

CITY OF VERGENNES, VERMONT
REGULAR MEETING of the CITY COUNCIL

June 22, 2021

Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

- Mayor Mathew Chabot
- Alderman Dickie Austin
- Alderman David Austin
- Alderman Mel Hawley
- Alderman Ian Huizenga
- Alderwoman Jill Murray-Killon
- Alderwoman Susan Rakowski
- City Manager Ron Redmond
- City Clerk Britney Aube
- Kathy Rossier
- Jim Larrow
- Chris Spencer
- Andy Kirkaldy

1) Call to Order, Amendments to Agenda. (Time Stamp 0:11)

Mayor Mathew Chabot called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Alderman Mel Hawley noted agenda items H, I, and J were not designated as action items or discussion items. Manager Ron Redmond explained that agenda item H will be a discussion item, agenda item I will be an action item, and agenda item J would be a discussion item.

Alderwoman Susan Rakowski noted that the July Council meeting was scheduled for July 13th not July 23rd. She also requested that the resignation of the City Council designee to the Park and Recreation Committee and the appointment of a new designee be added to the agenda. Mayor Mathew Chabot noted that the appointment of a new designee would be added is item K to the agenda.

2) Visitors.

None.

**3) Approval of Minutes and Warrants. (Time Stamp 3:00)
Minutes (06/08) Warrants: (06/22)**

- a. A motion was made by Alderwoman Susan Rakowski, seconded by Alderwoman Jill Murray-Killon, to approve the June 8, 2021, minutes with revisions as presented. VOTE- all members voted in favor.

A motion was made by Alderman Dickie Austin, seconded by Ian Huizenga, to accept the warrants of June 22, 2021, as presented. Alderman Mel Hawley questioned whether the invoice for the air packs for the fire department has been paid. He noted the invoice was not listed in the warrants. The motion was amended to include the payment to MES in the amount of approximately \$148,000 for the air packs. VOTE- all members voted in favor. City Treasurer Abbie Farrar stated that the payment to MES would be included when checks are cut for the other warrants.

4) Business.

- a) **FY2022 Budget Presentation/Set Tax Rate. (Time Stamp 7:50) ***

CITY OF VERGENNES, VERMONT
REGULAR MEETING of the CITY COUNCIL

June 22, 2021

Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

Manager Ron Redmond highlighted key budget numbers explaining that the projected ending fund balance for FY2021 is estimated at \$279,000. The most recent projected deficit for FY2021 is \$56,660. The FY2022 fund balance is anticipated to be \$109,970. Manager Redmond noted additional expenses worked into the budget including: \$10,000 for a review of the Vergennes Police Department by the International Association of Chief of Police, \$12,000 for replacement bullet proof vest, as required by the Union Contract, and a built in 3% salary increase (VPD separate).

City Treasurer Abbie Farrar reviewed the property tax calculator, noting the voter approved expenses of \$44,014.00 and the final grand list value of \$ 2,339,290.70. If the Council maintained the 0.920 tax rate from FY2021, the total property taxes raised would be \$2,152,147.44.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Susan Rakowski, seconded by Alderman Dickie Austin, to set a FY2022 tax rate of 0.91 cents. Susan Rakowski asked whether some of the surplus would still be used for sidewalk repairs, since it did not appear to be in the budget. Mayor Mathew Chabot noted that the Council was only setting the tax rate and the budget items would be set by the city manager. Alderman Mel Hawley explained that the Council has historically approved the general fund budget, fire budget, pool budget and the sewer budget. He also noted that budget amendments have historically required approval by the Council. Alderman Mel Hawley also questioned Manager Redmond's projected FY2021 fund balance, noting that he was not sure if delinquent taxes had been factored in. Manager Redmond noted that he averaged the past two years of delinquent tax values and accounted for that in the budget at \$45,000. Alderman Mel Hawley asked the City Manager Redmond if he were confident that his projection would be within +/- \$23,000, which equates to approximately one cent of the tax rate. City Manager Redmond stated that he was confident with his projects. Alderman Mel Hawley suggested waiting a week to set the tax rate. Alderman Ian Huizenga noted that keeping a level tax rate, rather than reducing the tax rate could help ease the sting of potential cuts for next year or for future projects. Alderman David Austin stated that sitting on cash is unwise because it will be worth significantly less at this point next year. Alderman Dickie Austin was supportive of the suggested tax rate relating to the current budget, noting that the Council could direct the city manager to propose budget adjustments later down the road, including allocating funds from the fund balance for capital improvement projects. Alderman Mel Hawley noted that a 3% increase in pay was standard across the board for employees apart from the Recreation Coordinator position. Manager Redmond explained that he decided an increase for the Recreation Coordinator based on the growth of recreation and the current job market. Alderwoman Susan Rakowski, asked for clarification regarding the Governor's Highway Safety Grant. Manager Redmond explained that it was moved to non-budget revenue/non-budget expense.

The motion was amended by Alderwoman Susan Rakowski, seconded by Alderman Dickie Austin, to set that tax rate and include the approval of the budget for the General Fund at \$2,719,557, Fire Fund \$245,171, Sewer Fund at \$799,470 and the Pool Fund

CITY OF VERGENNES, VERMONT
REGULAR MEETING of the CITY COUNCIL

June 22, 2021

Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

\$51,157, with a tax rate of 0.91 cents. VOTE – 6 in-favor; 1 opposed (Alderman David Austin). Motion passes.

b) Formal submission of proposed City of Vergennes Zoning and Subdivision Regulations from Planning Commission. (Time Stamp 1:00:30)

Planning Commission Chair, Shannon Haggett, explained that the Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 3rd and received public input on the proposed regulation updates. The Planning Commission has since made updates to the proposed regulations and is now ready to turn them over to the City Council for review and approval. Clean and track changes versions of the regulations is available on the city website. Alderman Mel Hawley noted that it was a short turnaround for from July 13th to August 10th for changes to be made to the regulations. Planning Commission Chair Shannon Haggett that any requested revisions the July 13th meeting should be immediately forwarded to the Planning Commission.

c) Set dates of public hearings for proposed City of Vergennes Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. Proposed dates: City Council meetings scheduled for July 13 and August 10, 2021. (Time Stamp 1:05:00)

A motion was made by Alderman Mel Hawley, seconded by Alderman Dickie Austin, to set the public hearing dates for the proposed amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for July 13th and August 10th. VOTE – all members voted in favor.

d) Appointments of delegates and alternates to Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) from 07/01/21 – 06/30/2022. (Time Stamp 1:05:02)

A motion was made by Alderwoman Susan Rakowski, seconded by Alderman Dickie Austin, to appoint Cheryl Brinkman and Shannon Haggett as the City's delegates to the Addison County Regional Planning Commission from 07/01/2021 to 06/30/2022. Mayor Mathew Chabot noted that the two alternate positions were vacant. VOTE- all members voted in favor.

e) Appointments of delegates and alternates to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) for a one-year term from 07/01/21 – 06/30/2022. (Time Stamp 1:06:06)

A motion was made Alderman Dickie Austin, seconded by Alderwoman Jill Murray-Killon, to appoint Brent Rakowski as the City's delegate to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Shannon Haggett as an alternate. VOTE- all members voted in favor.

f) Recommendation to Merge Basin Committee with Parks and Recreation Committee. Alderman David Austin. (Time Stamp 1:10:00)

Alderman David Austin stated that he would like to see the Basin Task Force merge with the Parks and Recreation Committee because Parks and Recreation has a budget. Alderman Mel Hawley questioned if the intent would be to dissolve the Basin Task Force and transfer the mission to the Parks and Recreation Committee. Alderman David Austin confirmed that the intent would be to dissolve the Basin Task Force. Alderwoman Susan

CITY OF VERGENNES, VERMONT
REGULAR MEETING of the CITY COUNCIL

June 22, 2021

Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

Rakowski questioned if the Basin Task Force had a formal charge and suggested dissolving the Basin Task Force but not transferring the charge to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

A motion was made by Alderman Mel Hawley, seconded by Alderwoman Susan Rakowski to dissolve the Basin Task Force. VOTE- all members voted in favor.

g) Presentation of FY2022 Priorities, Pavilion Update. Kathy Rossier, Chair, Parks and Recreation Committee. (Time Stamp 1:16:00)

Kathy Rossier, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee. gave a presentation on FY2022 priorities. Kathy Rossier noted that the Parks and Recreation Committee would be focusing on Phase I of the Veterans' Memorial Park Pavilion, the Vergennes Connector Trail, the Skate Park redesign and rebuild, and the pool inspection.

h) Watershed Recreation Reserve Fund review and update. (Time Stamp 1:32:30)

Alderman Mel Hawley reviewed the revenue that accrued in the Watershed Recreation Fund Reserve noting an available balance of approximately \$31,000. Alderman Hawley noted that the Council allocated some money to connector trail, so the report needs to be updated to include activities that occurred in FY2021. Once updated, the report should be shared with Julian Censer, who is the financial liaison to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

i) Authorization re: U.S. Department of the Treasury Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. (Time Stamp 1:36:52).

Manager Ron Redmond explained that he needs to be approved as the representative to receive the ARPA funds on behalf of the City. A motion was made by Alderman Dickie Austin, seconded by Alderman Ian Huizenga, to appoint City Manager Ron Redmond as the authorized recipient for the State and Local Fiscal recovery funds. VOTE- all members voted in favor.

j) Agreement for Professional Services from Hoyle Tanner re: Otter Creek Docks Manager's Report. (Time Stamp 1:38:55)

Manager Ron Redmond explained that Falls Park docks on Otter Creek are experiencing some major deterioration. There is a short-term plan to make some temporary fixes to the steel sheet piling retaining walls. The temporary fix will be approximately \$5,000 but would allow for the floating docks to be installed on the Falls Park side of the falls at least temporarily. The long-term plan would be to have a condition assessment by a structural engineer and a budget cost estimate for new docks. The condition assessment, which would be the first step of the long-term plan is expected to cost approximately \$6,500. Jim Larrow noted that the wall can be secured which will work as fix for a couple of years. A new pressure treated deck can be constructed and installed as well. Jim Larrow explained that the cost would likely be in the \$100,000 range. Alderman Mel Hawley noted that there are donation boxes on both side of the falls and that the money for those

CITY OF VERGENNES, VERMONT
REGULAR MEETING of the CITY COUNCIL

June 22, 2021

Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

boxes is deposited in the Otter Creek Basin Fund. That money could be used towards the dock improvements.

A motion was made by Alderman Dickie Austin, seconded by Alderman Ian Huizenga to allow City Manager Ron Redmond to spend \$6,500 from the Otter Creek Basin Fund for the condition assessment by Hoyle and Tanner. VOTE – all members voted in favor.

k) Resignation of the Parks and Recreation Committee Designee (Alderman Jill Murray-Killon) and appointment of new Parks and Recreation Committee Designee (Alderman Susan Rakowski). (Time Stamp 1:51:35)

A motion was made by Alderman Mel Hawley, seconded by Alderman Dickie Austin, to accept the resignation of Alderman Jill Murray-Killon as the City Council designee to the Parks and Recreation Committee and appoint Alderman Susan Rakowski as the new designee. VOTE- all members voted in favor.

5. Manager's Report. (Time Stamp 1:49:50)

Manager Ron Redmond recognized Jim Larrow for all his work with the paving in the city.

6. Mayor's Report. (Time Stamp 1:53:30)

Mayor Mathew Chabot congratulated Girl Scout Elena Heath on receiving her democracy badge. Mayor Chabot also recognized Aiden Gebo, Tyler Jewett, Zachary Botala, and Adam Salsberg, for achieving Eagle Scout status and their contributions to the community.

7. Adjournment.

A motion was made Alderman Ian Huizenga, seconded by Alderman Dickie Austin, to adjourn the meeting. VOTE- all members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by:
Britney Aube
Vergennes City Clerk