**CITY OF VERNDALE**

**WADENA COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday September 10, 2018**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Verndale City Hall**

**101 Brown St. SW**

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

Jim Runyan

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Barbara Holmes, City Clerk/Treasurer; Gary Rosenthal, Liquor Store Manager; Michael Madsen, Fire Chief; Cory Carr, Police Chief; Matt Uselman, Public Works Manager; Melissa Current, Deputy Clerk

**STAFF ABSENT**: None

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Trinity Gruenberg, Verndale Sun; Joeb Oyster, Moore Engineering; Stan Thurlow, Thurlow Planning Office; Amos Self, Family Life Church; Don Weniger, Jared Coffey, Unamae Thurlow, Jim Lepper, Gordon Sharp, John Rousslang

**OPENING PRAYER:** The opening prayer was led by Amos Self, Family Life Church.

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND SEPTEMBER PAYABLES**

A motion was made by Carr to approve the August 6th, 2018 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, the August 28th, 2018 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes for the Variance, the August 28th, 2018 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes for the Liquor Store and the August 27th, 2018 Budget Workshop minutes as written, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve the September payables in the amount of $58,753.40 seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC

**ACKNOWLEDGE VISITORS**

**Joeb Oyster - Moore Engineering:** Oyster stated that he is still waiting on the permit from MN DOT. Oyster stated the County did not say no to dewatering in the ditch. Oyster stated he will try to get something more definite in writing from them. Oyster stated that the County is doing inventory on their ditch system right now so they want to wait until that is complete. Oyster stated that the draft IUP for the remaining funding for the Water Tower Project has Verndale down for 5 points and that typically isn’t enough to get funding. Oyster stated that Verndale received 5 points for the infrastructure part and Verndale didn’t qualify for the income level. Oyster stated that there is two parts to the income level one part is MN Department of Health and

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one part is PFA. Oyster stated that they are both using different sets of numbers and he has been telling them that they need to coordinate with their numbers. Oyster stated that PFA is using new numbers. Oyster stated that there are other funding options as well. Oyster stated that he brought Stan Thurlow with and he is the one that will be administering the $600,000 DEED grant.

**Stan Thurlow – Thurlow Planning Office**: Thurlow stated that he is the grant administrator and he has done over 30 of these grants. Thurlow stated that DEED has awarded the City the grant but the City doesn’t have anything in writing. Thurlow stated that the grant is in procurement and DEED will send the City a contract, hopefully by the next meeting. Thurlow stated that he does an environmental review to make sure that no Indian burial grounds are disturbed and to make sure the City isn’t killing an endangered species. Thurlow stated that he makes sure there is equal housing, that Labor Standards are followed, he does site visits, and all the reporting. Thurlow stated he will be with the City until the project is successfully closed out. Holmes asked if Thurlow would be here through the audit. Thurlow stated yes. There was discussion about how invoices would get paid. Thurlow stated that the main thing is that the City and Thurlow communicate and know where they are at with the finances. Thurlow stated that $20,000 of the grant will be in the contract for him for administering the grant. Thurlow stated that no City money will be spent on him, it is all paid for by the grant. Thurlow stated that the City needed to pass a drug free workplace and an Anti-displacement plan and he normally does that right up-front. Holmes stated that these were both just done. Thurlow requested copies.

**Jared Coffey** **– Liquor Store**: Coffey thanked the Council for having the Public hearing. Coffey stated that he is still interested in purchasing the Liquor Store. Holmes stated that there is a survey in the Council packet for the Council to approve to send out with the water bill. Ludovissie stated that the Council will look at the surveys and go from there.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT- MICHAEL MADSEN- FIRE CHIEF-** Madsen stated that there were 4 calls for the month, 3 were medical and 1 was a false fire call. Madsen stated that the Fire Relief is looking into buying a Polaris side by side for $10,000 for wildland fires and rescue calls. Erckenbrack asked if they have the funding for it. Madsen stated yes. Madsen stated that September 11th is Patriot Day and there will be a Red, White, and Blue service honoring Police, Fire, EMS, and medical personnel at St. Ann’s in Wadena starting at 5:30 pm with a reception to follow. Madsen stated that the grade school will have a parade at 10 AM on September 11th up

to the City Park where they put on a program for the First Responders, Military and Police.

Madsen stated that John Rousslang is interested in being the Emergency Management Director

and he has ICS training. Carr asked about Fire Prevention Week. Madsen stated that Fire Prevention Week will be the first week of October.

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**LIQUOR STORE- GARY ROSENTHAL-MANAGER**- Rosenthal stated that there was a net loss of $5,174 for the month. Rosenthal stated his reasons for the loss. Rosenthal stated that the Handicapped Entrance is completed and the Handicapped parking spot is painted in the rear of the building. Rosenthal stated the Liquor Store was closed on Labor Day. Rosenthal stated that the TV for the electronic pull tabs was installed on September 6th. Rosenthal stated that installation will be complete the last week of September or the first week of October. Rosenthal stated that Texas Hold-Em started on Tuesday September 3rd and there were 10 players. Rosenthal stated that there is a cost of $30 per week. Rosenthal stated that he has some customers that are concerned about the survey being mailed out with the water bill. Rosenthal stated that not every resident receives a water bill. Holmes stated that the survey’s will be available at the City Office. Holmes stated that the people that fill out the surveys need to be residents of Verndale. Holmes stated that if Council approves she could print off 30 copies to be handed out at the bar. Holmes stated that it is required to fill out the name and the address. There was discussion about having a special election. The Council decided it would cost too much to have a special election. Holmes stated that the surveys could be picked up at the bar but they could not be turned in at the bar. Self stated that surveys could be put in the church’s too. Ludovissie restated that all survey’s need to be turned into the City Office.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve the Liquor Store Survey as written, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC

Rosenthal stated that one of his employees gave notice that her last work day will be December 1st, 2018. Holmes asked Rosenthal if he was posting the position. Rosenthal stated no, it’s too early yet. Holmes stated that Rosenthal would need to get the new employee trained. Rosenthal stated if the Council wants to put the ad out that’s fine. Rosenthal stated that there was gravel put behind the bar. Rosenthal stated that there was water in the basement. Erckenbrack stated that there are some price adjustments that need to be made on the soda. Erckenbrack suggested bumping the price up to a $1 per can. Rosenthal stated he would need to get ahold of the pop machine people. Erckenbrack stated that the other adjustment would be to the pizza and a pitcher sale, which she suggested bumping up to $15. Rosenthal stated he wanted to take a look at what the costs are. Erckenbrack stated that if the Liquor Store has an event that is advertised for the $12.50 then the Liquor Store needs to honor that, but after that the price will be $15. Ludovissie stated that the Liquor policy has been updated. Rosenthal stated that he didn’t see any statutes or laws that say he can’t offer his employees discounts. Holmes stated that she included the statute in the packet for the public hearing. Erckenbrack stated that unfortunately that ruling will have to stay and it is in the current updated Liquor Policy.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve the Liquor Store Policy, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC

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There was discussion about putting an ad in the Lion’s 2019 Program Book. Ludovissie stated that the City needs to support the Lion’s so he wanted to go with a half page ad.

A motion was made by Ludovissie to purchase a $90 half page ad in the 2019 Lion’s Mid-Winter Convention Program Book, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC

**POLICE DEPARTMENT – CORY CARR – POLICE CHIEF-** Ludovissie asked Chief Carr how it was going at the school. Chief Carr stated good. Ludovissie asked Chief Carr if he had found anyone else that might be interested in being the School Resource Officer. Chief Carr stated that he has four applicants and the posting closes on Friday. Ludovissie asked how the hiring process works for Police. Holmes stated that Chief Carr always hires on his own. The Council decided to have the Personnel Committee sit in on the School Resource Officer interviews. Ludovissie asked Chief Carr about having a body cam to wear at the school. Chief Carr stated that until the County Attorney and the Departments decide to go with the body cams, he’s not going to wear one. Erckenbrack stated that the Police Committee was informed that it would be a waste of money to purchase body cams because the City’s equipment wouldn’t be integrated with the County’s equipment. Chief Carr stated that the school has really good cameras. Ackerson asked about ALICE training at the school and if they had buckets in the classrooms with snacks, etc. Chief Carr stated that the school is working on getting buckets in the classrooms. Chief Carr stated that the school does several ALICE trainings. The starting date and the terms of the School Resource Officer contract with the school were discussed.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve the School Resource Officer contract with the Verndale School, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC.

**PUBLIC WORKS- MATT USELMAN-MANAGER-** Uselman handed the Council a drawing of what the bathrooms at the bar would look like. Uselman stated that the City would need to add on to the Liquor Store in order to have two bathrooms, unless the City wants to have a porta potty while the bathroom is being built. Uselman explained his drawing. Erckenbrack stated that it would be nice to have two bathrooms. Erckenbrack asked if Uselman’s drawing was his recommendation. Uselman stated yes. Ludovissie stated that Uselman should get bids for it. Ludovissie asked if the Liquor Committee could approve the quotes for the bathrooms. Erckenbrack and Carr both stated that they would be comfortable with deciding. Ludovissie asked if any Council members objected to the Liquor Committee approving the bathrooms. No Council member objected. Ludovissie gave permission for the Liquor Committee to make the decision. Uselman stated he would send the drawing out for bids if that was okay. Council stated yes. Uselman stated that Graba has expressed interest in helping with snow removal. Uselman stated that Graba wouldn’t be able to work from 11 pm to 5 am on

school days unless school was cancelled because of Child Labor Laws. Uselman stated that Graba wouldn’t be able to run the skid steer or the plow truck until he turns 18. Uselman stated that the plow truck is in the shop right now for maintenance and repair. Uselman stated that the

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brushes on the snow broom have been replaced. Uselman stated that he might have found a way to fix most of the curb stops that aren’t working without digging all the way down to the shutoff. Uselman explained how he plans to fix them. Uselman stated that this won’t work for the ones that are in the sidewalks downtown. Uselman stated that this month’s Safety Training is for all City employees and the topic is ladder safety/ fall protection/ slips, trips and falls. Uselman stated that the training is in Clarissa at 10 am. There was discussion about replacing the light poles downtown which were installed in 1993 or 1994. Uselman stated it would cost $15,000 to replace them all. Uselman stated that he thought the County installed the light polls because the City has no record of buying them. Uselman stated he is waiting to hear back from the County to see if maybe they will replace the light poles. Ludovissie stated that the Council should be thinking about how to spend the $13,000 MIF Loan money. There was discussion about how the $13,000 MIF loan money should be spent. Ideas that were discussed included making the City Park handicapped accessible or using it for the Handicapped accessible Liquor Store bathroom. There was discussion about what to do with the green space at the new water tower site. The ideas that were discussed were basketball hoops, a volleyball court, a dog park and wiffle ball. Carr stated that it would be nice for the park to have a handicapped accessible swing. There was more discussion about the money from the MIF Loan being used to make the park handicapped accessible. Uselman stated that a mock OSHA inspection was done and the City has violations that need to be fixed.

**CLERK/TREASURER- BARBARA HOLMES-** Holmes stated that the Primary Election went well with 79 voters coming to the poll. Holmes stated that everyone did very well using the new election equipment. Holmes stated that Resolution 18-0906 regarding the off sale at stores other than the Municipal Liquor store was requested by the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Assoc. (MMBA) which the City is a member of. Holmes stated that the use of a time clock has been suggested again. Holmes asked if the Council wants her to purchase a new time clock for the City Office. The Council decided to order a new time clock. Erckenbrack stated that she would like a time clock policy that includes no writing in of times. Holmes stated that the scheduled November Council Meeting is the observance of Veteran’s Day, which is a holiday. Holmes asked when the Council wants to reschedule the November meeting for. Homes stated that the 1st day for canvassing for the election is November 9th and the last day is November 16th; this can be included with the November meeting. There was discussion about dates. The November meeting was set for Wednesday November 14th at 5pm. Holmes stated that the next Budget Workshop needs to be set for October or November. The Council decided to have the next budget meeting in November. Holmes stated that Sourcewell (NJPA) is holding the R5 Summit on October 24th. Holmes asked if any Council Members wanted to attend or should she go to receive the City’s $250.00 (reduced from $500 in previous years). Carr stated that she would attend. Holmes requested approval to transfer $17,000.00 from Water Money Market to General Fund Checking for the Wigen – Pilot Study payment.

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A motion was made by Ackerson to approve the transfer of $17,000.00 from Water Money Market to General Fund Checking for the Wigen – Pilot Study payment, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC

Holmes stated that the Wadena Pioneer Journal reported that Dan Carlisle will be the President/CEO/Legal Counsel of Todd-Wadena Electric starting in October. Holmes asked the Council what they want to do about the City’s legal counsel. The Council decided to see if the City could use Jeff Pederson. Ludovissie stated he would make a phone call to find out.

**Gordon Sharp:** Sharp stated that he has an issue with the City because he put up a deck around his swimming pool and the City told him he needed to have a permit to build it 5 months after it was completed. Sharp stated that he applied for the permit and it was denied. Sharp stated he didn’t understand why he had to apply for a variance because he was too close to his fence. Ludovissie stated that is why the building permit was denied is because you were to close to your fence. Holmes stated that what Sharp wants to do is to appeal the denial of the building permit and allow his deck to remain as is. Sharp stated that he has talked to his neighbors and they are fine with where the deck is. Ludovissie stated that if Sharp can get his neighbors to sign off on it then the he would agree to appeal the denial of the building permit. Council agreed with Ludovissie. Ludovissie stated that Sharp needed to turn something in to the City Office in writing from his neighbor. Holmes stated once she receives the letter then the City will issue him his building permit.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Resolution 18-0910 Resolution Opposing the Concept of Allowing Strong Beer, Sprits & Wine to be Sold, For Off Premise Consumption, At Any Outlet Other Than the Municipal Liquor Store

Holmes stated that this is to keep grocery stores, etc., from being able to sell off sale alcohol.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve Resolution 18-0910 - A Resolution Opposing the Concept of Allowing Strong Beer, Sprits & Wine to be Sold, For Off Premise Consumption, At Any Outlet Other Than the Municipal Liquor Store, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC

B. Resolution 18-0910A Resolution Accepting a Donation from the Verndale Fire Relief Association

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve Resolution 18-0910A - A Resolution Accepting a Donation from the Verndale Fire Relief Association in the amount of $5,000 for the purchase of equipment, seconded by Runyan. AIF/MC

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C. Resolution 18-0910B Resolution Approving Proposed 2018 Tax Levy Collectable in 2019

A motion was made by Carr to approve Resolution 18-0910B - A Resolution Approving Proposed 2018 Tax Levy Collectable in 2019, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC

E. Updated Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)

This needs to be updated to say John Rousslang.

A motion was made by Runyan to approve John Rousslang as the Emergency Management Director, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Set special meeting date to review/update Community Plan

The Council decided they would look at the Community Plan and present it at the October meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** None

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to close the meeting at 7:40 pm, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC

**Submitted by: Attest:**

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Melissa Current, Deputy Clerk Raye Ludovissie, Mayor