

**CITY OF VIROQUA
COUNCIL MINUTES
MAY 25, 2021**

1. Roll call:

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 by Mayor Karen Mischel via online zoom meeting #85023232366 with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Gregory Splinter, Nathaniel Slack, Tanja Birke, Ben Wilson, Cyndy Hubbard, John Thompson and Kristal Welter present. Alderperson Allison Sandbeck was excused. Also present were City Clerk Lori Polhamus, Administrator Nate Torres, Public Works Director/City Engineer Sarah Grainger, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, Library Director Trina Erickson, Randy Skinner, Laci Sheldon, Dodie Whitaker, Lance Eitland, Charlie Handy, Chad Hoyum, Tim Hundt and Youssef Almas

2. Approval of the May 11, 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. Appointment of Citizen members to Diversity Advisory Board- Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Hubbard to nominate Dodie Whitaker. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Slack to nominate Whitney Dregne. Roll call vote four in favor, four against. Vote was tied so Mayor Mischel voted aye and motion carried. Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Welter to nominate Youssef Almas. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried. Whitaker, Dregne and Almas will all serve a term of three years.

5. Discussion with possible action on Smart Bus contribution for electric vehicles for 2022 budget – Charlie Handy from La Crosse County is the Smart Bus coordinator. Their committee is looking at the option of purchasing either a diesel bus or two electric buses which they have grant funds for but the local match would still be needed. The cost of the diesel bus is \$100,000 and the electric ones are \$300,000. They currently have eight buses and with the grant funding they are asking for help with the \$18,000 gap in funds with our 1/3 portion of \$6000 in the 2022 budget. Our current contribution is \$2000 for operating funds. Although the Council could not commit funds until the budget process this fall, the Council was in support of the electric bus concept moving forward.

6. Operator license approvals – Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the pre-sent list of operators for the 7/1/2021 renewals pending background checks being completed. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Action on alcohol license renewals for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 (Public Safety) – Tangled Hickory had a change in premise description after Public Safety met so it is recommended to send this back to Public Safety for further review. Twelve Twelve LLC also included their outside patio which still has to have a fence added before this can be part of their premise. Motion by Alderperson Splinter/second by Alderperson Slack to approve the alcohol license renewals as presented with Tangled Hickory being sent back to Public Safety and Twelve Twelve LLC held pending the approval of the fence. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

8. Approval of Visu-sewer proposal for lining sewer for easement between Main Street and Rusk Avenue (Public Works) – this project is tied to the water main replacement under item nine and would come from sewer reserves at a cost of \$24,845.25. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the Visu-sewer proposal with the condition that we do the water main project and it is approved by USDA. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

9. Approval of water main replacement for easement between Main Street and Rusk Avenue under Badger Environmental contract (possible change order for S Rusk & Washington project) (Public Works) – the

water line would be moved south of the current sewer line and connect water service to the distillery property with a 6" service. The project is time sensitive and needs USDA approval to become a part of the current project and would come back as a change order. The change order amount would be \$65,220 with additional costs of \$6522 for contingency, \$8600 for engineering services for a total of \$80,342.00. The funds would come from the remaining water loan from USDA since bids came in lower for the project rather than using contingency. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the water main replacement pending USDA approval. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

10. Discussion with possible action regarding Covid-19 mitigation policies – Council discussed the changes from the CDC and the plan for re-opening City Hall and public meetings going forward. Due to the limited space in the current City Hall and open meetings law, it was recommended to remain virtual for meetings until the new City Hall is built but other options such as a hybrid setup can be explored. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Welter to go with the mitigation policy as proposed with opening City Hall on June 1st recommending masks from the unvaccinated public, keeping virtual meetings and staff masking up as a courtesy for masked visitors. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

11. Possible closed session per Wis. Stats 19.85 (1)(c) – considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governing body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility – Street Auxiliary Worker & Utility Auxiliary Worker Positions (Public Works)- Motion by Alderperson Wilson/second by Alderperson Welter to enter closed session at 8:22 pm. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

12. Reconvene in open session with possible action on items discussed during closed session – Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Welter to reconvene in open session at 8:29 pm. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried. Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the hires for the Street and Utility Auxiliary worker positions as discussed in closed session. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

13. Payment of bills (Finance) - Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the payment of bills on report date 05/20/2021 in the amount of \$249,638.14 and additional bills on report date 5/25/2021 for \$16,562.64. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

14. Second Period for Public Comment – None

15. Adjournment - Motion made by Alderperson Slack/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk