

CITY OF VERGENNES, VERMONT
REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, February 28, 2023

COUNCIL MEMBERS/STAFF: Mayor Mathew Chabot, Alderman Dickie Austin, Alderman Mel Hawley, Alderwoman Jill Murray-Killon, Alderwoman Zoe Kaslow, Alderwoman Sue Rakowski (Zoom), Alderman Ian Huizenga, City Manager Ron Redmond, City Clerk Penny Austin, City Treasurer Angie Bolduc.

VISITORS: Martha DeGraaf, Recreation Coordinator, Dave DiBiase, Cheryl Brinkman, Don Peabody, and Chris Bearor

Call to Order: 5:30 PM

Amendments to Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes (2/14/23). Motion to accept minutes a written by Alderman Austin, seconded by Alderwoman Kaslow Vote: 7-0. Approved unanimously.

Approval of Warrant (2/28/23). Alderman Austin asked what GOVOS was. It is our land record digitization company. Motion by Alderwoman Austin, second by Alderwoman Kaslow. Vote 7-0. Approved unanimously.

Visitors:

Business:

7a.

1) Theresa Kajenski of Fothergill Segale & Valley spoke on Zoom about her findings from the 2021 audit. She had 13 journal entries that were changed to match the financial statements. Her two major findings were internal reconciliation of the balance sheets (45 Accounts) and approval of invoices. Mayor Chabot thanked her for all the time she has spent being our auditor and wished her well.

7b. Alderman Hawley went through all the fund balances even though the title said Fund 8 & 9. Mel spoke of a \$47k difference between the Pre-Audit number and the Post-Audit number. Alderwoman Rakowski asked if all of the reserve funds have been approved by the voters.

7c. Police Budget. Ron fixed the errors on the macros and presented the spreadsheet to the council. There was a discussion about changing the budget number because we now thought it might be cheaper. Alderman Austin asked if we were going to change the budget whenever we get something cheaper? Alderman Hawley moved to leave the police budget as approved at \$892,417 with line items rounded to the nearest dollars and reduce the interest, and round the straight time down to get to the \$892,417 with Alderwoman Kaslow seconding. Vote was 7-0 to approve.

7d. Fire Budget. Alderman Hawley moved to amend the Fire Budget by \$26,667 to pay the double payment to the Ray Davidson Fund to make the City current. Motion was seconded by Alderman Austin. Vote: 7-0.

7e. There was a discussion on the one-time \$24,000 Watershed Fund allocation to cover FY23 Budget Expense related to Recreation shown on page 16 of this months Council packet. Alderman Austin moved to pay the listed Recreation Expenses (\$^,087) from this fund allocation seconded by Alderman Huizenga. Vote: 7-0.

7f. Pump House Cleaning discussion. Alderman Austin moved to use the \$11,000 from the Watershed Fund to clean the Pump House, seconded by Alderman Huizenga. Vote: 7-0.

7g. Discussion on Sewer Connection Fees and Sewer Reservation Fees.

- 1) Sewer Connection Fees: It was found that a residence with one connection to sewer had been renovated to make the residence into 4 efficiency apartments with no additional connection permit nor were they being billed for the additional three units. These three units were done with no additional connections.
- 2) Sewer Reservation Fees: Alderman Hawley explained that this policy that was in place when he was City Manager, was taken to be \$50 for the Sewer Capacity Letter written so that the developer could get a permit from the State to proceed. Present City Staff and Zoning Administrator read it to be \$50 per "residential use" not an administrative charge for a letter as we were keeping track of sewer capacity granted which would mean if you were reserving capacity for six units, you paid \$50 for each unit as you were reserving capacity for six units, not one.

It was noted that the Zoning Administrator is rewriting the sewer connection and reservation policy so that adds a checklist to keep track of all of the forms and signatures are captured as the process goes forward so things can't be overlooked. It is expected to be presented to the council in March.

7h. Recommendation by Alderman Hawley to amend the refund policy for permit fees. This is also being included in the new policy mentioned above to be presented in March.

7i. Discussion to terminate the MOU with the Bike Club that uses MacIntosh Park. A new MOU is being presented to the City for review so there may be no need to terminate the existing MOU if the new one is agreeable. It will be reviewed by our legal and discussed at the next meeting.

7j. Alderman Austin moved to amend the City of Vergennes Resolution for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Allocation of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, approved by the Vergennes City Council on June 14, 2022, by adding "Section 2. The following allocation of ARPA funding to fund government services under the replacing lost public sector revenue spending category as follows: \$386,062.96 plus \$182.05 for a total of \$386,245.01- to offset the cost of municipal salaries and benefits in FY23, seconded by Alderwoman Kaslow. Vote: 7-0.

7k. Request to apply State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds in the amount of \$386,062.96 and \$182.05 for a total of \$386,245.01 to offset the cost of municipal salaries and benefits in FY 23. Alderman Austin made a motion to transfer this amount to Fund 10, seconded by Alderwoman Murray-Killon. Vote: 7-0.

8. Manager's Report:

- a. FY23 Budget Status Report- Done earlier in the evening on Section 7b.
- b. 1) Easement request from Maple Broadband- must go to voters at a special election as well as the other grants that need voter approval (Friends of Opera House All-Access Project, etc.)

10. The council went into executive session at 7:12 pm. per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) The Council came out of executive session at 9:30 pm. (no action taken). They immediately adjourned on motion by Alderman Austin, second by Alderwoman Murray-Killon.