

CITY OF VERGAS
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, November 12, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 5:45 pm on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at the Vergas Event Center and on Zoom for a hybrid public hearing of the council with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn; Council Members: Dean Haarstick, Bruce Albright, Paul Pinke and Natalie Fischer. Absent: None. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers; Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; and Citizens: Dwight Lundgren and Bobby DeWolfe.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn opened the public hearing to discuss Tax Abatement for David & Pam Johnston.

The Hearing included information regarding the tax abatement encouraging homes to be built by citizens wanting to homestead in Vergas. This program gives a tax incentive of up to \$5,000 in tax refund for up to 5 years on the home built on property. This will increase the tax market value of Vergas for years to come.

Public Hearing Closed at 5:49 p.m.

CITY OF VERGAS
PUBLIC INPUT MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, November 12, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at the Vergas Event Center and on Zoom for a hybrid public input session on the energy grant of the council with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn; Council Members: Dean Haarstick, Bruce Albright, Paul Pinke and Natalie Fischer. Absent: None. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers; Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; Editor Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum and Citizens: Dwight Lundgren, Dan Handeen, Jan Jackola, Garrett Mosiman, Molly Zins and Bobby DeWolfe.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn opened the public input meeting at 6:00 pm.

Bruhn briefed on the energy grant for the City of Vergas regarding municipal building efficiency. A large part of this project is collecting energy consumption data, energy audit and building audit. .

Dan Handeen, Architect with University of MN Center for Sustainable Research. presented the preliminary date for the for the Government Services Building, Fire Hall, Event Center and the Municipal Building. Energy assessments were conducted by looking at gas and electric consumption. Anticipate completion of data analysis in January. Final outcome of the project is an energy action plan.

Public input meeting at 6:32 p.m.

COUNCIL MINUTES
VERGAS EVENTS CENTER & ZOOM
Tuesday, November 12, 2024

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:33 pm, on Tuesday, November 12, 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, Bruce Albright and Natalie Fischer. Absent: none. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers; Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; Liquor Store Manager Kyle Theisen, Editor Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum; and Citizens: Dwight Lundgren, Jordan Grossman, Mark Jorgensen, Danny Coloski, Ross Jenson and JoAnne Knuttela.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

Canvas the Vote

Lammers provided council members with the election results from Otter Tail County; Mayor Dwight Lundgren 118 and Julie Bruhn 108 votes and 5 write ins, Council Members Bruce Albright 114 votes, James Stenger 109 votes, Natalie Fischer 91 votes, Rebecca Hasse 62 votes and Connie Lee 37 votes and 1 write in. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Haarstick to approve the vote. Motion approved unanimously.

Citizens' Concerns

None.

Agenda Additions and Deletions

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

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

- A. Council Minutes of the October 8, 2024
- B. Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$45,542.99.
- C. Liquor Store bills for October 2024 totaling \$74,327.40.
- D. Late water/sewer bills.
- E. 2024 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule
- F. General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account
- G. 2024 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances
- H. TIP-Ottertail Chapter - LG230 Application to Conduct Off-site Gambling
- I. Chicken Permit Application
- J. Mayor's Thank you (202302024) listing
- k. Committee Reports: Park Advisory Board, Event Center.

Motion passed unanimously.

Tax Rebate

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the tax abatement for parcel 82000990263000 for \$5,000 or 5 years whichever comes first for real estate taxes related to the residential building improvements on said property. Motion passed unanimously.

Lake Runners Trail Assn Request

The council reviewed both Townline/Scharf route and County Road 4 route. Street committee recommended Townline/Scharf route because as from a safety perspective this makes the most sense. The point of contact for the City of Vergas is Julie Lammers, Clerk-Treasurer, Trail contact is Ross Jenson, President of Lake Runners Trail Association. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Albright to approve the Townline/Scharf route. Motion passed unanimously.

Street Closing – Nov 30, 2024 – Small Town Christmas

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to close Main Street from 12 pm to 7 pm on November 30, 2024 for the Small-Town Christmas celebration. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

EDA/HRA

CEDA Representative Jordan Grossman reviewed the Business Façade improvement program and funding being offered through the EDA.

Liquor Store/Municipal Building/License Committee

Lammers provided an estimate from Zitzow Electric to replace one light and add a light in the stairway area and to replace the lights with LED lights. The funds for this project would come from the liquor store and Theisen stated he would need to look at numbers before he could state if this would come from 2024 or 2025. We will have Otter Tail Power audit rebate from energy audit. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to proceed with lighting project and Lammers and Theisen will look at scheduling, budget and rebates and use their discretion to do in either 24 or 25. Motion passed unanimously.

Lammer reviewed the furnace at the Step Up where merchandizing items and bags had been placed against the furnace. The furnace fan motor burned out due to shredded plastic bags. Both Lammers and Theisen have spoken with Step Up owners regarding keeping items away from the furnace. Knuttela said that she spoke with Theisen regarding items by furnace, but it was after we had the issues with the furnace. Motion by Albright, seconded by Hanson to pay Hanson's invoice of \$944.26. Motion passed unanimously. Discussed the costs of these updates and renting at \$550 a month is not paying the bills for the building and the City will need to look at raising the rent.

Personnel

Albright reviewed personnel meeting minutes of November 4 2024 (minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office) . Recommended changing the Event Center Coordinator and the Deputy Clerk positions. Currently working on the 2025 pay table. Bruhn noted to defer until pay table is established and can more accurately look at the cost impact. Fischer stated we do not have any backup for Lammers, and we need to plan for the future.

Streets/Sidewalk/Yard Waste

Albright reviewed Street/Sidewalk/yard waste meeting minutes of October 29, 2024(minutes available at the Vergas City Clerk's Office) . Lammers to bring lighting agreement to December meeting. The right-of- way project for E Lake Street needs to proceed and we are waiting for the city attorney to provide documents. Albright stated street signs need to be installed on Scharf Ave and Glenn St for 30 miles an hour. DuFrane will take care of getting signs. Reviewed utility permit needed for utilities and associated with projects in town. Motion by Haarstick, seconded by Pinke to combine a right-of-way permit and utility permit for \$350.00. Motion passed unanimously.

Planning Commission

Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the updated zoning map presented by the planning commission. Motion passed unanimously. Albright stated that all Council members should review changes to ordinances affecting the council and get changes to Lammers. The Planning Commission is going through and reviewing changes and then it will be updated, and a public hearing will be held.

Council Workshop Recommendations

Minutes were presented and no action was taken.

Staff Reports

Clerk-Treasurer Report

The written report provided by Lammers. Safety committee expenses from the League of Minnesota is being raised by 5%.

Liquor Store Manager

Theisen provided the 3rd quarter financial data for the liquor store. Connie Lee resigned due to low wages. Motion

by Albright, seconded by Pinke to accept Connie Lee's resignation. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Haarstick, seconded by Pinke to transfer \$25,000 to the general fund. Motion passed unanimously.

Utilities Superintendent

The boardwalk has been repaired and it is now open.

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