117.77 was circulated for review and signatures of approval.

MINUTES: The minutes to the meeting of April 12, 2016 were reviewed with two minor corrections made. Alderman Bertrand moved to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Senior Alderman Perry with all voting in favor.

ADDISON COUNTY COMMUNITY TRUST (ACCT) SIDEWALK EXTENSION PROPOSAL:

City Manager Hawley advised he previously reported there was about 350' of sidewalk to be installed on South Maple Street to connect the current sidewalk with Addison County Community Trust's affordable housing project at the former Gevry Park in Waltham. He said the project has been engineered and there are actually 492' that will be needed. He has spoken with Public Works Supervisor James Larrow who advises his Department would be able to construct the concrete sidewalk if the site was prepared. Manager Hawley advised it was his understanding that ACCT proposes to do all the site preparation work, the Public Works crew will form and finish the concrete sidewalk and then ACCT will return to fill, grade and seed the area. The cost of concrete to be absorbed by the City is about \$2,250, he advised. Senior Alderman Perry inquired how many Public Works man-hours would be involved. City Manager Hawley reported it would be a three- or four- pour job that will take up to around eight days (which is \$5,000 - \$6,000 in manpower). Alderman Donnelly felt this was a good step for the City to take. Alderman Koenig expressed his hesitations. Senior Alderman Perry was also in favor of the proposal especially if the funds were to come from the Water Tower Fund. Alderman Fritz advised he has reservations like Alderman Koenig. Alderman Bertrand felt it was the perfect opportunity to lay sidewalk in that area and to use Water Tower Funds. City Manager Hawley advised all the expenses can come out of the Water Tower Fund if the City Council decides it is a capital improvement. He encouraged the City Council to utilize the opportunity to put in over 300' of sidewalk that our residents may ask for in the future if not done now. Mayor Benton suggested taking \$5,000 from the Water Tower Fund to put towards the project for labor as well as the cost of materials. Alderman Donnelly stated she felt it was just an addition to our sidewalk inventory. She would support the materials being paid out of the Water Tower Fund but did not feel it was appropriate to take the cost of man-hours. Senior Alderman Perry moved to approve the project with funds for materials taken out of the Water Tower Fund, seconded by Alderman Donnelly, followed by discussion. Aldermen Chabot and Koenig both expressed sentiments regarding loss of labor being their concern when there are other projects in the City that should be accomplished. Mayor Benton pointed out that the City has not spent much on sidewalks in the last two years. A vote on the motion showed all in favor except Mayor Benton, Aldermen Fritz, and Alderman Chabot opposed. The motion passed.

CITY COUNCIL EMAIL ACCOUNTS: City Manager Hawley advised he spoke with VLCT and they do not have a "best practices" for this topic. The City of Montpelier does assign email addresses just as our Addison Northwest Supervisory Union does for all of their school board members. He stated he did not know if we solve anything taking this route but if they wanted email through the City it must go through SmyQuest, the City contracted information technology service provider. He pointed out there are other boards and employees such as the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, firefighters, etc. It would be great if there was a "best practices" to guide municipalities, he advised. Alderman Koenig advised the school gets their email through google and it is free. He went to google government and sees that they charge \$50 per person per year. He advised we can also develop a free email on-line and use it only for City business. Senior Alderman Perry did not feel we needed to go in that direction as we don't have much email other than the City Council packets. He did not feel enough e-mail communication was going on to justify the expense. Alderman Fritz did not feel it was easy to

do nor did it give them any protection. Mayor Benton suggested just dropping it for now until we saw a real need for it.


2016 POOL BUDGET AND RATES: City Manager Hawley advised Brad Castillo will not be returning as the Pool Director this year; he held that position for 3 years. He reported he has met with Assistant Pool Director Jennifer Kingsley and Michelle Eckels, co-President of the Vergennes Swim Team Committee. They will be changing the lesson schedule this year to expand the late afternoon/early evening program that they tried last year. It is planned for 3 groups instead of 4 in the morning which will allow the swim team to begin their practices a little later in the morning. To begin the season the Swimming Pool Fund will start with a \$1,666.81 fund balance. He then explained funds under Lesson Director did not get expended last year as they did not get at least six people to take the course. Recommended rates for the 2016 season are the same, he advised, with the exception of the increase from \$1.00 to \$2.00 for the expanded adult swim time from noon to 1:00 p.m. Alderman Bertrand moved to set the pool rates for the 2016 season as recommended by Manager Hawley including the \$1 increase. Senior Alderman Perry seconded the motion with all voting in favor.

COMMENTS: Senior Alderman Perry, who is also President of the Vergennes Partnership, announced the Partnership wrote a grant application for \$40,000, with help from the City, for sidewalk replacement and handicapped accessibility for the building at the corner of Green and School Streets that houses the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vergennes, Bar Antidote, and the Clock Shop. He advised they received word today that they were awarded that grant. This will be an \$80,000 project, he advised. City Manager Hawley reported this as a fall project if possible.

GREEN UP DAY: Green Up Day Co-chair Lowell Bertrand reminded everyone that Green Up Day is Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> and he will have a team of workers on the City Green from 8 a.m. until noon.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:40 p.m. Alderman Bertrand moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Fritz, with all voting in favor. The next meeting will be held May 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 p.m. and will begin with a tour of the fire station and equipment.

Respectfully submitted,



City Clerk