

**CITY OF VIROQUA  
COUNCIL MINUTES  
MARCH 5, 2019**

**1. Roll call:**

The special meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 by Mayor Karen Mischel with Alderpersons Gregory Splinter, Terry Noble, Tanja Birke, Mike Koppa, Cyndy Hubbard, John Thompson, Sondra Naxi and Jeff Gohlke present. Alderperson Steve Bekkedal was excused. Also present were City Clerk Lori Polhamus, Administrator Nathan Torres, Public Works Director/Engineer Sarah Grainger, Park & Rec Director Dan Stalsberg, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Attorney George Hopkins and Chamber Director Nora Roughen-Schmidt attended via phone.

**2. First Period for public comment - none**

**3. Discussion with possible action on capital improvement grant collaboration with Viroqua Chamber Main Street** – Mayor Mischel reviewed a list of items that are in need of repair in the City Hall building and stated it was time to decide how much money we want to put into the building or look at other options. The Chamber has done a project plan and are applying for a RBDG grant through USDA in the amount of \$475,000. The plan would be to purchase the old Anchor Bank building on Rock Avenue, tear it down and build a multi-story building to house the Chamber, Vernon Economic Development office, Community room and kitchen space along with first floor retail incubator space and apartments above the offices. This would be the first time that the Chamber would possibly take on debt and are looking to partner with the City regarding matching funds, Tif funds or in-kind through City labor. The grant is due by March 29, 2019 and the Mayor approached Nora regarding partnering for the potential of City Offices to also be incorporated into this project. The grant is flexible enough that if it were awarded a representative from USDA would come and sit down with them to discuss the project plan so at that time the specifics could be finished. Stalsberg suggested also looking at closing the street (Court) by this area.

The relationship the Chamber would have with the City is negotiable at this time but funding the project with Tif money would depend on who is actually in the building for taxable purposes in order to get our investment back. There are other forms of financing that could be brought in such as PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) within the agreements.

Chad Buros updated the Council on the health inspection done at City Hall and the other issues found with the fire inspection. We are now at a point that we either fix the issues or move on. Alderperson Birke stated she is not interested in saving City Hall but temporary fixes only. Alderperson Gohlke suggested a referendum. Alderperson Noble would like to see the final figure on what it would cost to make the current building livable along with all the other capital projects so we don't use funding on this that could hurt other capital projects.

A motion was made by Alderperson Koppa to show support for the grant project with \$100,000 and City labor support to remove waste and let them know we have an interest in temporary tenancy in the building. After other possible changes to this motion it died for lack of a second.

Motion by Alderperson Noble/second by Alderperson Naxi to table this until the Special Council meeting set for March 19, 2019. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**4. Second period for public comment - none**

**5. Adjournment** - Motion made by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Splinter to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk