

**CITY OF VIROQUA  
COUNCIL MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 14, 2023**

**1. Roll call:**

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 by Mayor Justin Running at City Hall and via Zoom with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Andrew Bergum, Joe Ahler, Tanja Birke, Todd Spaeth, Cyndy Hubbard, John Thompson and Steve Willis present. Alderperson Kristal Welter was excused. Also present were City Clerk Lori Polhamus, City Administrator Nate Torres, City Engineer/Public Works Director Sarah Grainger, Library Director Trina Erickson, Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, Fire Chief Chad Buros and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Jodie Olson.

**2. Approval of the January 31, 2023 Regular Council minutes** – Motion by Alderperson Willis/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the minutes of the previous meetings. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**3. Council Announcements** – None

**4. First period for public comment** – None

**5. Recognition of Jodie Olson for years of service to City of Viroqua** – Olson was presented a plaque for her twenty plus years of service to the City at Deputy Clerk/Treasurer.

**6. Approval of interim loan extension at Royal Bank for city hall project** – Since we cannot close the USDA loan until the project is complete, we need to extend the interim financing out a second time. Our second extension came due on 2/1/2023 for the principal amount of \$2,014,711.28 and interest of \$24,107.66. We can extend until 8/31/2023 at a 4.29% interest. The final rates with USDA will be 2.25%. Motion by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Hubbard to approve the interim loan extension with Royal Bank at the 4.29% interest until 8/31/2023. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**7. Review and approval of Vierbicher proposal for fire station project support** – this is for administrative support for the USDA process to manage the grant process. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Spaeth to approve the Vierbicher proposal. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**8. Approval of engagement letter with Johnson Block for WEDC grant services for Hotel Fortney** – as part of the grant process it is required that Hotel Fortney have an audit done. Because the grant funding flows through the city the engagement letter with the auditor also needs to go through the city. Hotel Fortney will be responsible for these costs as part of the agreement. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Ahler to approve the engagement letter for audit services. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**9. Approval of development agreement with Round River Distilling for CDI grant** – the development agreement is part of the application process and does not include any payments to them but spells out the process as part of the application in support of the project since the funds flow through the city. Motion by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Bergum to approve the development agreement. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**10. Discussion with possible action on ag land leases** – we received the bids in, however they were not opened. There was some confusion after the last council in regards to the airport area and what was considered part of the conventional versus organic portion. The grass runway has 31.24 acres that would need to be conventional, otherwise would need a buffer zone as the airport sprays this area for maintenance. There was also 1.91 acres that will be pulled out of another area due to potential development. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Spaeth to amend the contracts to remove the 1.91 acres and recategorize the parcels as an alternate option with all parcels around the airport as conventional including the grass runway and extend the bid process out to 2/27/2023 at end of day. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried. Torres will contact all the bidding farmers with this change.

**11. Presentation of Police Department Annual Report** – Chief Niedfeldt reviewed a slide presentation with the Council and answered questions.

**12. Payment of bills (Finance)** - Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Ahler to approve the payment of bills on report date 02/09/2023 in the amount of \$149,648.00 and additional bills on report date 02/14/2023 for \$1,874,831.67. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

**13. Second Period for Public Comment** – None

**14. Adjournment** - Motion made by Alderperson Bergum/second by Alderperson Willis to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk