

CITY OF VERGAS
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, September 10, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at the Vergas Event Center and on Zoom for a hybrid regular council meeting with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn; Council Members: Dean Haarstick, Paul Pinke and Natalie Fischer. Absent: Bruce Albright. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers; Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; Editor Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum; Attorney Tom Winters; Engineer Blaine Green; and Citizens: Kelly Posch, Cal Miller, James Stenger, Rosemary Sandua, Marcia Huddleston, Danny Colosky, Ross Jenson, Jerry Johnson, Neil Strawhorn, Mark Jorgenson, Bruce Nereson, Janice Nereson, Dwight Lundgren, John Sieling, Mike Strege, JoAnne Knuttila and Carol Sharp.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn opened public input meeting.

Ross Jenson, President Lake Runners Trail Association presented plan to have trail come into town on County Road 4, turn onto County Road 35, turn onto County Road 36, turn onto Townline Road and continue onto Scharf and meeting up with Frazee Avenue. The snowmobiles will stay off the south side of Scharf and use the north side only. This is the best trail they could come up with to come into Vergas and use the businesses.

Danny Colosky, Vice President Lake Runners Trail Association reviewed the trail area and stated the snowmobiles would stay on the gravel pit side of the road. They are open to whatever works the best for the citizens of Vergas. This trail would join up with the existing Ultra Detroit Lakes Trail.

Rosemary Sandua explained she lives along Townline Road, and they would want snowmobiles to stay out of their yard and field. Colosky asked if they would stay in the road right of way how would she feel. Colosky explained they would groom the trail in the ditch, and they can put up no trespassing signs to have people stay out of yard. Jenson stated they want riders to stay on the trail.

DuFrane explained he does maintenance for the city and was concerned with where the groomed snow would go. DuFrane has concerns with the groomer making ice on the road as he has had issues with the Ultra Club by the lagoons. Ross stated the groomer could skip the area of the trail. Colosky stated they can make sure the area is not groomed.

Discussed where snowmobiles are currently riding.

Carol Sharp questioned how the snowmobiles get off Long Lake. Colosky stated the trail never goes onto a lake. Overall concern that Scharf is narrow road difficult for 2-way traffic and speed has picked up on Scharf.

Mark Jorgenson stated he has worked with the trails for over 25 years and worked for the City of Fergus Falls and it is easier to tell snowmobilers where they should go. Jerry Jacobson questioned why the snowmobilers could come straight down County Road (Pelican Avenue). The ditch along Scharf is steep and it will not be possible to ride in the ditch. Colosky stated where they cannot run in the ditch they will run on the road.

The Perham Club meets up with the Lake Runners trail by Maplewood State Park, so it is a lot of riders coming to Vergas. The City of Fergus Falls manages it by if there is curb and gutter stay on the road if it is rural road they drive in the ditch. Otter Country Trails which maintain the Lake Runners Trail has 364 miles of trail.

Neil Strawhorn stated currently the snowmobiles come down the ditch and across Lawrence Lake. He is concerned that if the trail is on south side there are 5 accesses, and he would prefer it to stay on the north side.

Jenson stated they are open to change the trail to where the city would like it.

Colosky asked the citizens in attendance would they like to see the path come down County Road 4 (Pelican Avenue). Dwight Lundgren stated that soon there will be a bike path along Pelican Avenue. Jorgenson stated that the county has given them permission to use bike paths for snowmobiles. Trails are not groomed until there is 15 inches of snow. Season is December 1 to March 31.

Cal Miller who lives on Scharf by the laundromat questioned, if there is a lot of traffic the snowmobiles will be forced into his yard. Who is responsible for damage? Colosky stated the snowmobile club would collaborate with owners regarding

damage. How many club members are there, how many snowmobiles are we talking? This is difficult to answer as it depends on the amount of snow in a year and what specials Billy's is having. On a good snow day there could be 35-50 snowmobiles.

John Sieling stated he has been to a lot of these meetings and recommended having someone in the city designated to represent the city with the club and make sure the signs are correctly distributed.

Discussed options of Pelican Avenue.

Bruhn closed the public comment meeting and thanked everyone for coming. There will not be a vote on this tonight to give Council time to consider and for Pelican Avenue residents know what is being discussed.

CITY OF VERGAS
COUNCIL MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, September 10, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:45 pm, on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at the Vergas Event Center and on Zoom for a hybrid regular council meeting with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn; Council Members: Dean Haarstick, Paul Pinke and Natalie Fischer. Absent: Bruce Albright. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers; Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; Editor Bob Williams of the Fraze-Vergas Forum; Attorney Tom Winters; Engineer Blaine Green; and Citizens: Kelly Posch, Cal Miller, James Stenger, Marcia Huddleston, Jordan Grossman, JoAnne Knuttila and Alex Ohman.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

Citizens' Concerns

None.

Agenda Additions and Deletions

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve the agenda with the deletion of Park Trail Vehicle Request and the following additions to the consent agenda; Personnel/Budget Meeting and certified utility letter to Count. New addition Lights at the Municipal Building. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve the following consent agenda:

Council Minutes of August 14, 2024

Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$69,263.89.

