

**City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois  
Regular City Council Meeting  
Monday, April 2, 2018  
7:00 p.m.  
MINUTES**

The Mt. Vernon City Council held a Regular City Council Meeting on Monday, April 2, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building, Veterans Park, 800 South 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

Mayor John Lewis called the meeting to order.

Brad Henson from the Jefferson County Ministerial Alliance gave the Invocation

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call showed present: Council Member Jeff May, Council Member Donte Moore, Council Member Jim Rippy, Council Member Mike Young, and Mayor John Lewis.

**PRESENTATION OF JOURNALS**

The Journal for the March 19, 2018 Regular City Council Meeting was presented to Council for any additions, deletions or corrections.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to approve the Journal as presented. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

**VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE**

Russell Brown, owner of the Downtown Granada Theater, spoke on the Downtown TIF's. He asked when the negotiations for the former Park Plaza Shopping Center would conclude, because one option was the use of all TIF funds to finance the project. He stated that the TIF is an economic development tool for the downtown area and said that he needs the TIF funds to continue the redevelopment of the Granada.

JoAlice Pierce spoke on developing 7<sup>th</sup> Street into a thoroughfare to Veteran's Memorial Drive. The road would be an asset to the area and many citizens would use the roadway. She was discouraged on how long it is estimated for the reopening of 7<sup>th</sup> Street at the railroad crossing. She asked for more urgency to reach this goal.

Julie Kubitz from King City Bookstore spoke on the Downtown TIF's. She said many businesses including King City Bookstore have applied for and received TIF funding. This has helped many existing and new businesses. Potential businesses will need the Downtown TIF funding in the future to continue the revitalization of downtown. She feels that the TIF funds should be used for many businesses, not just one project.

Ron Moyer stated that the reopening of 7<sup>th</sup> Street at the railroad crossing and the redevelopment of the former Park Plaza Shopping Center should be two separate issues. He spoke on the backup of traffic on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> since the closing of 7<sup>th</sup> Street. He does not see any benefit to Milano Rail for having 7<sup>th</sup> Street closed. It inconveniences about 100 people per day. He stated that it did not take 3 to 4 years to close 7<sup>th</sup> Street and he asked why it would take that long to reopen it.

### **APPROVAL OF CONSOLIDATED VOUCHERS FOR ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

The Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable were presented to Council for approval. Council Member Jeff May asked if the \$465,235 payment to Illinois Counties Risk Management Trust include liability coverage. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel replied that it covers liability, worker's compensation, property, and casualty insurance. The City has \$11 million in liability coverage. The deductible is \$1,000 per incident and \$5,000 for building damage.

**Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable in the amount of \$1,670,061.72. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

### **BIDS & QUOTES**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested approval of the proposal from WD Technologies for a complete Telemetry System for the City's Office site and Tank/BPS sites, a new control panel for each site except Eagle Court BPS/GST, and a new SCADA computer at the Office site including alarm dialer software. WD Technologies proposal totals \$129,760. Bechtel stated that the systems will be up and running by June 1, 2018.

**Council Member Mike Young motioned to approve the \$129,760 proposal from WD Technologies for the Telemetry and SCADA Systems. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

### **CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to seek bids for a new lawn mower for the Parks Department. Currently, the Parks Department has three mowers, however one mower is about worn out and will not make through the next season. The funds will come from the Capital Budget. The cost is estimated at \$11,000.

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to grant permission to seek bids for a new lawn mower for the Parks Department. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to waive the bidding requirements for scoreboards at Lincoln Park Cusumano Sport Complex. The scoreboards will be installed on the four smaller fields. The City has a commitment to sponsor one scoreboard and is looking for sponsors for the other scoreboards. Each scoreboard will cost between \$5,000 and \$6,500. The City will provide the installation. Bechtel recommended using T Ham Signs because he is local, and he will maintain the scoreboards.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to waive the bidding requirements for scoreboards at Lincoln Park Cusumano Sport Complex. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to close 9<sup>th</sup> Street from Broadway to Main Street for a Child Abuse Prevention Month event. The event will be held on Wednesday, April 25, 2018 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. The businesses of the area agreed to the street closing.

**Council Member Mike Young motioned to grant permission to close 9<sup>th</sup> Street from Broadway to Main Street for a Child Abuse Prevention Month event. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to waive the bidding requirements to purchase a new server for the City's Tyler accounting system. Bechtel explained that the City's current software for the accounting system is due for a major update in June 2018. The City's IT consultant reported that the current server "probably" could not accommodate the update. Council Member Jim Rippy asked why IT would not know if the server will or will not accommodate the update. Finance Director Merle Hollmann explained that, definitely, the server would not accommodate the necessary updates. The current server is four years old and more capacity is needed. The estimated cost is \$46,025. Bechtel recommended purchasing the server from Kuncce Computers.

