**CITY OF VERNDALE**

**WADENA COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday December 14, 2020**

**Following Public Hearing**

**Verndale City Hall**

**101 Brown St SW**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  James Ackerson, Ardith Carr, Tara Erckenbrack, Raye Ludovissie, Jim Runyan

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:**  Michael Madsen, Fire Chief; Cory Carr, Police Chief; Matt Uselman, Public Works Manager; Melissa Current, City Clerk/Treasurer

**STAFF ABSENT**: None

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Tahna Rurup, Family Life Church; Trinity Gruenberg, Verndale Sun; Clif Allen, Moore Engineering; Jesse Finck

**OPENING PRAYER:** The opening prayer was led by Tahna Rurup, Family Life Church.

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND DECEMBER PAYABLES**

A motion was made by Carr to approve the November 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes and the November 12, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve the December payables in the amount of $16,925.42, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

**ACKNOWLEDGE VISITORS**

**Ronda Kern – Lakes Country Insurance**: Current stated that Kern wasn’t coming to the meeting so she would cover her items. Current stated that the City needs to sign a Liability Waiver for 2021 for insurance and decide to waive or not waive the monetary limits on municipal tort liability. Current stated that in the past the Council had not waived.

A motion was made by Carr to not waive the monetary limits on municipal tort liability, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

Current stated that the League of MN Cities evaluated the buildings so Kern needs to know which amount the City wants to insure the buildings for; the 2020 values or the 2021 values.

A motion was made by Runyan to keep the insurance values the same as last year (use 2020 values), seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

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**Clif Allen - Moore Engineering:** Allen stated that bid opening for the water tower project was Friday December 11; there were three companies that submitted bids. Allen stated that they are recommending that the contract go to the lowest bidder which was Maguire Iron, Inc. with a bid of $798,500.00 contingent on Rural Development approval and attorney approval. Ludovissie asked what happens if they go over their bid. Allen stated that that is why there is a contract and the contract has a lot of very clear requirements. Ackerson asked about Change Orders. Allen stated that Water Towers are much less likely to need Change Orders as they are a much more straight forward project.

A motion was made Runyan to approve the Notice of Award for Maguire Iron, Inc. in the amount of $798,500.00, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

Allen stated that meters are separated from the tower and are under $100,000 so they went out for quotes instead of bids. Allen stated that four (4) quotes were received; the City can take some time to break down the quotes and decide which company to go with. Allen stated that at the final walk-through inspection MN Department of Health required the installation of some small curbs to protect water from running into the hatches above the potable water storage tanks. Allen stated that this resulted in needing Change Order #7 in the amount of $5,272.00, which he recommended approval.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve Change Order #7 in the amount of $5,272.00, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

Allen stated that when meters were added to the scope of the Water Tower Project the professional services contract was never amended accordingly. Allen stated that he has Amendment #2 to the Owner-Engineer Agreement in the amount of $17,500.00, which he requested approval.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve Amendment #2 to the Owner-Engineer Agreement in the amount of $17,500.00, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

Allen stated that now that the Water Tower Project has reached the bidding and award period, he is submitting an invoice in the amount of $82,000.00 for professional services including the Studies and Report, Preliminary Design and Final Design services.

A motion was made by Carr to approve the Moore Engineering Invoice in the amount of $82,000.00, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

Allen stated that all of the DEED issues are working out. Allen stated that the City was required to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with SHPO and Rural Development in October 2020 that obligated the City to provide further study for the State Historical Office. Allen stated that the City should expect additional costs for the study to be approximately $15,000.00.

**Jesse Finck:** Finck asked if Lee Brekke from the Assessor’s Office was around. Council stated no. Current stated that he comes to the Board of Equalization meeting that is usually held in April. Finck stated that he had an issue with his appraisal and will come back in April.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

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**FIRE DEPARTMENT – MIKE MADSEN-FIRE CHIEF-** Madsen stated that there were 5 calls for the month; 2 medical, 3 fire. Madsen stated that he was elected Chief again and Ryan Schmitz was elected secretary. Madsen stated that he needed approval.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve Mike Madsen as Chief and Ryan Schmitz as Secretary, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

Madsen stated that he didn’t change the officers this year as they worked very well as an officer group. Madsen asked for approval of the officers as follows: Assistant Chief, Steve Schmitz; 2nd Assistant Chief,

Louis Wegscheid; 1st Captain, Nate Witthuhn; 2nd Captain, Tyler Fisher; Lieutenant, Keith Weiher; Safety Officer, Erick Anderson.

A motion was made by Runyan to approve the Fire Department Officers, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC.

Madsen asked the Council if there was any word on a holiday parade. Council stated no. Madsen stated that one of his guys asked if the Fire Department could have Santa ride on a Fire Truck and drive him around. Council agreed that if someone is interested in having a parade that would be great. Madsen stated that if they get something put together, he will put it out there.

**LIQUOR STORE - MELISSA CURRENT-** Current stated the Liquor Store is open on Fridays and Saturdays from 2:00 pm – 8:00 pm for Off-Sale. Current stated that they are waiting to hear from the Governor for an opening date for On-Sale; he is scheduled to make a decision on Wednesday. Current stated that a date needed to be set to complete Liquor inventory; this has been done on New Year’s Day in the past. The Liquor Committee agreed to perform the Inventory on New Year’s Day (January 1) at a time determined by the Shift Supervisor.

**POLICE-CHIEF CARR-** Ludovissie asked Chief Carr if it was quiet.Chief Carr stated yes, it’s getting cold. Council stated that the properties that they had concerns about had been cleaned up.

**PUBLIC WORKS- MATT USELMAN-MANAGER-** Uselman stated that the City was successful at getting the winning bid for the snow plow truck which was $40,200.00. Uselman stated that the proposed Cemetery Bylaws are attached and ready for approval if Council sees fit. There was discussion about a couple of the bylaws. Uselman stated that he would post the bylaws all over at the Cemetery so that they are visible. Current stated she would publish the bylaws in the paper and have them on the City website.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve the Cemetery Bylaws, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

Uselman stated that the old plow truck is in need of some repairs to the fuel lines and asked for approval. Uselman stated that it would be nice to use both trucks for hauling snow. Council asked Uselman to get a quote of how much the repairs would be and bring it to the next meeting. Uselman stated that there may be an Apprentice program coming soon through Minnesota Rural Water Association that the City could

use to get Graba licensed. Uselman stated that this program would help the City pay wages. Uselman

stated that he will be on vacation the last week of the year. Uselman stated that at the budget meeting the Council talked about increasing Graba’s wage by $1 starting in December for having his CDL; Uselman

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asked for approval.

A motion was made by Runyan to approve increasing the wage for Chase Graba by $1 per hour starting December 1, 2020, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

**CLERK/TREASURER- MELISSA CURRENT**- Current stated that the City needs to decide who will be paying for the TIF District – the proposal letter stated that either the City or Developer would be responsible for the fees. There was discussion about what has been done in the past and if the TIF District would benefit anyone else.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack for the developer to be responsible for paying for the TIF District, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

Current stated that the Board of Appeal and Equalization online Training is available until Feb. 1, 2021- Erckenbrack and Carr are trained already. Current stated that the City has received the draft copy of the

Code of Ordinances and the Legal and Editorial Research and Report from American Legal that needs to be returned by Feb. 24, 2021. Current asked the Council if they wanted to set up a special meeting to go through the recommendations and questions. Council will decide on a date at the December 21 meeting. Ludovissie asked about the Winter running water credit. Current stated that council normally offers this and starts it at Uselman’s discretion.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve offering the Winter Running Water Credit with the start and end dates at Matt Uselman’s discretion, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

Current stated that Jim Maas called asking for a partial refund on his liquor license for the months that he didn’t own Maasconni’s. Current asked for the Council’s opinion. Council discussed if the City would prorate the license fee. Council agreed that the license was paid for by the year by the business, it was not double paid, so if Maas wants the fee prorated, he will need to take it up with the new owners. Current stated that the final meeting for 2020 is Dec. 21 at 6:00 pm. Current asked Council to turn in any Committee meetings that they want to be paid for. Ackerson asked if Current kept track of the meetings. Current stated no, she wouldn’t know about all the meetings. Current state that she will be on out of the office December 24-January 3 to spend Christmas break with her kids; she will be in the office December 28 since there is payroll that day. Carr asked Current about swearing in the new officers at the December 21 meeting as she will be gone for the council meeting in January so there wouldn’t be a quorum. Current stated that she would check with the League of MN Cities.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Main Street Business Store Front: Current stated that she didn’t receive a business plan from the individual yet so it is on hold.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

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1. Amendment to Ordinance 18 – Ludovissie asked if this is the law now. Current stated yes.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve the amendment to Ordinance 18 which replaces the age of 18 with 21 to buy tobacco and tobacco products, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC.

1. Resolution 20-1214 – Accepting a Donation from the Verndale Lions

A motion was made by Carr to approve Resolution 20-1214 - A Resolution Accepting a Donation from the Verndale Lions in the amount of $351.95 for their building fund, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC.

1. Resolution 20-1214A – Final Levy

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve Resolution 20-1214A – Resolution Approving Final 2020 Tax Levy Collectable in 2021, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

1. Resolution 20-1214B – Setting Assessments for Services Rendered

A motion was made by Carr to approve Resolution 20-1214B – Resolution Setting Assessments for Services Rendered by the City of Verndale, Minnesota, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

1. Resolution 20-1214C – Combining Parcels – Hanlon

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve Resolution 20-1214C – Resolution Combining Parcels 21-330-0100, 21-330-0070 and 21-330-0010 for Kevin Hanlon, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

1. Resolution 20-1214D – Combining Parcels – Rousslang

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve Resolution 20-1214D – Resolution Combining Parcels 21-030-5100, 21-030-5080 and 21-030-5090 for John and Lindi Rousslang, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

1. Resolution 20-1214E – Combining Parcels – Finck

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve Resolution 20-1214E – Resolution Combining Parcels 21-330-0280 and 21-330-0440 for Eugene and Vicky Finck, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

1. Tobacco License - Verndale Liquor

A motion was made by Carr to approve a Tobacco License for Verndale Liquor for 2021, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

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1. Liquor License - On-Off Sale – Verndale Liquor

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve an On-Off Sale Liquor License for Verndale Liquor for 2021, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

1. Liquor License – Sunday Sale – Verndale Liquor

A motion was made by Runyan to approve a Sunday Off -On Sale Liquor License for Verndale Liquor for 2021, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

1. Liquor License – On Sale – Verndale Liquor Community Center Location

A motion was made by Runyan to approve an On Sale Liquor License for Verndale Liquor for the Civic Center Location, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

1. 2020 Audit Engagement Letter

Carr asked about the cost being $13,000.00. Current stated that the City will probably need to have a single audit done because of the money received for COVID-19 and that covers the cost of that.

A motion was made by Ackerson to accept the engagement letter for the audit for the City of Verndale in the amount of $13,000.00 from Mayer, Porter & Nelson, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 pm, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

**Submitted by: Attest:**

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Melissa Current, City Clerk/Treasurer Tara Erckenbrack, Mayor