**CITY OF VERNDALE**

**WADENA COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday April 13, 2020**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Verndale Fire Hall**

**102 Butler St SE**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Tyler Savaloja, Police Officer; Matt Uselman, Public Works Manager; Melissa Current, City Clerk/Treasurer

**STAFF ABSENT**: Michael Madsen, Fire Chief; Cory Carr, Police Chief

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Heath Belknap, Verndale Alliance Church; Clif Allen, Moore Engineering; Trinity Gruenberg, Verndale Sun; Robin Fish, Scott Veronen, Jen Veronen

**OPENING PRAYER:** The opening prayer was led by Heath Belknap, Verndale Alliance Church.

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND APRIL PAYABLES**

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve the March 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC

A motion was made by Carr to approve the April 7, 2020 Board of Review Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

A motion was made by Carr to approve the April payables in the amount of $8,927.57, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC

**ACKNOWLEDGE VISITORS**

**Scott and Jen Veronen– Water Bill:** Ludovissie asked Veronen’s what they would Council to do for them. S. Veronen stated that they would like to have their bill averaged like the Council did for Sickels and Mane Hair Design. Erckenbrack stated that Uselman had went to the other properties and couldn’t prove where the water went. Erckenbrack stated that in their case there was a break. S. Veronen stated that water went through the meters in both cases. There was discussion about how the Veronen’s situation is different from Sickels and Mane Hair Design. There was discussion about what to credit and how much. J. Veronen gave examples of what has been done in the past by reading excerpts from previous meeting minutes. There was more discussion about what to credit and how much. Ludovissie stated that he was recommending a $2700.00 credit on the bill. S. Veronen stated he would be fine with that.

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A motion was made by Ackerson to approve crediting the water and sewer bill for Scott and Jen Veronen (Veronen Properties) in the amount of $2700.00, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC

Fish recommended that the Council establish by motion that this evenings treatment of the water has no precedential value. Fish stated that then people can state their case but they can’t look back at what was done for others. Council didn’t think this was necessary and didn’t make the motion.

**Brain Schlupp – Water Bill:** Ludovissie asked if he had a running water hose. Uselman stated yes, when they read meters a hose was found running and Fleisher shut it off. Uselman stated that he contacted Schlupp about the hose running in the back yard. Current stated that Schlupp contacted her about the high water bill and she told him about the hose running. Current stated that Schlupp asked if something could be done.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve billing the average usage of sewer for Brian Schlupp, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC

**Clif Allen - Moore Engineering:** Allen stated that the Water Treatment Plant has been in operation for roughly a month now. Allen stated that there are two partial payments this month because one was received right after the last Council meeting. Allen recommended approval of Partial Pay Estimates 13 and 14.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve Partial Pay Estimate #13 in the amount of $117,234.78 and Partial Pay Estimate #14 in the amount of $12,910.50 for Eagle Construction, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC

A motion was made by Runyan to approve paying the Moore Engineering Invoice in the amount of $10,503.00, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC

Allen stated that SHPO has to review the empty lot for historical impact. Allen stated that everything is on hold because offices are closed. Allen stated that they may reach out to DEED or Rural Development and see if they will waive the SHPO requirement in light of everything else going on.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT – MIKE MADSEN-FIRE CHIEF-** Ludovissie stated that everyone could read Madsen’s report.

**LIQUOR STORE - MELISSA CURRENT-** Ludovissie stated that a loss of $1442.14 isn’t that bad. Current stated that it could get ugly depending on how long the bar is closed as employees can claim unemployment and that is paid out of the Liquor Store fund. Current stated that all the

painting has been completed and the floors will be waxed so when the bar opens it will look nice.

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Ackerson asked about the inventory on perishables. Current stated that there are quite a few pizzas in the freezer but they should stay good for a while. Ackerson asked if someone was going into the bar to check. Current stated yes. Erckenbrack stated that a list will be made to keep track of the perishables lost. Runyan asked if the government will help on the unemployment. Current and Erckenbrack stated that this is an unknown.

**POLICE-CORY CARR-POLICE CHIEF-** No Report

**PUBLIC WORKS- MATT USELMAN-MANAGER-** Uselman stated that he would like to recommend Chase Graba as the new full-time employee with a probationary period of six (6) months starting on May 4. Ludovissie asked if Graba can run all the equipment. Uselman stated that once Graba gets his CDL then he will be able to. Uselman stated that he will be training Graba on everything so that he can take a vacation. There was discussion on the starting wage.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve hiring Chase Graba as the full-time year-round Maintenance Worker with a starting wage of $13.25 with a .50 increase after the six (6) month probation period, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC

Uselman stated that he only received one bid for remodeling the back entrance to the bar. The bid is from JR Construction in the amount of $32,609.00 with $17,000 paid down and the balance due upon completion. There was discussion about waiting to do this project.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to accept the bid for the roof/rear entrance from JR Construction in the amount of $32,609.00, seconded by Carr. Voting in favor were: Ackerson, Carr, Erckenbrack and Ludovissie. Runyan was opposed. Motion carried.

Uselman stated that he also has an estimate on new HVAC and ductwork. Current stated that the duct work is very dirty so it needs to be cleaned. Uselman stated that he asked someone to clean it and they said they wouldn’t do it because it is the old type of duct work that runs through a joist. Erckenbrack stated that they aren’t even metal lined then. Uselman stated no, and there are holes everywhere. Uselman stated that he had Clif Allen look into what the costs would be to upgrade the new meter project to an AMI system. Uselman stated that the system would work with antennas and data collection system software and would read meters every hour and give the City an email everyday showing meter usage. Uselman stated that this would allow the City to notify people that there is running water before they get a large bill. Runyan asked how much this would cost. Uselman stated that Dean with Core & Main gave him a rough estimate of $60,000. Allen stated that one of the big differences is the software to manage it. Allen stated that Dean was a little more forthright with him and said that Verndale can’t afford this kind of system. Allen stated that the towns that afford the system have their own electric. Uselman stated that he has been asked about sweeping private parking lots and charging $50 per half hour. Council stated that they don’t want Uselman to sweep private parking lots. Uselman asked the Council if they want to waive disconnects at this time. Council stated that it is business as usual.

Erckenbrack stated that if a unique situation arises then Current can contact a Council member

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and run it past them. Council agreed that a responsible person will contact the City office and state that they have a problem and that will be handled accordingly.

**CLERK/TREASURER- MELISSA CURRENT**- Current stated that the Schedule 2 for 2019 is attached and needs approval.

A motion was made by Ackerson to accept the Schedule 2 for 2019 seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC.

Current stated that in the budgeting process her wages are split based on the work being done. Current stated that 25 % of her wage goes to the Liquor Store and she was wondering if she should adjust her percentage since the Liquor Store is closed. Council stated no, leave it how it is. Current stated that the rest of her report is the dates for elections and filing to be a Candidate.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Property Checks – Erckenbrack stated that since it is Spring property checks should be done. Officer Savaloja stated that they are already working on that and that letters should be included in next month’s packet.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

1. West Central Telephone – Election of Directors – Current stated that this is included in case the Council wants to vote. Council declined as they have not voted as a business in the past.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 pm, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

**Submitted by: Attest:**

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Melissa Current, City Clerk/Treasurer Raye Ludovissie, Mayor