

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 13, 2016
MINUTES

Mayor William Benton called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. at the Vergennes Fire Station meeting room located at 50 Green Street. Those in attendance were:

Mayor William Benton	Rick McDurfee
Senior Alderman Renny Perry	Andrew Fritz
Alderman Lynn Donnelly	Karen Kotecki
Alderman Lowell Bertrand	Tim Vachereau
Alderman Jeffrey Fritz	Lisa Casey
Alderman Mathew Chabot	Sue Rakowski
Alderman Mark Koenig	Sophie Pickens
City Manager Mel Hawley	
City Clerk Joan Devine	

VISITORS: Andrew Fritz, a member of the Bixby Memorial Free Library Board of Trustees, advised it was brought to their attention by Green Mountain Power that they were paying for a floodlight that is on a utility pole at the corner of Main Street and Macdonough Drive. Apparently, he stated, they have been paying for it since 1980 as the result of a lease. He reported the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to discontinue this service at the end of September. Mr. Fritz wanted the City Council to be aware of this in case they wanted to add a streetlight at this location. City Manager Hawley will investigate and consider having Green Mountain Power install a typical LED streetlight at this location.

WARRANT: The Warrant totaling \$768,479.45 for current fiscal year expenses was circulated for review and signatures of approval.

MINUTES: The minutes to the August 30, 2016 meeting were reviewed. On the second page under TENNIS COURT RESURFACING, the first sentence was replaced with “City Manager Hawley reported he received estimates for resurfacing the courts from \$7,689 to \$32,904 depending on the level of work plus an additional \$150 to \$500 for incorporating pickleball court lines.” Alderman Bertrand moved to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Alderman Donnelly, with all voting in favor.

ITINERANT VENDOR LICENSE: An application for an itinerant vendor license was submitted by One Hearth, who is located in Burlington. The license would allow them provide wood-fired pizza at the grand opening of Northern Daughters’ Gallery on Friday, September 16th from 5-8 p.m. Sophie Pickens, co-owner of Northern Daughters Gallery, advised One Hearth will bring a truck that will utilize 1-2 parking spaces in front of their business where they will cook the pizza and bring the food inside. Alderman Bertrand moved to approve the application, seconded by Senior Alderman Perry, with all voting in favor.

VERMONT GAS SYSTEMS – LICENSE AGREEMENT AND EASEMENTS: City Manager Hawley advised City Attorney James Ouimette feels that separate easements are not required as

such can be incorporated into the License Agreement. They are waiting for confirmation whether the distribution line needs to go across the back rear corner of the City Green. Also, the line going under Otter Creek toward the wastewater treatment plant may be within the Canal Street right-of-way. He advised that Alderman Donnelly's concern with "various streets" now references the map of all distribution lines. It has been confirmed that three properties will not have natural gas service available to them; all are located at the north end of Comfort Hill. City Manager Hawley advised he is looking for authorization from the City Council to sign the License Agreement with Vermont Gas Systems. He said he will not sign the document until he has received the performance bond, certificates of insurance, and a final review by the City Attorney. Alderman Donnelly expressed concern with the general liability and auto liability limits of coverage advising she carries that amount on her personal auto liability. City Manager Hawley explained those amounts cover damage that occurs while working in the City right-of-way and are not intended for catastrophic events but would contact the City's carrier for their input. If their limits are higher, he will revise the agreement accordingly. Senior Alderman Perry moved the City Manager be authorized to sign the agreement with Vermont Gas Systems pending review of the performance bond, certificates of insurance, and review by the City Attorney. Alderman Bertrand seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

CERTIFICATE OF NO APPEAL OR SUIT PENDING: A Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending for the 2015 grand list was prepared. Manager Hawley advised we were not sure at the last meeting if the 30-day time period had passed for an appeal by VV II Housing Associates, LP to the Supreme Court. He advised he has not heard back from them and we have not been notified of an appeal and recommended the City Council sign the certificate. The certificate was passed for signatures from the City Council and will also be signed by the Board of Listers.

SIDEWALK INVENTORY AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Mayor Benton advised the document prepared by the Planning Commission recommended the City Council solicit public opinion on sidewalk extension projects and the elimination of the sidewalk at the end of South Water Street. He stated that the Planning Commission may also want to participate or use this as part of one of their public forums. City Manager Hawley inquired if it was the City Council's desires to have the Planning Commission gather public input. Senior Alderman Perry felt the City Council should be determining priorities. Alderman Chabot agreed and felt basic repairs can and should be done without public input. Alderman Fritz asked how many years it would take to address the deteriorated sections of sidewalk. City Manager Hawley advised the \$10,000 in the budget is for materials only and therefore does not include the cost of labor. He said the cost would be much greater if done by outside contractors. He advised he will need sidewalk lengths for each repair to estimate the cost. Alderman Koenig stated a decision needs to be made on whether to discontinue the sidewalk on lower South Water Street before any repairs are made in that area.

WINTER PARKING BAN ORDINANCE: City Manager Hawley provided a report of property owners in the designated downtown district which identified the number of living units at each property and the number of off-street parking spaces associated with the respective parcel. The report revealed there are 107 living units and 370 off-street parking spaces. City Manager Hawley questioned whether winter parking is a City problem to solve or is it the property owners' problem. He also questioned whether there really is a problem for residents to secure

off-street parking during the ban. Senior Alderman Perry advised his concern lies with businesses that open before 6:30 a.m. City Manager Hawley stated that, unfortunately, the current ordinance has no flexibility. Mayor Benton suggested making it more flexible. Alderman Donnelly suggested telling the police officers not to ticket anyone unless there is snow; common sense judgement can take care of the rest. Senior Alderman Perry agreed with Alderman Donnelly regarding flexibility for the police. Mayor Benton suggested the current ordinance be distributed for review and possible areas of change. Andrew Fritz, a member of the Bixby Memorial Free Library Board of Trustees, advised they have discussed leasing off-street parking spaces to the public to raise funds to have their parking lot paved soon. He advised the City plows their parking lot and they would be interested in working with the City to get the lot paved.

TENNIS COURTS RESURFACING: City Manager Hawley stated the tennis courts did not have to be resurfaced this fall but if we are clear that we will not be doing that project he would like to tell the contractors that submitted proposals. Senior Alderman Perry advised if it was going to be much cheaper to do now he would support that or if they can not do it until next July, he again would support doing the courts now. Alderman Chabot supported the resurfacing be done sooner rather than later. Alderman Koenig wanted to wait until spring. Alderman Donnelly stated she would like to get the tennis courts done now and then do the pool. She was concerned with additional damage by waiting until spring. Aldermen Bertrand and Fritz supported doing the tennis courts this fall. Since there was a majority of the City Council supporting the work be done in the fall, Mayor Benton asked City Manager Hawley to proceed accordingly.

SWIMMING POOL INSPECTION: City Manager Hawley reported he contacted Tom Booska, owner of Pool World, on September 2nd and Mr. Booska advised he was busy but would get back to him by September 11th. City Manager Hawley advised he has not heard back. He reported that the pool had been partially drained and the main drainage valve has been replaced. He reported there is some patching needed in the far right hand corner of the toddler section. Public Works Supervisor Jim Larrow wants to hear from Tom Booska on the proper method to do the work. Alderman Koenig provided three proposals for an evaluation or inspection of the pool. He recommended the City Council select Aquatic Development Group at \$4,000 to do an inspection of the pool. Senior Alderman Perry revealed he wasn't aware we had a gunite swimming pool and stated he was not interested in suggestions from those who do not work on gunite pools. A professional inspection needs to be done and the operation of the pool also needs to be addressed, he advised. The pool is 50 years old so we need to create a plan and follow it. Senior Alderman Perry felt we need to empty the pool this fall. Although he was not sure where the money was coming from, he felt we needed the inspection. Alderman Chabot stated he has been holding out for Tom Booska but supports an inspection as soon as possible. Alderman Koenig again brought up the pool operation certification that is available for a pool director even though it is not required in Vermont. Alderman Fritz moved to engage Aquatic Development Group for the inspection at a cost of \$4,000 and that the inspection is conducted as soon as possible. Alderman Bertrand seconded the motion with all voting in favor.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Hawley reported the Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review, has determined that the house on Scovel Lane

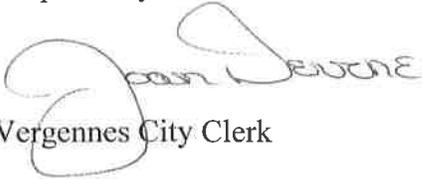
recently purchased by the Victory Baptist Church should remain taxable in the 2016 grand list. They concluded that as of April 1st the property was vacant so it is a taxable property for this year. VV II Housing Associates, LP is appealing their 2016 assessed value. The 1st quarter education taxes are included in the Warrant. The Police Department supplies and equipment expenditures were noted at 73 percent of budget.

City Manager Hawley advised the 2016 pool season has ended. He provided a report that reflected a negative fund balance of \$9,341.61. He noted that fees associated with the Mary Johnson Summer Program and the ISSP program through the Counseling Service of Addison County have not been received. We are also waiting for \$1,000 from the Champlain Valley Swim League for hosting the swim team league meet as well as the Sam Fishman Family annual donation of \$2,000. He pointed out that the valve replacement at the pool cost about \$5,500 will result in an even greater deficit. He recommended a Watershed Recreation Reserve Fund transfer of \$9,500 to cover the valve replacement (\$5,500) and the pool inspection (\$4,000); \$28,697.68 is available. He suggested this be on the next agenda.

Alderman Koenig inquired on the progress at the sewer department with the additional help. City Manager Hawley advised they have completed the inspection of most manholes on the west side of the city and reported some are in rough shape. They were not able to find two manholes in the trailer park but are continuing to look. He stated that they feel something is out there like a collapsed pipe as sod has been routinely found at the Macdonough Drive pump station. .

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m. by motion of Alderman Bertrand, seconded by Alderman Koenig, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Vergennes City Clerk