

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL
MAY 24, 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:

Mayor William Benton	City Manager Mel Hawley
Senior Alderman Renny Perry	City Clerk Joan Devine
Alderman Lowell Bertrand	Andy Kirkaldy
Alderman Jeffrey Fritz	Shannon Haggett
Alderman Mathew Chabot	Cheryl Brinkman (6:30 p.m.)
Alderman Mark Koenig	
Alderman Lynn Donnelly	

WARRANT: The Warrant totaling \$707,085.59 was circulated for review and signatures of approval. It was noted that the 4th quarter school taxes were included in the Warrant.

MINUTES: Minutes to the April 26, 2016 meeting were approved as written by motion of Senior Alderman Perry, seconded by Alderman Fritz, with all voting in favor. Minutes to the meeting held May 10, 2016 were amended on the first page in the last paragraph. The third sentence in that paragraph was amended to read, "Matt Birong felt picnic tables on the City Green could accommodate overflow outdoor seating from the two restaurants on that block." On the second page the following sentence was injected: "The Vergennes Partnership also considered non-wood products but they were cost prohibitive." Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to approve the revised minutes, seconded by Senior Alderman Perry, with all voting in favor.

PRELIMINARY FY2017 RECYCLING BUDGET: City Manager Hawley submitted his preliminary budget for the recycling center that reflected a 9.5 percent increase. He reported that tipping fees per ton continue to rise compared to 2008 when the City actually received revenue for recyclable materials. The City has the option for our materials to go to the Chittenden Solid Waste District or the Rutland Materials Recovery Facility. Rates for fiscal year ending June 2015 were \$11.00 per ton at the Chittenden County facility compared to \$12.50 at the Rutland facility. Effective July 2015 rates went up to \$21.00 per ton at the Chittenden County facility versus a variable rate at the Rutland facility. City Manager Hawley advised this year by year-end we will have paid \$69,065; he is budgeting \$75,000 for FY2017. Alderman Mark Koenig questioned what the Addison County Solid Waste Management District charges. Manager Hawley advised he did not know but we can ask Cheryl Brinkman, our representative on the ACSWMD Board of Directors, who will be arriving soon.

PROPOSED FY2017 SEWER DEPARTMENT BUDGET: The proposed budget worksheet submitted by Manager Hawley reflected revenues and expenses for FY2015, our current budget for FY2016 and his proposed FY2017 budget. The sewer department now has 3 fulltime employees, he advised, and he also reduced the sewer line replacement fund allocation from \$50,000 to \$20,000 as all the sections of the sewer main with frequent problems have been fixed. At the current rates, revenues are \$95,000 less than the expense budget so the options are to raise sewer rates or cut expenses, he stated. City Manager Hawley advised he expects another \$25,000 in revenues by year-end. Expenses for payroll and benefits, utilities, etc. will also continue until the end of the fiscal year and projects a \$40,000 fund balance. He advised the last sewer rate increase occurred prior to 2008. Mayor Benton advised raising the rate from \$350 annually to \$400 would result in a 14 percent increase. Senior Alderman Perry suggested we could also make a definitive capital improvement list and bond for that amount of money instead of self-funding. Alderman Chabot expressed his surprise with not much need for capital improvements with all

the press coverage that was pointing out deficiencies. City Manager Hawley advised the combined sewer overflow policy, when it becomes the rule, will allow zero overflows in 20 years. We now have great data available to us with the monitors that we installed but when we get heavy rain or an extreme snowmelt the infiltration is considerable. Our treatment plant is designed to limit the discharge of phosphorus to a concentration level of 8 mg/l. He advised that the State is considering lowering it to the permitted concentration of 2 mg/l which will require major upgrades to the treatment plant. Senior Alderman Perry said the impact municipalities are having on the water quality is very miniscule and he is frustrated with the politicians who are not dealing with the problem. Alderman Koenig felt we probably should not be taking out budgeting for capital improvements when we hired a new employee who will be looking at lines for infiltration that haven't been looked at in years. Alderman Jeff Fritz felt the rates will have to be increased. Mayor Benton stated that he is hearing that budgeting for capital improvements should not be cut out this year and that a rate increase will probably have to happen to solve the deficit. City Manager Hawley will go back and re-work the budget with a rate increase included.

ADDISON COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT: Our representative on the ACSWMD Board, Cheryl Brinkman, arrived to answer questions regarding the solid waste district. She advised a lot of Casella's recycling goes to ACSWMD. She also advised they charge a tipping fee of \$50 for recyclable material. Effective July 1st private haulers will have to take leaf and yard waste, she reported, and suggested the City offer space for a drop-off where clean wood could be left, mulched and then available free. She advised the next phase is organics; two years out before mobile drop-off is mandated.

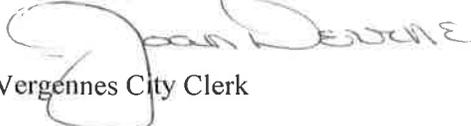
FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE TRUCK INVENTORY: Senior Alderman Perry advised it takes months to speck out a fire truck so the Fire Department would probably appreciate a decision from the City Council as to whether they are in support of having a bond vote to purchase a new truck. Alderman Donnelly advised she is fine with making that decision but would like more of the proposed budget completed first. They are going to need about \$500,000, she advised. Alderman Mark Koenig inquired if they have looked for any grants that might be available. City Manager Hawley reported he would be looking at a bond vote in March 2018 if this is approved. He advised the front line pumper is 22 years old and locating parts is a problem.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: City Manager Hawley advised the majority of the City Hall building maintenance expenses are related to the renovations associated with the Vergennes Partnership office and the so-called ticket booth. He will request an allocation from the Water Tower Fund to cover those expenses at the next meeting. He went on to report in June the Public Works Department will be paving just south of City Hall towards Monkton Road and tearing out and replacing the roadway in the alley behind the Stone Block building.

Manager Hawley reported the hearing for the appeal by VV II Housing Associates, LP was held and we are expected to have a decision within a month. The Listers have filed the 2016 grand list with the City Clerk and mailed out 45 notices. Grievance Day has been set for June 6th at 5:00 p.m., he advised.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:25 p.m. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Mathew Chabot, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Vergennes City Clerk