Liquor Store bills for July 2024 totaling \$90,241.74.

Late water/sewer bills

Certification of utility bill to taxes.

2024 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule

General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account

2024 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances

Committee Report: Personnel/Budget committee

Motion passed unanimously.

Lake Runners Trail Assn Request

Council stated they would like Lammers to have notices given to Pelican Avenue and Sunset Strip addresses stating they may have the trail along County Road 4.

Municipal Building Lights

JoAnne Knuttila, A Step Up Thrift Boutique stated the stairs area where the door was moved needs a light as the area is very dark. The main area is also not very bright and would like this addressed as there are auditing building. Bruhn stated they would discuss this Monday at the municipal building committee meeting. We do not have the energy audit results back yet, but we are looking at LED lighting and adding a light at the bottom of the stairs. Knuttila stated there are items left on the list they would still like to complete and does she need to get approval to do them. Approval is needed before any work can be completed in the rental space. Knuttila provide a list of items she is planning by 1 pm on Monday, September 16, 2024 the committee will discuss.

Committee Reports

Streets/Sidewalk/Yard Waste

Pinke reviewed Street/Sidewalk/yard waste meeting minutes of August 28, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Request for Widseth Engineering to provide plans and specifications repaving and grading project downtown alley and parking lot. Greene stated the plans and specifications can be completed this winter. Green stated he would like to bid in March and have construction start early May. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to proceed with Widseth to prepare plans and specifications for paving project around 140 E Linden and 111 Main Street. Motion passed unanimously.

Park

Minutes from August 22, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office) stated they would like to replace the camera we have in the ballfield with one that covers the pickleball court. DuFrane stated they are not ready to move forward with the camera at this time.

Event Center

Pinke reviewed minutes of Event Center Advisory Board held on July 23, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve resignation of Bev Flateland. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to purchase handrails from Ness for the front of the Event Center. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussed reduced rate form provided to the City Office on July 24, 2024. Board was emailed form, but majority of board did not comment on email. Vergas Loonies applied for a reduced rate at the Event Center to only pay for the event center during the event and be allowed to set up the day before at no cost. Pinke stated this may cause other groups to request this like the Lion's and Community Club. Fischer questioned Pinke regarding what the committee was doing to increase rental at the event center. Event Center costs are rising, and the City has put in a number of improvements to the building; but the rental of the building is declining. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to allow reduced rate on the building for the Vergas Loonies Fashion Show event but will need to further review in the future. Motion passed unanimously.

Planning Commission

Lammers reviewed the Planning Commission meeting held August 26, 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office). Discussed the current chicken ordinance and changing it to allow the following:

1. No more than four (4) chickens shall be kept on the premises;
2. Chickens shall be kept in a coop or attached coop run/enclosed at all times;
3. No roosters shall be kept on the premises;
4. The premises must be located in a Single and Two-Family Residential (R-1) or Limited Multiple-Family Residential (R-2) zoning district; and
5. The premises must have a parcel of at least five thousand (5,000) square feet.

Motion by Fisher, seconded by Pinke to hold a public hearing regarding chickens in the Ordinance 91.04 Farm Animals on Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 6 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve Lakeshore Management Ordinance 2024-002 (complete copy of ordinance located at the city office) to approve the ordinance as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

EDA/HRA

Jordan Grossman, CEDA representative for the City of Vergas requested permission from the Council to apply for the Community Development Grant from Otter Tail County for \$25,000 for grants EDA would give out to local businesses as the Vergas EDA has decided. This is a matching grant, and the match will come from Vergas Committee Club (\$5,000), and the CEDA grant for \$15,000. We are still looking for another donation of \$5,000. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve resolution authorizing the City of Vergas EDA to apply for the Otter Tail County Community Development Grant. (complete copy of resolution located at the city office). Motion passed unanimously.

2025 General Fund Budget

Lammers reviewed proposed fee schedule that is not ready to be approved as committees still need to review.

Bruhn reviewed the proposed budget, committees provided requested budgets and if all committees received their request the budget would raise by 46%. The budget committee reviewed all areas of the budget, taking a look at priorities with the comprehensive plan and with cuts to all departments they are proposing at this time a 9.19% increase in the budget. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve resolution regarding preliminary budget (complete copy of resolution located at the city office) for \$296,169.00. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Utilities Superintendent

DuFrane stated the Scharf and Diane Avenues slopes are being corrected this week. DuFrane thanked Council for sending him and Matt to the training with MN Rural Water it was hands on training which is the best kind of training.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

The written report provided by Lammers. Lammers provided the copy of the draft ordinance for cannabis. The City will need to make a decision if they want to adopt the County Ordinance and allow them to oversee it or does the city want to have its own Cannabis ordinance. Planning Commission has recommended any cannabis store be in the commercial district of Vergas.

Information & Announcements

Trainings:

1. Clerks Advanced Academy- September 19-20, 2024 (Lammers)

Events:

1. Hairy Man, Sept. 28, 2024

Adjournment

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Vergas Clerk-Treasurer
Julie Lammers, CMC