

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
AUGUST 18, 2015  
MINUTES

Mayor William Benton called the 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  
Alderman Lowell Bertrand  
Alderman Jeffrey Fritz  
Alderman Lynn Donnelly  
Alderman Joe Klopfenstein

Alderman Michael Daniels  
City Manager Mel Hawley  
City Clerk Joan Devine  
Shannon Haggett  
Reporter Andy Kirkaldy

MINUTES: Alderman Joe Klopfenstein was added as an attendee and two typographical errors were corrected to the minutes of the July 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Alderman Jeff Fritz, with all voting in favor.

WARRANTS: Two warrants were presented for approval. One warrant was for June expenditures totaling \$179.25 and the other for July and August expenses totaling \$141,357.02. Both were circulated for review and signatures of approval.

FVOH LEASE/VERGENNES PARTNERSHIP – CITY HALL USE: City Manager Hawley advised the City entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Friends of Vergennes Opera House for use of the “ticket booth” and voters authorized an amendment to the lease on May 5, 2015. The City reserves the right for its employees to access the vault through the “ticket booth”. In light of the eventual lease amendment, to allow the Vergennes Partnership to use the for Police Chief’s office with access through the “ticket booth”, FVOH must approve. He advised that Gerianne Smart, President of FVOH, notified him that the Board of Directors of the FVOH approves of mixed use of their space and they will develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Vergennes Partnership. Once that is done, Manager Hawley advised he will draft a Memorandum of Understanding with the Vergennes Partnership for review. He went on to advise that because Senior Alderman Perry could not be present at this meeting, he has requested that no action be taken on this item of business until his return.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD ALTERNATE MEMBER APPOINTMENT: City Manager Hawley advised he overlooked the need for the reappointment of Lowell Bertrand as one of the alternate members of the Development Review Board. He advised his term expired August 1, 2015. He recommended the re-appointment of Lowell Bertrand as an alternate member on the DRB with a two-year term expiring August 1, 2017. Alderman Joe Klopfenstein moved to make that re-appointment, seconded by Alderman Jeff Fritz, with all voting in favor.

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND POLICY: Shannon Haggett, a member of the Transportation Task Force, advised the Sidewalk Improvement Plan and Policy is in the hands of the Task Force and they are moving on it. He reported Alderman Fritz has supplied some sample surveys for them to model for use in doing the sidewalk inventory. He advised photos will be taken of areas in need of attention which will allow them to prioritize the work. Once the surveys are completed, we will be able to do a lot with it, he stated.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: City Manager Hawley reported the City has received two VTrans highway improvement grants that will be extremely beneficial. One is a \$45,000 structures grant that will be used for the culvert across South Maple Street just south of Victory Street. Another for \$144,000, that will require a local match of \$36,000, is a paving grant that will allow us to pave the southern end of

South Maple Street and all of Panton Road. The paving will be done next spring. Notice was recently received that the PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) payment from the State, once projected at \$62,000, then adjusted to \$77,000 when the budget was adopted, is now estimated at \$82,046. As for the budget, Manager Hawley advised we are only into the year a few months and that it looks okay at this point. The line item for police supplies and equipment was questioned as it was already at 91 percent. Manager Hawley will check on that.

A report of the reconciliation for the swim team was made available by City Manager Hawley. Based on revenue from swim team registrations minus wages and associated costs for coaches, the swim team ended their year with a shortfall of \$1,827.77, he advised. The City Council allocated up to \$2,000 in financial support from the Watershed Recreation Reserve Fund should there be a shortfall. The transfer will be made, he advised. The budget for the operation of the swimming pool looks good with approximately \$10,000 available but we still have payroll, chemicals to buy, as well as costs associated with closing the pool for the summer. He advised this year they offered swimming lessons during the supper hour break and that increased lesson revenue. Mary Johnson Summer Program and the ISSP program still need to be reconciled for the season. Manager Hawley reported that both diving boards need to be replaced and he will likely come to the City Council with a request for funds.

MEIGS ROAD SEWER SERVICE: City Manager Hawley reported he has been working on this for a while and has finally found a solution that all parties have agreed to. A detailed map of existing conditions was distributed. Stanley Hotte has agreed to sign easements for anyone that currently does not have a deeded access nor needs access to the sewer force main that goes across his property. The right-of-way for the abandoned gravity line serving the Newton property and Leach property will be extinguished and they will access the sewer through the force main. Attorney Ouimette is preparing those documents.

DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES AND SEWER ASSESSMENTS: Delinquent tax collector Mel Hawley reported the delinquent property taxes are now down to \$44,000 but we still have until August 31<sup>st</sup> for collections that will affect our June 30<sup>th</sup> fund balance. The delinquent sewer assessments are \$32,688.

VERMONT GAS SYSTEMS: City Manager Hawley stated he was at a meeting at the Strong House Inn where Don Rendell, President of Vermont Gas Systems, spoke of some of the setbacks they have had. They are moving forward with Phase I and are hopeful the Public Service Board is going to grant them approval, he advised. The plan is that Middlebury will have natural gas by 2016 and only a portion of Vergennes will be on in that year. They are planning the bulk of their work in Vergennes for 2017. Alderman Lynn Donnelly will speak with Police Chief Merkel to see if there is anything we can do to make trucks hauling natural gas to use Route 17 when they are headed to New York.

OTHER: We had another overflow at the Macdonough Drive pump station last week, advised Mayor Benton. Alderman Klopfenstein stated he would like to see us be pro-active on this. Manager Hawley advised we are operating under a 1272 Order and are doing required dated items for compliance. This topic will be listed as an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting where the 1272 Order will be discussed.

ADJOURNMENT: At 6:45 p.m. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Jeff Fritz, with all voting in favor. The next regular City Council meetings will be held September 8<sup>th</sup> and September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jean Devereaux  
Vergennes City Clerk