

**CITY OF VIROQUA  
COUNCIL MINUTES  
OCTOBER 26, 2021**

**1. Roll call:**

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 26, 2021 by Mayor Karen Mischel via online zoom meeting #88075608427 with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Gregory Splinter, Joseph Ahler, Tanja Birke, Cyndy Hubbard, John Thompson and Kristal Welter present. Alderpersons Ben Wilson and Steve Willis were excused. Also present were City Clerk Lori Polhamus, Administrator Nate Torres, Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, Park & Rec Director Dan Stalsberg, Library Director Trina Erickson, Public Works Director Sarah Grainger, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Utility Clerk Cheryl Purvis, Deputy Clerk Jodie Olson, Jeff Maloney (Vanderwalle), Robert Jack (Strand), Sean O'Brien (Northpointe Development), Monica Klempel (Liberty National) as well as several members of the public.

**2. Approval of the October 12, 2021 Regular Council minutes** – Motion by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the minutes from the previous Council meeting. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**3. First period for public comment –**

- (a) Emma Hood – Diversity Board members at the 10/6 meeting were subjected to inappropriate behavior and needs leadership
- (b) Aurora Boyd-had concerns about how the Diversity Board was created
- (c) Allison Starn – gave background of Diversity Board and what has happened since
- (d) Evelyn Sumer – Diversity Board should have been prepped before the 10/6 meeting
- (e) Mary Henry – Wants Council to move forward with the ATV/UTV ordinance with trial period
- (f) Roger Call – reviewed the petition in support of ATV/UTVs that was done with local businesses
- (g) Mike Bieser – opposed to ATV/UTVs route and on all streets due to noise and safety concerns
- (h) Vern Britt – in favor of ATV/UTVs, diesel trucks are louder and they follow all traffic laws
- (i) Vicki Ramsay – we need to listen to the Diversity Board as we aren't experts, concerned about South Street route for ATVs as this is also an ambulance route
- (j) Kelly Skoda – too early to make decision on ATV/UTVs, more info needed with surveys and education
- (k) Evan Blattner – against ATV/UTVs due to safety concerns and noise and they don't meet same standards as vehicles
- (l) Shawn Engh – interesting that everyone that is pro diversity is anti other ideas they don't agree with
- (m) Sue Veres – concerned about children safety and ATVs and asked for police opinion on these

**4. Approval of certified survey map – Marv Hansen (Plan Commission)** – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve the certified survey map. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**5. Operator license approvals (Public Safety)-** Motion by Alderperson Wilson/second by Alderperson Ahler to approve operator licenses for Robert Johnson and Kimberly Gilbert. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**6. Review of the creation and role with possible action on the Diversity Advisory Board-** Mayor Mischel reviewed how the board was formed and read the ordinance and their mission statement. It was acknowledged that we have more work to do as the original intent of the board isn't working in light of recent events. Alderperson Wilson stated that this board doesn't fit with the structure of city government to make people feel safe in the setting of open meetings. Regular education is needed on diversity, equity and inclusion. Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Welter to have the work of the Diversity Advisory Board pause and focus on the process and education and address any safety concerns. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried. Alderpersons Birke and Welter will talk to the current members to see if they are still willing to serve on the board.

**7. Council appointment to Diversity Advisory Board to replace Ben Wilson - tabled**

**8. Discussion with possible action on ATV/UTV concept plan (Public Safety)**- Motion made by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Welter to send this back to Public Safety to discuss and consider a permitting process for Viroqua residents only to be able to drive their ATV/UTVs on city streets, and that discussion should include but is not limited to a discussion of litigation risk, licensing, insurance, age restrictions, time of day use, street restrictions, speed limits, noise limits and emissions. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried. Other items suggested to be considered were traffic counts, school zones and the Main Street project.

**9. Discussion with possible action on downtown Main Street Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant road project improvements (Committee of the Whole)** – Jeff Maloney of Vanderwalle showed street scape options for option 2C that was discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting to give the Council an idea of what could be done. Motion by Alderperson Splinter/second by Alderperson Ahler to select option 2C for the Main Street TAP grant road improvement project. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**10. Approval to apply for WisDOT LRIP Discretionary and Supplement grant funding for West South Street (Public Works)**- this is a 90% grant for the resurfacing of West South Street from Rock Avenue to Sidie Hollow Road that was included in the 2024 capital improvement plan. It would include widening of the street and extending the multi-use path from Rock Avenue. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Splinter to apply for the WisDOT LRIP discretionary and supplement grant funds including the multi-use path. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**11. Approval to apply for WisDOT LRIP local grant funds for Prairie Wind Way or West Parkinson (Public Works)**- this is a 50% grant for \$15,000 and would be for updating the road on Prairie Wind Way. It would be an internal crew project. This was not part of the capital improvement plan as development in this area hadn't occurred when the plan was put together. Motion by Alderperson Splinter/second by Alderperson Welter to apply for the WisDOT LRIP local grant funds for Prairie Wind Way. Roll call vote seven in favor, one abstention. Motion carried. Alderperson Birke abstained.

**12. Approval to request to submit grant application for Neighborhood Investment Fund Grant program on behalf of Northpointe Development**- Sean O'Brien of Northpointe Development updated Council on their plan for applying for this grant to hopefully purchase the old county highway shop property to put in affordable workforce housing with 40-45 units and mixed-use commercial space. They would be the long-term owners of the properties. Grant funds were announced in late August with applications due November 4<sup>th</sup>. Nothing is guaranteed and would be contingent on them obtaining the property from the County. Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Birke to approve submission of the grant application for Northpointe Development. Roll call vote seven in favor, one abstention. Alderperson Splinter abstained.

**13. Review and approval of draft 2022 budget (Finance)** – it has been through all the committees and there have been a few changes since the publication as our work comp premium has gone down and the municipal court contribution has gone up. The overall budget will be approved after the public hearing on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

**14. Discussion with possible action on amendment to Southwest Sanitation contract** – the terms of the contract should have been for two years but the wording had for three years so this is correcting the language. As a compromise, rather than a 50-cent increase in fees in 2022 it will only be 25 cents with 50 cents in 2023. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the Southwest Sanitation contract amendment. Roll call vote seven in favor, one against. Motion carried. Alderperson Birke voting no.

**15. Approval of 2022 Driftless Humane Society contract**- Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Wilson to approve the 2022 Driftless Humane Society contract for \$16,493.34. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**16. Approval of Coon Prairie Trail contract** – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the ten-year commitment of \$1700 per year for the Coon Prairie Trail. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**17. Discussion with possible action on returning to in-person meetings** – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Wilson to continue with zoom meetings at this time. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**18. Review and approval of ordinance establishing City Wards based on the 2020 census-first reading** – Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Ahler to approve the first reading of ordinance 21OR005. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**19. Review with possible acceptance on offering employee paid benefits through Liberty National (Finance/Personnel)** – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Birke to approve offering employee paid benefits through Liberty National. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**20. Approval of pay request #4 for Brickl Bros. – City Hall project-** Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Birke to approve pay request #4 for \$231,968.53. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**21. Payment of bills (Finance)** - Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the payment of bills on report date 10/21/2021 in the amount of \$469,143.94 and additional bills on report date 10/26/2021 for \$18,287.61. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**22. Second Period for Public Comment** – Evan Blattner thanked the council for making tough decisions and liked the sidewalk experience described with the Main Street project. Tom Holmes asked why we continue to use Southwest Sanitation as the costs keep going up and the size of containers goes down. Recycling and garbage both should be picked up weekly.

**23. Adjournment** - Motion made by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to adjourn the meeting at 10:04 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk