

**CITY OF VIROQUA
COUNCIL MINUTES
OCTOBER 10, 2023**

1. Roll call:

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 by Mayor Justin Running at City Hall and via Zoom with Alderpersons David Tryggestad, Andrew Bergum, Todd Kirking, Tanja Birke, Todd Spaeth, John Thompson, Kristal Welter, and Steve Willis present. Alderperson Cyndy Hubbard was excused. Also present were City Clerk Lori Polhamus, City Administrator Nate Torres, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Public Works Director Sarah Grainger, Library Director Trina Erickson, and Park & Rec Director Kale Proksch.

2. Approval of the September 26, 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 – None

4. First period for public comment – None

5. Reappointment of Jess Johnson and Jean Klousia to Board of Appeals for three-year terms expiring 5/1/2026 – Motion by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Kirking to approve the reappointments of Johnson and Klousia to Board of Appeals. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

6. Acceptance of resignation of Theresa Washburn from Tourism Commission and appointment of Josh Brown to one year term expiring 10/30/2024 – Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Spaeth to approve the resignation of Washburn and appointment of Brown. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Authorization to move forward with wetland delineation work for fire station project (Public Safety) this is the environmental review that Keller wants to move forward with now. The cost is \$3300 and part of the contract. There is a question on if it is needed by Vierbicher since it is not located in a flood plain. Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Birke to approve contingent on if it is found necessary by the Keller, Vierbicher and Torres. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

8. Discussion with possible action on architectural/engineering contract with Keller for Fire Station project (Public Safety) – the contract is at USDA for review but could be another 30-60 days before concurrence. If we wait, we will miss the ideal window for bidding this winter and Keller feels if we could commit \$250,000, they can continue working to stay on timeline. Torres checked with USDA to make sure if we do this before concurrence that it will not affect the grant in anyway for the local share and was told it would not. It was recommended to sign the contract with a side letter from our attorney stating that if USDA wants changes after concurrence that Keller would make the changes. The full contract is \$485,000 so once they reach \$250,000, they would re-evaluate again. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the contract without USDA concurrence with an addendum letter be added to the contract regarding the pending USDA concurrence and changes from our attorney up to \$250,000. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

9. Review and approval of authorizing resolution for urban forestry grant program (Public Works) – Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Kirking to approve resolution 023RS016. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

10. Review and approval of RFP for waste & recycling services – Torres reviewed a summary of the RFP for Council. With this change we will be receiving two bills, one from Vernon County for tipping fees and one from the hauler. Discussion regarding toter size and co-mingled recycling was had as they do not want to restrict who may want to bid. Motion by Alderperson Birke/second by Alderperson Welter to approve the RFP with no requirement for co-mingling of recycling and no requirement on toter size for garbage but with options for other sizes. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

11. Review and approval of Park & Rec 2023 budget amendment from Rec wages to maintenance (Park & Rec/Finance) – Proksch stated there is money remaining in the Rec wages account since the admin assistant position was not filled in 2023 and he would like to move that money one-time to the maintenance budget for park lighting projects. Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve a budget amendment of \$10,000 from Rec wages to Park & Rec maintenance accounts. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

12. Discussion with consideration of changing the next Council meeting date from October 31st to October 24th – Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to keep the Council date on October 31st. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried. All department heads would not be required to come to the meeting.

Council took a five-minute break at 8:10 pm before finishing the agenda.

13. Review/discussion/possible action on 2024 draft budget and authorize publication – Torres reviewed the draft budget for Council and answered questions. The tax levy will be \$2,615,015 with a mill rate of 7.64. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Kirking to approve the draft 2024 budget and authorize publication. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

14. Action steps, time line and budget for old city hall demolition – when originally discussed we were planning on having the demo and hazardous materials mitigation separate for the raze. There is asbestos material and the DNR did a walk through and required additional samples at a cost of \$1400 more. It was not recommended that we separate the demo and materials mitigation as it could create a worse situation so it will be bundled under one bid in late November. We will also likely have one contractor for the salvage material as well rather than having the public coming in. The budget is now at \$148,745.

15. 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 building project – Motion by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Willis to enter closed session at 8:55 pm. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

16. 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 9:10 pm. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried. Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Kirking to authorize proceeding with mediation as discussed up to \$15,000. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

17. Payment of bills (Finance) - Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Birke to approve the payment of bills on report date 10/05/2023 in the amount of \$308,973.36 and additional bills on report date 10/10/2023 for \$36,995.25 along with bill for Johns, Flaherty & Collins for \$2295.00. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

18. Second Period for Public Comment – None

19. Adjournment - Motion made by Alderperson Willis/second by Alderperson Bergum to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk