

**CITY OF VIROQUA
COUNCIL MINUTES
NOVEMBER 30, 2021**

1. Roll call:

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 30, 2021 by Mayor Karen Mischel via online zoom meeting #88953533476 with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Gregory Splinter, Joseph Ahler, Tanja Birke, Ben Wilson, Cyndy Hubbard, John Thompson, Kristal Welter and Steve Willis present. 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, Justin Miller, Shauna Anderson, Jenny Cain, Youssef Almas, Steve Thompson, Shelley Gunn, Roger Call, Tom Burkhalter, Aurora Boyd, Emma Hood, Dodie Whitaker, Roy Gunn, Evan Blattner and Nancy Bongers.

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

3. First period for public comment – None

Council moved to item eight before finishing balance of agenda.

4. Public hearing on conditional use of property at 601 Arena Drive for an early learning center and/or childcare facility/preschool – Viroqua Area Schools- the public hearing was opened at 7:06pm. The school plans to purchase the property by the end of the year. With the child care shortage, they hope to fill a need in the community as well as a head start program. They would have an outside play area on the south east side of the property. There are multiple outlets, setbacks are good and plenty of greenspace. Tom Burkhalter updated on the possibilities of having the staffing in house or lease it out and operate 12 months of the year. All options are being explored. Shelley Gunn asked about impact on Wild West Days and their events would not be happening around the same time as the school and a school waiver on the temporary alcohol licensing could be done. The public hearing was closed at 7:23pm.

5. Approval of conditional use of property at 601 Arena Drive (Plan Commission)- Motion by Alderperson Wilson/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the conditional use. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

6. Approval of certified survey map – Vernon Memorial Healthcare (Plan Commission)- Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Willis to approve the certified survey map. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Approval of temporary Class “B” beer license for Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School Holiday Faire on December 4, 2021 (Public Safety)- Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Splinter to approve the Class B license. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

8. Appointment of Justin Miller to Tourism Commission to replace Dani Lind whose one-year term expires 4/30/2022- Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Ahler to approve the appointment of Justin Miller to Tourism Commission. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

9. Appointment of Kathryn Ashley to Tourism Commission to replace Ted Parrish whose one-year term expires 4/30/2022 -Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the appointment of Kathryn Ashley to Tourism Commission. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

10. Approval of contract amendment to ag land lease and authorize settlement- We had 2.6 acres of land behind the Wild West Days area leased to both Joe Vesbach and Wild West Days since 2017. Vesbach was contacted and is fine with removing this area from his lease and we will reimburse him for the acreage overpayment

in the amount of \$1950. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the contract amendment and authorize payment for the settlement. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

11. Discussion with possible action on Wild West Days lease (Public Property)- Torres reviewed the lease for 2022-2026 for the 16.3 acres at \$75/acre. The previous lease was \$65/acre. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve the Wild West Days lease for 2022-2026. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

12. Discussion with possible action on direction of Diversity Advisory Board – Alderpersons Birke and Welter reached out to the members of the Diversity Board and the feedback received was that the equity and inclusion issue is bigger than the open meetings requirements under the current setup. There are heightened feelings of being unsafe and feel that hiring an outside consultant to guide the city would be better than having community members put at risk. A regional approach may be an idea but it is important work that is hard to accomplish under the open meetings laws that government has. Motion by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Wilson to dissolve the Diversity Advisory Board and come back with a better plan for the future. Roll call vote four in favor, five against. Motion failed. Alderpersons Tryggestad, Ahler, Wilson and Thompson voting in favor. Required diversity, equity and inclusion trainings of employees and elected officials along with meeting transcripts were suggested. Youssef Almas spoke in support of the work of the Diversity Advisory Board. Motion by Alderperson Birke to hire a consultant and recommends the Diversity Advisory Board dissolve. Motion later rescinded by Birke. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Welter to dissolve the Diversity Advisory Board and hire a consultant as soon as possible to get ideas on how to proceed on diversity, equity and inclusion work. 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 11/24/2021 in the amount of \$391,616.95 and additional bills on report date 11/30/2021 for \$145,434.81. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

14. Second Period for Public Comment – None

15. Adjournment - Motion made by Alderperson Wilson/second by Alderperson Welter to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk