

**CITY OF VIROQUA
COUNCIL MINUTES
JULY 11, 2023**

1. Roll call:

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 by Mayor Justin Running at City Hall and via Zoom with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Andrew Bergum, Tanja Birke, Todd Spaeth, Cyndy Hubbard, John Thompson, Kristal Welter and Steve Willis present. Also present were City Administrator Nate Torres, Deputy Clerk Joy Conley, Director of Public Works/City Engineer Sarah Grainger, Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, Officer Robert Raasch, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Park & Rec Director Kale Proksch, Chad Hoyum, Trina Erickson, Dallas Seevers, Heather Seevers, Richard Running, Toby Grotz, Gregory Splinter, Aaron Parker, Carson La Belle

2. Approval of the June 13, 2023 Regular Council minutes – Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Bergum to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Tanja Birke requested an addition to item 14 to add: site lines for the pedestrian walkway. Spaeth and Bergum were ok with the amendment to their motion. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

3. Council Announcements – none.

4. First period for public comment – Gregory Splinter shared his perspective on the Northpointe Development project and the money aspect of it going to a developer outside the city. Toby Grotz also spoke that he had tried to contact Jake at Northpointe via phone and email and drove to two of their locations (pictures via slide were presented to show what these buildings looked like). He did not think the city should use an outside source. Dallas Seevers presented a few additional points on the old City Hall building regarding his proposal and requested more time be taken to look into all options and decide what to do.

5. Review/approval of resolution designating July as Park & Recreation month (Park & Rec) – Kale informed everyone that July is Park & Recreation month and he is looking for the city to recognize it here in Viroqua. Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Thompson to approve resolution 023RS010 to designate July as Park & Recreation month. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

6. Review/approval of resolution in support of Wisconsin Act 12 local government funding legislation – Nate went over how the state passed a resolution to change local government funding that provided a 20% annual increase with an additional bump each year in sales tax. The proposed resolution was basically a thank you to our legislature. Alderperson Birke expressed she felt the city should have been getting the additional money for years and mentioned the state restricts how we can spend the money. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Bergum to approve resolution 023RS011 in support of Wisconsin Act 12 local government funding legislation. Voice vote 7 in favor, 1 opposed with Alderperson Birke opposed. Motion passes.

7. Discussion with possible action on next steps for the old city hall building – Motion by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Thompson to raze old city hall and follow up with remediation ASAP. Alderpersons Willis and Hubbard expressed concern that there is no plan in place for vacant lot. Alderperson Welter asked if it was known what it would take to fix the corner if the building was gone. Grainger showed a diagram of the corner now and with the changes. Alderperson Welter said she would like to see a plan and cost before deciding. Mayor Running reminded the council the primary concern is public safety and the building being there is a hazard and with the building currently vacant now is a good opportunity to do something. Alderperson Willis feels there needs to be a better vision and plan on how to re-use the property. Alderperson Hubbard questioned why tear down the building if the street lights would remain where they are at. Alderperson Birke said the stop lights and site lines are two issues. Sarah Grainger said the DOT is not interested in moving Highway 56 at this time. Alderperson Birke feels downtown needs more green space and feels a plan is needed first. Torres said a quote to remove the building was received for \$65,000 and mentioned with the loss of revenue (approximately \$3,900 in taxes) the expenses would go away. Alderperson Birke asked Grainger if she knew approximately how long the process would be to move the sidewalk and street light poles and Grainger said not long. Alderperson

Tryggestad voiced his concern with public safety and asked Torres to show the videos of the street light area being struck by semi-trucks. Torres showed the council video of the most recent accident where a truck turning east on Decker struck the street light on the west side with its tail end knocking it to the ground, followed by a second video of a truck turning west at the corner running over the cone that was in place of the street light that was struck down a few months ago. Alderperson Willis asked if they could commit to doing something to solve the problem. Mayor Running said tonight was to set direction on what to do next. Voice vote all in favor to raze old city hall and follow up with remediation ASAP. Motion carried.

8. Approval of seal coat bids (Public Works) – Sarah Grainger went over the micro-surfacing bid from Struck & Irwin Paving. They are able to do the work in the next few weeks while the main street construction is going on, otherwise it would be at the end of the construction year. Quote on bid is \$14,957. The budget is at \$60,000 so that leaves \$45,043 remaining. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the bid from Struck & Irwin Paving. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

9. Review/approval of budget and police union bargaining timelines (Finance) – Torres explained he and Lori designed a timeline to streamline the budget process and provided a slide to show the new process. The timeline included the process for the Police Union Bargaining. This would allow more time for department heads to have conversations with their committee before coming to council. Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve and move forward with new timelines. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

10. Appointment of Police Union Bargaining Committee members – Mayor Running said in addition to himself, Nate Torres, and Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, he nominates Todd Spaeth and Andrew Bergum as committee members. Motion by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Thompson to accept the nomination. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

11. Payment of Bills (Finance) – Motion by Alderperson Kirking/second by Alderperson Hubbard to approve payment of bills in the amount of \$159,015.43 and additional bills of \$19,278.84. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

12. Second Period for Public Comment – Carson Labelle told the council that he was on the corner by old city hall and almost got hit. Aaron Parker spoke on planning, priorities, and budget.

13. Adjournment - Motion made by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Welter to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Joy E. Conley, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer