

**CITY OF VIROQUA
SPECIAL COUNCIL MINUTES
JUNE 16, 2020**

1. Roll call:

The special meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 by Mayor Karen Mischel via online zoom meeting #81698447036 with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Gregory Splinter, Terry Noble, Tanja Birke, Mike Koppa, Cyndy Hubbard, John Thompson and Peter Bergquist present. Also present were City Clerk Lori Polhamus, Administrator Nate Torres, Public Works Director Sarah Grainger, Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Park & Rec Director Dan Stalsberg, Library Directory Trina Erickson, Attorney Stephanie Hopkins, Mike Maas-ADCI and numerous members of the public.

2. First period for public comment – Toby Grotz stated concern that we are in a recession and the City Hall/Police Station project should wait 3-5 years and money put into housing instead. Jeff Gohlke stated contractors are hungry right now, great interest rates and that is exactly when you should build.

3. Discussion with possible action on 2020 Park & Rec program cancellations and authorization of refunds of program registrations – Dan Stalsberg stated there have been more cases in LaCrosse and is following the dashboard for each County as well as Health Department guidelines. Baseball has gone well with the older kids in other communities. He reviewed each program based on social distancing, equipment uses, ages, coaches, size and travel. We would provide no transportation and there would be no spectators to watch games. A form has been put together that each parent would sign. Attorney Hopkins reviewed discretionary and ministerial (administrative) risks for the Council. If we adopt policies the coaches would have to adhere to them. There is also low liability risk if residents decide to use the fields on their own. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Koppa to open the Park & Rec programs as outlined by Stalsberg in his graph for the 2020 season. Roll call vote seven in favor. One against. Motion carried. Alderperson Splinter voting no. Motion by Alderperson Koppa/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve the refunds of the programs canceled as discussed or if a parent chooses not to participate. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

4. Discussion with possible action on City Park facilities in response to Covid-19 – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to open the shelters to groups of 50 or less, bathroom facilities and park playgrounds but keep concession stand closed starting June 20th. Roll call vote seven no and one yes. Motion failed. Alderperson Noble voting yes. Motion by Alderperson Noble to open to groups of 25 or less. Motion failed for lack of a second. Motion by Alderperson Bergquist to open playground structures and bathrooms and not the shelter facilities to events. After discussion Bergquist rescinded his motion. Motion by Alderperson Koppa/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to keep the bathrooms, pavilions and park playground structures closed for the remainder of 2020 with the exception of the pavilion by the ball field at Park Bowl and the Park Bowl bathrooms and all shelter rentals will receive refunds. Roll call vote six in favor, two against. Motion passes. Alderpersons Bergquist and Noble voting no.

Alderperson Koppa left the meeting at 7:15pm

5. Discussion with possible action on scope of City Hall/Police Station project and financial analysis – Mike Maas from ADCI reviewed the project thus far with the Council. Site layouts and spaces were reviewed and explained the first site layout did not work due to elevations. The different options for building size were discussed and the pros and cons of each along with the alternative option of Vernon Communications selling their building and property also. The Building Committee met and submitted a recommendation to Council that we proceed with the combined building option of a 19,051 square foot building on the City's lot and to not pursue the purchase of the Vernon Communications building. A rendering of the building was also reviewed. Alderperson Splinter stated he does not want the facilities combined. Alderperson Birke read a statement by Erin Ford that also doesn't want them combined. Nate Torres proceeded to review the budget for the facility as it relates to the Capital Improvement Plan with the increase in cost projected for the different options presented. Jeff Gohlke stated the alley situation with Vernon Communications needs to be straightened out and agrees with the Building Committee's recommendation on not renovating an old building. Rod Olson of Vernon Communications stated there hasn't been a meeting with the businesses that will be affected by this and that the City should wait for the appraisal to come in before making a decision. It is premature to discount their building when other options may become available. Jenny Cain asked what percentage of the budget belongs to the Police Department and has concerns about a combined project. Alderperson Bergquist is not in favor of any of the options presented and does

not want to see a budget increase for the police department. Mike Maas reviewed the timeline of the project that is about two months behind but hopes to bid out in late December or early January 2021. Discussion on this will be brought back to the June 30th Council meeting and it was requested that all alderpersons do their research and be ready to make a decision at this meeting.

6. Operator license approvals (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the operator licenses presented pending background checks. Roll call vote six in favor, one abstention. Motion carried. Alderperson Tryggestad abstained.

7. Approval of 2020-2021 alcohol license renewals (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve license renewals for Gassers, Pacifico, Temple Theatre and the Viroqua Hills Golf Course. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

8. Second Period for Public Comment – Amanda Running stated that Council decided to allow some Park & Rec activities for older kids and then stated the younger kids cannot play in the parks and was wondering what they can do and who has the authority to decide to close down the programs later if they need to.

9. Adjournment - Motion made by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Birke to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk