

**CITY OF VIROQUA
COUNCIL MINUTES
JULY 25, 2023**

1. Roll call:

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 by Mayor Justin Running at City Hall and via Zoom with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Andrew Bergum, Todd Kirking, 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, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Police Chief Rick Niedfelt, Public Works Director Sarah Grainger, Library Director Trina Erickson, Park & Rec Director Kale Proksch, Street Superintendent Chad Hoyum, Aaron Parker, Carson LaBelle, Dallas Seevers, Angie Cina, Lisa Henner, Randy Skinner, Chris Clemens, Evan Blatner, Dian Krause, Eddy Nix, Rebecca Gustafson, Sonja Newenhouse, Nancy Rhodes, Mary Benson, Heather Seevers, Tom Wilson as well as several other members of the public.

2. Approval of the July 11, 2023 Special Council minutes – Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

3. Council Announcements – Alderperson Bergum stated he was contacted regarding the city hall demolition and was also asked to petition the DOT regarding the location of the truck route.

4. First period for public comment – Chris Clemens stated the Chamber is launching a new website on Tuesday. The remaining comments pertained to the old city hall:

- Dian Krause, 520 Prairie Ln – sent a letter from the Historical Society to the Council asking to save city hall
- Dallas Seevers, 620 W Decker – urge Council to take more time before making decision to tear down the building
- Eddy Nix, 518 Walnut St – gave history of the building, give it more time, and suggested holographic street lights
- Rebecca Gustafson– 524 E South St – she is a business owner and the building is valuable and needs more time
- Sonya Newenhouse-422 Hickory St – it is sustainable, it is expensive to build new, the green space will probably not be used, we need more retail and apartments, it is costly to tear down and it would be long term taxable property
- Nancy Rhodes – discussed the Main Street program from 1987. We cannot afford to lose any buildings; we need more retail space and we should petition the DOT to move trucks off Decker to Broadway.
- Mary Benson – 611 S Rock Ave, need the DOT to move the location of the trucks and get the community behind it.
- Heather Seevers – 620 W Decker, take time to consider all options
- Carson LaBelle – Dionne Lane, no one tonight has come up with a plan for this but rather just dumped it on City Council to figure out
- Aaron Parker – 111 N Lincoln, agrees with several who already spoke but we need a plan going forward
- Tom Wilson – 707 Railroad Ave, the building is structurally sound but not feasible as a city hall but there are possibilities for other things and feels traffic should be moved off Decker and not rush the vote to demolish

5. Operator license approvals (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Birke to approve licenses for Lukas Hanson, Chase Haakenson, Melissa Iverson, Jill Tretsven, Blake Claxton and Shae Mcculloch. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

6. Review/approval of temporary class B beer license for Wild West Days August 18-20, 2023 (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Willis/second by Alderperson Spaeth to approve the temporary Class B beer license for Wild West Days. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Review/approval of temporary class B beer license for Wild West Days Little Britches Rodeo September 8-10, 2023 (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Willis to approve the temporary class b beer license for Wild West Days. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

8. Review/approval of temporary class B beer and wine license for Wild West Days Twinkle Light village Christmas market November 25-December 16, 2023 (Public Safety) – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Bergum to approve the temporary beer and wine licenses for Wild West Days. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

9. Review and approval of special event permits for Harvest Parade & Celebration, Wild West Days Parade and Taste of Viroqua – Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Bergum to approve the Harvest Parade permit and to winterize the bathrooms at the end of September as usual. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried. Motion by Alderperson Bergum/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve the permit for the Wild West Days parade. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried. Council discussed the Taste of Viroqua at the VFW and since this is not on city grounds this was an informational event application only so no action was taken.

10. Appointment of budget team members – Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Bergum to appoint Nate Torres, Justin Running, Kristal Welter and Tanja Birke to the budget team. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

11. Update on economic impact from 2023 Book Festival and planning for 2024- Trina Erickson – Trina Erickson and Lisa Henner updated the council on the festival that was held April 28-30, 2023 and the next one is scheduled for April 26-28, 2024 with Dian Krause as co-chair next year.

12. Discussion/action on demolition of old city hall

- Discussion/action regarding Historic Preservation Commission recommendation against demolition

Alderperson Hubbard read parts of the Historic Preservation ordinance and asked other members to speak. The building is not designated historic as there were changes made to the windows and it was never nominated for consideration. They urge the council to look at all input and take more time to see if it can be saved.

- Public Safety input regarding old city hall – Sarah Grainger read two letters from the DOT regarding the site triangle, jurisdictional transfer and changing traffic to West Broadway. The city retains ownership of this intersection and we could move the curb line in 15 feet and move the light pole if the building wasn't there. It takes a long time to hear back from the DOT and any major changes would be at least 4-5 years to get on their schedule as they allocate resources elsewhere. Chad Hoyum stated by moving the traffic from Hwy 56 to Broadway you are now making trucks turning north to make two turns versus going straight putting the issue on the opposite tight corner and the road ratings are not set for semis on West Broadway. Alderperson Thompson stated that intersection was built for Model T's not today's vehicles. Chief Niedfelt reviewed traffic counts. Chief Buross stated that it is when, not if, we have a fatality at that corner as we have had a lot of close calls. The building needs a lot of work as well.

- Discussion/action on plan for move out & demolition of old city hall – Alderperson Birke stated the site line issues are a problem. She was almost hit at these intersections and is disappointed that HPC did not do a certificate of appropriateness for the building but are now coming forward to save the building. We need to get Hwy 56 moved either way so an investigation with the DOT is needed. Torres stated that HPC did review the old city hall originally and stated they were not interested in it but there are new members on there now. Alderperson Welter said there are costs to waiting such as insurance, maintenance, and utilities. Torres shared the timeline for move out with the council. The budget to demo was \$80,820 to remove the basement and \$77,420 to cave in the walls and bury. Torres also reviewed the budget for moving the light. The DOT estimate was \$208,630 which would be funded by the additional TAP funds that will not be necessary now so those funds could be allocated out of Tid 6. It was also suggested by Alderperson Hubbard to nominate this location as a historic site versus a historic building. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Spaeth to move forward with the demolition timeline as discussed. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

13. Discussion and possible action regarding purchase of portion of Bathhouse property – Viroqua Housing Authority – the retaining wall at Park View Manor is failing and the Dept. of Housing is requiring to have it fixed. They are asking to purchase a 10 ft x 83ft section of the bathhouse property to make it an easier fix and lease the lower level of the filter house. Motion by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Bergum to move forward with drafting the sale documents with the Housing Authority as discussed. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Aldersperson Hubbard left the meeting at 9:30 pm.

14. Discussion with possible action on TAP project minimum offer approval amount (Public Works) – With the downtown project we need temporary limited easements from property owners which allows the use of their property during construction. The recommended amount was \$300/property which there are approximately twelve. Motion by Aldersperson Birke/second by Aldersperson Tryggestad to approve the \$300/easement for construction. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

15. Review and approval of Financial Management Policy – tabled from 6/27/2023 meeting – Polhamus and Torres reviewed the policy with the council and answered questions. Motion by Aldersperson Tryggestad/second by Aldersperson Welter to approve the financial management policy. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

16. 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 – Olson Storage, LLC development plan at Tax parcel 286-01356-0002 – the council reviewed the landscape plan of the storage unit development that is northwest of the Ennis property. Motion by Aldersperson Thompson/second by Aldersperson Tryggestad to approve the development plan for Olson Storage LLC contingent on engineering review and VDA approval. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

17. Reconvene in open session with possible action on items discussed during closed session – n/a

18. Payment of bills (Finance) - Motion by Aldersperson Birke/second by Aldersperson Bergum to approve the payment of bills on report date 07/20/2023 in the amount of \$160,065.23 and additional bills on report date 07/25/2023 for \$82,965.34. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

19. Second Period for Public Comment – None

20. Adjournment - Motion made by Aldersperson Bergum/second by Aldersperson Spaeth to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk