

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
OCTOBER 13, 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 Renny Perry  
Alderman Lowell Bertrand  
Alderman Jeffrey Fritz  
Alderman Lynn Donnelly

Alderman Joe Klopfenstein  
Alderman Michael Daniels  
City Manager Mel Hawley  
City Clerk Joan Devine  
Reporter Andy Kirkaldy

MINUTES: The minutes of the September 22nd meeting were amended under the City Manager's Report. Both references to "Mel" were replaced with City Manager Hawley. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Alderman Mike Daniels, with all voting in favor.

WARRANT: The warrant presented for approval in the amount of \$77,022.64 was circulated for review and signatures of approval.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - VERGENNES PARTNERSHIP: The draft Memorandum of Understanding between the City Council and the Board of Directors of the Vergennes Partnership, Inc. regarding use of the former police chief's office was deferred from the last meeting. Alderman Renny Perry, who is also the President of Vergennes Partnership, distributed the latest version of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Directors of Vergennes Partnership and the Board of Directors of Friends of Vergennes Opera House regarding their access through the so-called "ticket booth" which is agreeable by both parties. Manager Hawley advised he met with representatives of the Vergennes Partnership, Amy Bodette Barr and Connie Houston, last week to discuss renovations that will be needed for the former police chief's office and the ticket booth. He reported they have agreed to leave a half-wall between the two spaces, the flooring will be replaced, and lighting upgraded with hopeful financial assistance through Efficiency Vermont. It is hoped that this project can be completed within the constraints of the budget, advised Manager Hawley. The electrical demolition requires a licensed electrician, he stated, and there is also potential Northlands Job Corps assistance with the project. Alderman Daniels has also agreed to work on the project. Alderman Perry stated the Vergennes Partnership can also be involved with the project with volunteers. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to authorize City Manager Hawley to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the City Council and the Board of Directors of Vergennes Partnership upon receipt of a signed copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Directors of Friends of Vergennes Opera House and the Board of Directors of Vergennes Partnership and proof of insurance. The motion was seconded by Alderman Renny Perry with all voting in favor.

CITY HALL OFFICE RENOVATION PROJECT: Mayor Benton stated that Manager Hawley will continue to work on what renovations are needed to make the old police station functional as a meeting room.

APPOINTMENT TO ACRPC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Manager Hawley advised Greg Edwards moved out of Vergennes a while ago and we have been looking for a replacement ever since. Planning Commission Chair Shannon Hagggett has helped out with recruitment and they have found a candidate. Manager Hawley recommended the appointment of Brent Rakowski as the City's representative on the Addison County Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee. He also reported there may be conflicts with Mr. Rakowski's schedule that will prevent him

from attending all the meetings so when that happens he will be a more active alternate. Alderman Daniels moved to make the appointment as recommended by Manager Hawley, seconded by Alderman Lowell Bertrand, with all voting in favor.

RESIGNATION OF ALDERMAN: Mayor Benton read a letter from Alderman Joe Klopfenstein announcing his resignation effective December 1, 2015. Alderman Klopfenstein is moving out of state and will no longer be eligible to serve on the City Council. The City Council must fill this vacancy by appointing someone to serve until the Annual City Meeting in March 2016. City Clerk Devine will post a notice of vacancy and have it published in the Addison Independent and posted on Front Porch Forum. Citizens interested in this position need to send a letter to Mayor Benton and deliver it to City Hall by November 5, 2015.

BIXBY LIBRARY REQUEST: Alderman Perry requested permission to serve alcohol on City property as part of a fundraiser for the Bixby Library. He explained that four couples will do the preparation, cook, and serve a dinner for a private party of twelve at the Bixby Library on Halloween night. Alcoholic beverages are included as part of the dinner. This private dinner was auctioned and \$1,800 was raised, he advised. In accordance with the City Ordinance, a letter of authorization from the Bixby Library Board of Trustees must be submitted with this request. Alderman Renny Perry moved to approve serving of alcohol at the Bixby Library contingent upon receipt of a letter from the Bixby Library Board of Trustees. The motion was seconded by Alderman Lowell Bertrand. City Manager Hawley advised, according to Vermont Department of Liquor Control Regulations, the only time it is legal to serve alcoholic beverages without a license is in your primary residence. For an event such as this, a licensed caterer with a certificate of insurance would be necessary or attendees at the event could bring their own alcohol for consumption. A vote on the motion showed all to be in favor.


CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: City Manager Hawley reported the Police Department budget continues to be of concern to him and Chief Merkel is aware of that. The rest of the departments are fine, he advised. Alderman Daniels pointed out that the American flag on the City Green needs to be replaced and the tree adjacent to the pole needs to be trimmed or taken down. He also pointed out that if an American flag is displayed at night, it should be lit.

TODDLER PLAYGROUND LAWSUIT: VLCT's Amicus Brief Policy states that they only consider submitting an amicus brief when the case has been decided by a trial level court, advised Manager Hawley.

CAPITAL PROJECTS AND SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS: A report reflecting the respective balances in the various funds was reviewed. Manager Hawley advised some funds have policies adopted by the City Council regarding allocations, some do not need a policy as the purpose is established by state statutes, and others could use a policy. The Donnelly Fund was discussed and City Clerk Devine was asked to communicate with school officials to make them aware that this is a fund that could be used to purchase winter clothing for needy students.

ADJOURNMENT: At 6:55 p.m. Alderman Lowell Bertrand moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Joe Klopfenstein, with all voting in favor. The next regular City Council meeting will be held October 27<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Vergennes City Clerk