

**CITY OF VIROQUA
COUNCIL MINUTES
FEBRUARY 23, 2021**

1. Roll call:

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 by Mayor Karen Mischel via online zoom meeting #88690194246 with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Gregory Splinter, Terry Noble, Tanja Birke, Mike Koppa, Cyndy Hubbard, John Thompson, Kristal Welter and Allison Sandbeck present. Also present were City Clerk Lori Polhamus, Administrator Nate Torres, Public Works Director/City Engineer Sarah Grainger, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Park & Rec Director Dan Stalsberg, Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, Library Director Trina Erickson, Caroline Glover, Sean Lentz, Dodie Whitaker, Scott Harrington, Jeff Maloney, Tim Hundt, Josh Straka, Sarah Pitts, Kurt Muchow, Tom Wilson, Randy Skinner, Evan Blatner, Jeff Gohlke, Nathaniel Slack and Ben Wilson

2. Approval of the February 9, 2021 Regular Council minutes – Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the minutes from the previous Council meeting. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

3. First period for public comment – None

4. Operator license approvals (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Welter to approve an operator license for Brenda Volden. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

5. Economic Development Consultant proposals for planning services for Viroqua downtown Main Street TAP grant with possible action – Grainger stated we received two proposals and both will present to the Council. Sarah Pitts and Kurt Muchow presented first for Vierbicher Associates. Scott Harrington and Jeff Maloney presented second for Vandewalle & Associates. Both firms answered questions from Council following their presentations. After consideration of both proposals a motion was made by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the proposal from Vandewalle & Associates. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

6. Discussion with possible action on creation of Diversity Board – Council reviewed the document prepared including the mission statement, objectives and terms of the Diversity Board. If approved this would be put in ordinance format for final approval. Alderperson Splinter stated he would like to consider the Board members being paid. Alderperson Birke stated there are resources on the League's website for a racial equity toolkit. Caroline Glover and Dodie Whitaker feel it should be moving forward quicker and there is a strong active group in VERJ to serve as members of this Board but they need to be paid and feel welcomed. Tom Wilson is ok with the smaller group due to the open meetings issues and feels this is a good resolution. Ben Wilson was impressed with the concept for Viroqua. Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Hubbard to move forward with the creation of the Diversity Board and put in ordinance format. Roll call vote eight in favor, one against. Motion carried. Alderperson Tryggestad voting no.

Council moved to item nine on the agenda before returning to the remainder of the agenda.

7. Discussion and possible action on proposed policy changes for City of Viroqua time off benefits (Finance) – this item was tabled.

8. Review and award of agricultural farm land bids for 2021 and 2022 season- the bids came in lower this year with a net loss of \$8064.85 in revenue over the two-year period, in part due to the changes made to the contract. Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Koppa to accept the farm land bids as presented. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

9. Discussion and possible action on additional collateral for USDA CFP loan application for the City Hall capital project – Sean Lentz stated the City Hall project funding source is with an application through the USDA Community Facilities loan program via the Redevelopment Authority. The National office of USDA is requesting additional collateral by having the City provide a note to RDA for \$500,000 as a commitment. This would also go against the City’s borrowing capacity even though it is highly unlikely that we would ever have to use it but have it in reserve upon the possible default on the loan. The concept of this has been preliminarily approved by USDA and when the note is issued it would come back to Council for final approval. Ehlers and Quarles & Brady have all approved the concept as well. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Thompson to accept the additional collateral proposal as presented as part of the USDA Community Facilities loan application. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

10. Payment of bills (Finance) - Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the payment of bills on report date 02/18/2021 in the amount of \$1,850,165.41 and additional bills on report date 2/23/2021 for \$55,983.09. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

11. Second Period for Public Comment – None

12. Adjournment - Motion made by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Sandbeck to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk