**CITY OF VERNDALE**

**WADENA COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday November 9, 2020**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Verndale City Hall**

**101 Brown St SW**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jim Runyan

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

**STAFF ABSENT**: Michael Madsen, Fire Chief

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Amos Self, Family Life Church; Trinity Gruenberg, Verndale Sun; Clif Allen, Moore Engineering; Matt Kallroos, Region 5 Development Commission; Tad Erickson, Region 5 Development Commission, Brian Hagen

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND NOVEMBER PAYABLES**

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve the October 12, 2020 Public Hearing Variance Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve the October 12, 2020 Public Hearing Tri-County Health Care Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Carr. Voting in favor were: Ackerson, Carr, and Ludovissie. None were opposed. Erckenbrack abstained as she is an employee of the hospital. MC.

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

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve the November payables in the amount of $19,283.09, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

**ACKNOWLEDGE VISITORS**

**Mike Willis – Sewer Credit:** Current state that at the last meeting Willis was told to wait until he got the bill for watering and then ask for a credit. Current stated that Willis used 4,000 gallons more than his average, so that is what is being asked for a credit.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve a sewer credit for 4,000 gallons for Mike Willis, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

**Julia Johnson – Water Bill:** Current stated that Johnson moved into this rental house in July and the water usage was very high. Current stated that the meter has been replaced and now it shows a

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lower usage. Current stated that Johnson wanted to see if she could get credit for the higher usages. Uselman stated that there were leaks in the house. Uselman stated that he thinks that the landlord just finally got the leaks fixed and that is why the usage went down. Council agreed that this a landlord issue and not a City issue so Johnson should talk to her landlord to get reimbursed for the cost of the bill.

**Safe Routes to School:** Erickson and Kallroos explained what a safe route to school (SRTS) plan is and that the City needs to have a plan in place in order to make Highway 10 a safer crossing. Erickson stated that there was conversation about putting a flashing beckon at the crosswalk on Highway 10 to alert drivers when pedestrians are crossing. Erickson stated that there are grants available to do this but a SRTS plan needs to be in place first. Erickson stated that they put together the plan/application at no cost to the City; all they need is letters of support from the School and the County.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve moving forward with a Safe Route to Schools Application, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

**Clif Allen - Moore Engineering:** Allen stated that a final walk through was done at the Water Treatment plant and as a result the Health Department is requiring the installation of a raised hatch to protect water from possibly running into the hatches above the potable water storage tanks. Allen stated that the contractor is working on prices. Allen stated that there will be another small change order and a final payment after the work is completed and accepted. Allen stated that this is the bidding season for water towers and the bids are coming in higher than originally anticipated. Allen stated that Rural Development (RD) looks like they are ready to fund it, however there is a funding shortfall in the range of $250,000 – $350,000. Allen stated that RD will generally fund an overage with supplemental funds, however their supplemental funds are not in hand yet. Allen stated that RD will not let this go out to bid unless the City passes a Resolution acknowledging the funding shortfall. Allen stated that it is fully expected that RD will be the funding source for the overage with another loan/grant package with the same break downs. Allen stated that if Council approves the Resolution tonight then RD indicated that they will give authorization to bid probably by the end of the week with a bid opening around the middle of December.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve Resolution 20-1109 – Resolution Acknowledging a Funding Shortfall for the Water Tower Project in the range of $250,000 - $350,000, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC.

Allen stated that this is their last invoice for Post-Construction costs.

A motion was made by Carr to approve the Moore Engineering Invoice in the amount of $1,715.00, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT – MIKE MADSEN-FIRE CHIEF-** Madsen wasn’t in attendance. No report.

**LIQUOR STORE - MELISSA CURRENT-** Current stated there was a net profit of $6,059.96 for the month. Current stated that sales decreased in the amount of $1,687.44 over last year, but there was an increased profit of $380.11. Current stated that there is a Net Loss for the year of $28,103.13 but the new

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roof cost $34,324.70. Current stated that there will be a Meat Raffle every Friday at 6:00 pm. Current stated that the governor is expected to change hours for the Bar so she will be watching her email for updates. Current stated that she did compare this September to last September and part of the reason for the difference in revenue was that there was a wedding that brought in almost $5,000.

**POLICE-CHIEF CARR-** Chief Carr asked the Council to go by the Wadena School to check out how the beacons work for their crosswalks. There was discussion about putting sidewalks on the North side of town and up by the school to make it safer for the kids.

**PUBLIC WORKS- MATT USELMAN-MANAGER-** Ludovissie asked about the water coming in through the ceiling at the Bar. Uselman stated that he had JR Construction take a look at it and they felt that it is from heat loss, creating frost under the roof deck. Uselman stated that when the weather gets warmer it melts and runs into the building. Uselman stated that they put more insulation up and they will

see if that helps. Uselman stated that he found a plow truck on MN Bid that he would like to go look at; it is a 2006 with low miles and the reserve on it is $25,000. Uselman stated that right now the high bid is $30,300 with three days left to bid. Uselman stated that he wanted the Council’s input. Erckenbrack asked Uselman what he thought the top on this truck would be. Uselman stated he would hope it wouldn’t go for more than $50,000. Ludovissie stated that this wouldn’t hit the budget too hard so maybe the City should go for it.

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve increasing the amount for purchasing a plow truck to $55,000 or less, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

Uselman stated that Graba was able to pass his CDL test and is asking for the $1 raise for getting the license to start now instead of January. Uselman stated that he has the money in the budget to do so. Erckenbrack questioned giving a raise so close to the end of the year when a raise is expected in January. Council agreed to hold off with the $1 raise until January. Uselman stated that the City will be hosting an informational meeting on November 19 at the Fire Hall at 1:00 pm regarding the new Wellhead Protection Plan.

**CLERK/TREASURER- MELISSA CURRENT**- Current stated that there is an individual interested in turning a store front into an apartment building and wanted to know if the City would be okay with this. Uselman stated that this store front is currently empty. Carr asked if it is a main street business. Uselman stated yes. Uselman stated that the City doesn’t have an Ordinance against it. Uselman stated that he told him that there has to be parking in the back. Ludovissie expressed concerns about someone taking this on and just cutting holes in the building, putting a door in and calling it good. Erckenbrack stated that once a store front is taken away there is no chance at getting it back. Ludovissie asked for a drawing of what the front would look like. Erckenbrack expressed concern over where windows would be and what they might be covered with. Council asked for a business plan to be presented to the Council before a decision would be made. Current stated that canvassing of election results needs to be done by November 13 but the City can’t canvas until after the 10th. Current stated that the City will need to meet to pass the Resolution on the 12th of 13th. Council agreed to meet on November 12 at 6:00 pm. Current stated that the final budget meeting is November 30 at 6:00 pm and the truth in taxation meeting is December 14 at 6:00 pm with the Regular Council meeting to follow. Current stated that the Council needs to set a date for the final meeting to commit funds, etc. Council agreed to December 21 at 6:00 pm.

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**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. COVID-19 Business Assistance Program:

Ludovissie stated that there were six applicants and his suggestion is to divide the money equally between the applicants. Current stated that the City still needed to pay unemployment costs.

A motion was made by Carr to divide the money not spent equally between the businesses, seconded by Erckenbrack. AIF/MC.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Resolution 20-1109A

A motion was made by Ackerson to approve Resolution 20-1109A – A Resolution Accepting a Donation from the Verndale Lions in the amount of $4,252.53 for their building fund, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

1. Liquor License – The Pirate’s Den, LLC

Current stated that liquor licenses usually expire on December 31 of the current year. Current asked the Council if they would approve the licenses to expire on December 31, 2021.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to approve both an On-Sale Liquor License and a Sunday Liquor On- Sale License for The Pirate’s Den, LLC with an expiration date of December 31, 2021, seconded by Ackerson. AIF/MC.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

1. Sourcewell Nomination – Current stated that this is just for their information; they don’t need to nominate anyone.

A motion was made by Erckenbrack to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 pm, seconded by Carr. AIF/MC.

**Submitted by: Attest:**

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Melissa Current, City Clerk/Treasurer Raye Ludovissie, Mayor