

VERGENNES CITY COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 11, 2014
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 Clerk Joan Devine
Deputy Mayor Randall Ouellette	Police Chief George Merkel
Alderman Michael Daniels	Sophia Bowen
Alderman Renny Perry	David Bowen
Alderman Lowell Bertrand	JoAn Canning, ANWSU
Alderman Lynn Donnelly	Sierra Bertrand
City Manager Mel Hawley	T. Christopher Pettibon

HEAR VISITORS: Sophia Bowen advised she and her son, David, were in attendance to observe the meeting. David is working on a badge for Boy Scouts and will also have to interview someone on the City Council at the end.

ADDISON NORTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION DISTRICT: JoAn Canning, the new Superintendent of Schools, was present to update the City Council on progress they have been making. JoAn reported they have hired Tonya Mears as the new business manager and feel they are heading in the right direction. She advised they are working on their budget and another deficit is expected for FY13 so tough decisions will need to be made. She reported she has asked the Board for direction on whether to keep the proposed budget within a certain tax rate or whether to base it on a percentage increase. The results from the recent audit will be discussed with the public in December, she advised. Manager Hawley stated the FY12 deficit is what caused the sizeable tax increase this year and inquired if the FY13 deficit was lower. JoAn advised they had planned for a deficit this year but the actual deficit ended up higher than FY12. JoAn reported that, by law, an audit will need to be done every year now. They have sent out a request for proposal to 20 auditing firms. Alderman Lynn Donnelly expressed her pleasure with having JoAn on board as she is a breath of fresh air to our schools.

2004 FORD EXPLORER: Police Chief George Merkel reported the 2004 Ford Explorer, loaned to the Vergennes Police Department by the Addison County Sheriff's Department, has arrived and is in operation. It is understood when the police department no longer has a use for this vehicle, it will be returned to the Sheriff's Department. Chief Merkel reported the vehicle has been painted to match our other vehicles, decaled, a truck scale rack installed, a new radar system put in, and the computer and its stand installed. We are waiting on a spotlight, a partition to the rear, and a few other small items, he advised. This vehicle will be used primarily by Officer Brent Newton who has completed round 2 of the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement training that is paid for by the State. At 6:17 p.m. the meeting was recessed to go outside to look at the vehicle. The meeting was called back to order at 6:25 p.m.

CITY HALL FIRST FLOOR SPACE ASSESSMENT: Christopher Pettibon discussed proposed changes to drawings A-1, A-2, and A-3 that included a location for a new furnace when needed, a future provision for an elevator serving all floors, and a new waiting area. Manager Hawley, City Clerk Devine and Mr. Pettibon will meet again to finalize details on proposed changes.

MINUTES: Minutes to the October 28th meeting were approved as written on a motion by Alderman Michael Daniels, seconded by Alderman Lowell Bertrand, with all voting in favor.

WARRANT: The Warrant totaling \$105,955.94 was circulated for review and signatures of approval.

ADDISON COUNTY RIVER WATCH COLLABORATIVE: A request for \$400 in continued support was received from Addison County River Watch Collaboration (ACRWC). Manager Hawley advised he supports what they do; routine testing of the water quality of Otter Creek downstream of the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant is important. He inquired if this expense should be put into the budget just like Green-Up Day as it comes to the City Council every year. Manager Hawley advised he will invite Matt Witten of ACRWC to the December meeting for an update. Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to pay the \$400 requested, seconded by Alderman Lowell Bertrand, with all voting in favor.

TODDLER PLAYGROUND: Manager Hawley reported he will be going to his third Vergennes Union Elementary School Board meeting on Monday and is hopeful for definitive action from them regarding the location of the toddler playground adjacent to the ice rink/basketball courts.

CITY ORDINANCE REVIEW: Alderman Renny Perry reported he is working on Chapters 1, 2, 7, 11, 15 and 16 of the City Ordinances. He has completed and has ready for review by the City Council Chapters 1, 7 and 15. Manager Hawley will research the law regarding needed public hearings and how long it takes before they become effective after adoption.

BUDGET REPORT: Manager Hawley reported the Police Department budget is in good shape; we have about \$100,000 in grants for payroll available to us. The Public Works Department has bought most of the salt and sand we will need this winter and has most of it stored in Ferrisburgh. They have also enlarged and paved the parking lot at Vergennes Falls Park.

SEWERLINE EXTENSION AGREEMENT: City Manager Hawley reported John Dunleavy, Assistant Attorney General for the Vermont Agency of Transportation, has approved as to form the proposed Sewer Extension Agreement for the Vergennes-Ferrisburgh Park & Ride Welcome Center. Once the \$107,876.00 connection fee is deposited into the City's account the originals will be returned to him, he advised.

He went on to advise that Denecker Chevrolet had their Act 250 hearing but he is not sure where it all ended. If Tom Denecker still wants to connect to our sewer system he needs to make contact with us so an attorney can draw up an agreement for review. Everything is time sensitive if this is going to the voters in March, he advised. Mayor Benton advised he would like compensation for the upfront costs for our attorney to draw up the agreement. Manager Hawley suggested waiting until Tom Denecker gets his Act 250 permit. It was the consensus that Manager Hawley will talk with Tom Denecker regarding the timetable if an article is going to be on the ballot in March.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:20 p.m. Senior Alderman Randall Ouellette moved to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Lowell Bertrand, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Vergennes City Clerk