

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 27, 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 Lynn Donnelly
Alderman Renny Perry
Alderman Michael Daniels
Alderman Lowell Bertrand
Alderman Joe Klopfenstein

City Manager Mel Hawley
City Clerk Joan Devine
Sierra Bertrand
Sara Rivers - VARS
Chris McKirryher - VARS
Brian Goodyear

WARRANT: The warrant totaling \$624,031.59, which included the final quarter of education tax, was available for review and circulated for signatures of approval.

MINUTES: Minutes to the May 13, 2014 meeting were presented for approval. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Alderman Daniels, with all voting in favor.

VERGENNES AREA RESCUE SQUAD: VARS President Sara Rivers and Treasurer Brian Goodyear were present to address their proposed increase in the contract for ambulance service for the City. Mayor Benton reported the proposed per capita fee is \$5.00 to \$6.50 and asked for information and their reasoning. Brian Goodyear advised they use to petition the towns for voter approval but missed deadlines and were short of signatures at times so they received nothing. They started looking at what other non-municipal squads did for revenue and found that several were under contract for town service. When they went to contracts six years ago they charged \$3.50 per capita. Two major changes have occurred since that time, he advised. Medicare has cut back on their reimbursements and the volunteer base is smaller for them so they have had to hire staff. Service calls have not dropped as they still have 600 to 800 calls a year, but reimbursement has declined \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year, he advised. They have also had to add \$20,000 to the payroll in order to provide the same service. Brian Goodyear advised their \$400,000 budget is now supported through billing, donations, subscriptions and town contracts. Mayor Benton felt the substantial increase was due in part to no increase in contracts for the last three years. Brian Goodyear agreed and could only promise there would not be another increase in 2015. Alderman Donnelly asked if Charlotte was paid to be on-call for Vergennes. Brian reported that they are paid \$225 for paramedic services on interceptions but they were not paid for back-up service. Manager Hawley inquired if VARS receives any financial support from Northlands Job Corps. The response was that it depends on the operator at Northlands; currently they are not receiving any support. Alderman Lynn Donnelly stated that she understood their dilemma but the increase was a lot to accept in one year. Mayor Benton pointed out that it was a 30 percent increase in 3 years. Alderman Perry stated he did not feel the City Council had a choice but to sign the contract as it is a service our community needs and that the Medicare cuts are very real. He moved to approve the contract as submitted, seconded by Alderman Bertrand, with all voting in favor. The document was passed for signatures of approval.

DOG WARRANT: City Clerk Devine reported there are 28 dogs in the city that have not been registered after receiving two reminder letters since April 1st. A prepared Dog Warrant was presented for signatures that authorize any police officer to impound all dogs and wolf-hybrids in the city that are not duly licensed according to law. A copy of the Warrant is recorded as a part of these minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The required Internal Financial Controls report was submitted for acknowledgement. The financial management questionnaire deals with policies and procedures in place for the financial operation of the treasurer's office that includes processing payments, deposits, bank reconciliations, training, check writing, etc. A copy of that report is filed as a part of these minutes.

MANAGER'S REPORT: City Manager Hawley advised he discovered today that he has made an error in the Public Works budget for the current year. He neglected to include the payment due June 30, 2014 for one of the trucks. He thought he had fixed that in the budget but apparently did not. The budget is \$47,740.00 and we will spend \$68,316.72 from that line item.

POLICE STATION UPDATE: Manager Hawley advised we budgeted \$1,550,000 to build the new station and have spent \$1,518,000. Items remaining to be completed are the installation of the 'Police Department' ground sign and '8 Main Street' on the building. He would also like to see a couple more crab apple trees planted, and have the metal lettering that is on the building painted dark navy blue for better visibility. Manager Hawley and Chief Merkel will schedule a community open house for a Saturday in the near future.

BUDGET REPORT: Manager Hawley submitted a fund balance projection report showing revenues over budget by \$6,812 while expenses were under budget by \$291,582. Using the beginning year fund balance and adding projected excess revenues over expenditures leaves us with a year-end fund balance of \$350,540 at this time. He advised that we have a few payrolls and another month of expenses that will need to be paid but hoped we would end with at least \$125,000. The proposed FY2015 budget as presented will require a City tax rate of 75 cents with a fund balance of \$125,000; our current rate is 63.5 cents. He advised he has not spoken with the Chief of Police yet but did submit the budget based on the Chief's request. Their current budget is \$553,800 compared to the proposed \$801,000 budget. For the administration budget he has gone back to 1,300 gallons of fuel oil for City Hall. Public Works' budget shows a modest increase. The Fire Department had a \$30,000 cash carry-over to this year but he is not sure about this year because of the needed furnace replacement. He suggested everyone review the proposed budget as we will discuss it further at budget work sessions.

Grievance Day has been set for June 2, he advised. All appeals to the Board of Listers must be in writing and received on or before that date.

He also reported the pool will open on Sunday, June 15. The elementary school will begin using the pool tomorrow for their physical education class.

ORDINANCE UPDATE: Alderman Renny Perry submitted four of his six proposed ordinance amendments. He advised he has spoken with the Chief of Police regarding the taxi license and he will have either nothing or something with guts to make it enforceable.

BUDGET WORK SESSION: The first budget work session is scheduled for Tuesday, June 3 from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at the Fire Station.

ADJOURNMENT: Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m. The motion was seconded by Alderman Perry with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Vergennes City Clerk