

**CITY OF VIROQUA
COUNCIL MINUTES
FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

1. Roll call:

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28, 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, Kristal Welter and Steve Willis present. 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, Park & Rec Director Kale Proksch, Angie Cina, Chad Hoyum, Glen Martin, Tyler Conn, Evan Blatner, Dallas Severs, Sonja Newenhouse, Carson LaBelle, Vicki Ramsay, Joanna Lottig and Arwyn Wildhack.

2. Approval of the February 14, 2023 Regular Council minutes – Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Ahler to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

3. Council Announcements – Alderperson Spaeth stated he and Alderpersons Bergum and Birke met with department heads and they all did a good job

4. First period for public comment – Evan Blattner, Sonya Newenhouse, Vicki Ramsay, Joanna Lottig and Arwyn Wildhack spoke in support of No Mow May. Dallas Severs would like the old City Hall opened up to any developers to pursue.

5. Operator license approvals (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Bergum to approve operator licenses for Tyler Conn, Lavdrim Saliu and Bradley Otto and conditionally approve the license for JoAnn Palmer once proof of class attendance is received. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

6. Approval of Class B beer and Class C wine license for The Woolly Bear LLC at 117 E Terhune Street (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Hubbard to approve the licenses on the condition that they have an approved health inspection and get proper building permits as needed. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Approval of Class B beer and Class C wine license renewal for Viroqua Family Restaurant at 854 North Main Street (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Willis to approve the license renewals. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

8. Discussion with possible action on request for Vernon County 4H short term meat chicken program at 220 Rock Avenue Bathhouse location - tabled

9. Approval of special event application for VMH movie nights – these would be held in the Park Bowl parking lot as a fundraiser for VMH on June 16th and July 28th. There are no backup dates set but could work within the Park and Rec schedule if needed. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Hubbard to approve the special event application to work within the Park & Rec schedule. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

10. Discussion with possible action on ag land leases – we received six bids with the high bids as follows: Parcels 1 & 2 - \$206/acre each and Parcels 3 & 4 - \$226/acre each. The high bid for all was Joe Clark but parcels 1 & 2 have the first right of refusal and they would need to match the bids received. Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Thompson to approve the amounts listed in the bids. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

11. Discussion with possible action on No Mow May and possible amendment to noxious weed ordinance – Alderperson Birke stated she would like to see a resolution passed suspending the tall grass ordinance for May and look at it each year. Appleton was the first city to do this. It would be a city wide resolution and then residents would have to bring their lawns into compliance in the first few days of June. We do not have an intern in May so

this would work well with that schedule. Signs were discussed but that would be an additional administrative task so this would be citywide. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Welter to move forward with a resolution for no mow may and revisit this again next year. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried. Also discussed was section 8.32.040 regarding noxious weeds and Torres reviewed the timeline that currently exists with the use of notifications prior to citations. If we would eliminate the letter notification, we could speed up the process. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Ahler to move forward with the ordinance amendment to remove the notification and move straight to citations. Voice vote eight in favor, one against. Motion carried. Alderperson Hubbard voted no.

12. Discussion with possible action regarding old City Hall building (202 N Main St) – Grainger stated she is still waiting on info from the DOT on the update on moving 56 to Broadway. We cannot connect the street lights to the building. She shared the potential turning movement of traffic at the Main/Decker intersection that was provided by Strand. Torres would like to treat this building the same as others up for development with an open until we receive a proposal rather than a dedicated timeline. Mayor Running would like to see some kind of timeline on it so we can move forward. Torres stated he could give a monthly update to Council. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Spaeth to put a June 1st deadline on proposals. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

13. Presentation of Fire Department Annual Report – Chief Buros gave a slide presentation and answered questions from the Council.

14. Possible closed session per WI Stats. 19.85 (1)(e) – deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session – VDA land purchase - Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Welter to enter closed session at 9:01 pm. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

15. Reconvene in open session with possible action on items discussed during closed session – Motion by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Hubbard to reconvene in open session at 9:48 pm. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried. No action was taken.

16. Possible closed session per WI Stats 19.85 (1)(g) – conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved – City Hall – Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Thompson to enter closed session at 9:49 pm. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

17. Reconvene in open session with possible action on items discussed during closed session – Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Willis to reconvene in open session at 10:15 pm. This motion was rescinded and the council remained in closed session. Motion by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Bergum to reconvene in open session at 10:18 pm. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Hubbard to allow the Administrator to proceed as discussed in closed session with a cost up to \$5000. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

18. Payment of bills (Finance) - Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Ahler to approve the payment of bills on report date 02/24/2023 in the amount of \$330,645.74 and additional bills on report date 02/28/2023 for \$157,906.73 plus two additional bills for GFL Environmental of \$24,747.90 each. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

19. Second Period for Public Comment – None

20. Adjournment - Motion made by Alderperson Ahler/second by Alderperson Willis to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk