

**CITY OF VIROQUA
COUNCIL MINUTES
FEBRUARY 13, 2024**

1. Roll call:

The regular meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 by Mayor Justin Running at City Hall and via Zoom # 82571425761 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, Public Works Director Sarah Grainger, Library Director Trina Erickson, Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, Fire Chief Chad Buros, Jake Victor, as well as several members of the public.

2. Approval of the January 30, 2024 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 Hubbard stated the open house for the bike/pedestrian plan will be held on Thursday from 4:30-6:30pm at City Hall and the online survey is available.

4. First period for public comment – None

5. Acceptance of resignation of Ward 4 Alderperson Tanja Birke – Birke thanked Council and staff during her six years on the Council. Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Willis to accept Alderperson Birke's resignation. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried. Birke left and was no longer voting the remainder of the meeting.

6. Public hearing regarding conditional use application for Kelly Boyd to amend his current conditional use permit to include up to four cars for sale at property located at 126 W Jefferson St and up to five cars for sale in lot located at 210 S Main St currently leased from Michael Corr – the public hearing was opened at 7:10 pm. Chad Buros updated the Council on the application that was denied by Plan Commission. There are current concerns with compliance on their initial conditional use which are being addressed and off premise signage. The footprint for this is not a good fit for the historic downtown district and there were customer parking concerns as well brought up by the public at the Plan Commission meeting. The public hearing was closed at 7:22 pm.

7. Discussion with possible action on conditional use application for Kelly Boyd (Plan Commission) – Motion by Alderperson Thompson/second by Alderperson Welter to deny the conditional use application for Kelly Boyd. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

8. Discussion with possible action regarding lease agreement with Wild West Days – at the end of 2023 their current lease was terminated because it did not have the land reduction clause included. This lease would be for the 11.74 acres remaining after the fire station property is removed. It would be a five-year lease with the rent prorated the first year of 2024. The Wild West Days board has not met yet on this agreement but they are aware of the terms. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Spaeth to approve the lease agreement with the addition of the pro-rated rent the first year under item #3. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

9. Appointment of a council member to the TIF team – the current members are Nate Torres, Justin Running and Tanja Birke. This would be to work on agreements outside the VDA and Business Park locations which is mainly Tid #6. Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Kirking to appoint Steve Willis to the TIF team. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

10. Appointment of two council members to the website vendor selection team – Motion by Cyndy Hubbard/second by David Tryggestad to appoint Todd Spaeth and Todd Kirking to the website vendor selection team. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

11. Appointment of one council member to Housing Advisory Committee – this item was tabled.

12. Appointment of member of lending institution to Housing Advisory Committee – Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Willis to appoint Chris Rozeske to the Housing Advisory Committee. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

13. Review and approval of historic designation of old city hall site at 202 N Main Street – Alderperson Hubbard stated that HPC recommended the designation as it is the entrance to the historic district. This is for the site not the building. They will likely come up with some signage for the area or possibly a walking history board concept. This will give HPC oversight of what will be done in this location. Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Spaeth to approve the historic designation. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

14. Discussion with possible action on RFP for property development at 321 S East Avenue – this property was originally the old hospital that was taken down and the city had a large special assessment placed on it. The owner passed away and it was given back to Vernon County who removed the taxes and then deeded it over to the city so we would have control of what happens there. We do have a couple developers interested and the neighbor is also interested in a portion of the property. There may also be some affordable housing grants available. We would do development agreements as well to make sure the developers follow through with the project. Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Hubbard to approve the RFP. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

15. Discussion with possible action on development agreement for Phase 1 of Northpointe project – Jake Victor from Northpointe joined the meeting. They need to close on the property by March 1st with the County as they will not extend the deadline. Torres reviewed the agreement with Council. Parcel A is where the building would be and Parcel B will be owned by the city. Northpointe will lease the daycare to the city which will be leased to a daycare provider. The Tif financing will be part of Phase 2 and we received a \$6 million grant for this project as well and DOA agreed to up-front part of the cash to help with the purchase and remediation which we have already received from DOA. Northpointe has state approved plans and permits will be handled in the next month. If the project falls through the city would own the property and be repaying the funds to the state through this agreement. Motion by Alderperson Spaeth/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve the development agreement contingent on our attorney and administrator review. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

16. Discussion with possible action on preliminary resolution to vacate a portion of Main Street as laid out on the plat of Greves Addition to the Village (now City) of Viroqua – this is to clean up some of the title work for the Northpointe project. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Welter to approve resolution 024RS003 to vacate a portion of Main Street as laid out on the plat of Greves Addition. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

17. Discussion with possible action on partial termination of sewer easement – Sarah Grainger explained the location of this easement on the Northpointe project. Motion by Alderperson Welter/second by Alderperson Willis to approve the termination of the sewer easement as described on the easement documents. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

18. Discussion with possible action on cell phone transfer to FirstNet (Public Works) – We currently have US Cellular and we cannot always get reliable service and calls are getting missed including the usage on their I pads. FirstNet is through AT&T First responders and it will save on costs. Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Kirking to approve the cell phone transfer to FirstNet. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

19. Payment of bills (Finance) - Motion by Alderperson Hubbard/second by Alderperson Tryggestad to approve the payment of bills on report date 02/08/2024 in the amount of \$50,348.27 and additional bills on report date 02/13/2024 for \$1,693,437.74. Roll call vote all in favor. Motion carried.

20. Second Period for Public Comment – None

21. Adjournment - Motion made by Alderperson Tryggestad/second by Alderperson Kirking to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. Voice vote all in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Lori Polhamus, City Clerk