**Council Member Jeff May motioned to grant permission to waive the bidding requirements to purchase a new server for the City's Tyler accounting system. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Young, and Lewis. No: Rippy.**

#### **CITY ATTORNEY**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for first reading an Ordinance Authorizing Transfer of Surplus Property Identified as PIN 07-32-352-009, Commonly Known as the Former Townhomes Property to MTK Investments, LLC. MTK has offered to purchase the real estate for \$5,000 with the intention of developing the property for commercial use. **First Reading was held.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for first reading an Ordinance Authorizing the Ceding of Private Activity Bonding Authority to the Southeastern Illinois Economic Development Authority. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that the City is allocated private activity bonds and is permitted to reallocate to a state agency any portion of its unused allocation of volume cap. The 2018 State of Illinois Allocation guidelines identifies Mt. Vernon's population as 15,277 which makes the 2018 Volume Cap Allocation \$1,604,085. The City desires to cede the total volume cap to the Southeastern Illinois Economic Development Authority (SIEDA).

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to suspend the rules for voting on an Ordinance. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to adopt Ordinance #2018-9, an Ordinance Authorizing the Ceding of Private Activity Bonding Authority to the Southeastern Illinois Economic Development Authority. Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for first reading an Ordinance Amending Article 6, Section 6.9 regarding the Number of Liquor Licenses. This Ordinance increases the number of Retail Business Customer Licenses from one to ten. **First Reading was held.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented an Ordinance Approving a Tax Increment Financing Development Agreement with MTK Investments, LLC. The amount is \$8,500 for professional services. Bechtel stated that the plan is to redevelop the property, formerly Townhomes Property, into a coin-operated laundry mat. Their total investment is estimated at \$300,000.

**Council Member Mike Young motioned to approve Ordinance #2018-10, an Ordinance Approving a Tax Increment Financing Development Agreement with MTK Investments, LLC. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Letter of Intent to Enter into Contract Negotiations with Stuart C. Irby d/b/a Irby Utilities. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel stated that the Letter of Intent binds the City for 30 days to exclusively negotiate with Irby Utilities for the deployment of a Kamstrup Fixed RF Advanced Network utilized for a water meter reading system and the replacement of the existing equipment. In February, the Committee narrowed the water meter purchase to Kamstrup and Badger. To see the meters in operation, Public Utilities Committee members visited Franklin, TN. and Elmhurst, IL. Based on extensive research by the Committee, it was recommended to the City Manager to begin negotiations for the price to purchase Kamstrup Meters.

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to approve the Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Letter of Intent to Enter into Contract Negotiations with Stuart C. Irby d/b/a Irby Utilities. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Heneghan and Associates, P.C. for Engineering and Surveying Services for the Lift Station #14 Replacement Project. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that the Agreement includes the application for an IEPA low interest Loan for the force main as well as the Lift Station #14 Replacement. According to the IEPA, the City should expect about a one-year waiting period for approval after the application is submitted. The project will then be bid, and it should take 18 months to complete. Council Member Jim Rippey praised Bechtel for obtaining cost reductions by line items resulting in a reduction of \$35,000.

**Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the Resolution Approving an Agreement with Heneghan and Associates, P.C. for Engineering and Surveying Services for the Lift Station #14 Replacement Project. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippey, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Reclassifying Certain Public Utilities and Sanitation Accounts for Accounting Purposes. Finance Director Merle Hollmann explained that each year the City writes off water, sewer, and garbage accounts that are over 3 years past due. The accounts are written off but remain collectible if the customers try to sign up for utility services again. The amount this year is abnormally high because a local church ran up a \$26,779 bill. A lien has been placed on the property and he is hopeful that someone will purchase the property. The accounts have been turned over to the Illinois Controller's Office to withhold funds from customers' lottery winnings, tax refund, or State employee paychecks. Hollmann reported that this year the City billed \$8.3 million and the write-off represents seven tenths of one percent of the total amount billed.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to approve the Resolution Reclassifying Certain Public Utilities and Sanitation Accounts for Accounting Purposes. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippey, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for Council's consideration a Resolution approving an Agreement with Local 738 International Association of Firefighters AFL-CIO. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that the only change to this four-year contract is a 1.34 % salary increase each year. Council Member Jeff May stated that a significant percentage of the City's annual budget is for salaries. Bechtel reported that if all the unions settled for a 1.34 % salary increase each year, the City's cost for only contractual employees would be \$1.6 million over the next four years. May questioned with declining revenues how the City can pay for this increase. Bechtel replied that services and operations may be cut or staff. Council Member Donte Moore stated that compared to other communities, the City did well with negotiating the contract, but he is concerned about needing to cut services or employees in the future. May stated that this will be a challenge to the City, but everyone deserves a fair wage. Council Member Jim Rippey stated that there needs to be serious benchmarking of comparable municipalities.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to approve the Resolution approving an Agreement with Local 738 International Association of Firefighters AFL-CIO. Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented four Motions to Continue Negotiations Concerning the Redevelopment of the Former Park Plaza Shopping Center with the four interested parties. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that Jonathon Hallberg, Jefferson County Economic Development Executive Director, prepared an in-depth detailed comparison of the four proposals.

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel reported that last week Dan Black of Black & Sons/InnoTech Mfg. revised his proposal indicating that he is only interested in the former Woolworth/Flooring Center Building and the demolition of the building next to it. The terms remain the same with the City reimbursing him for the full cost of the renovation and if outside financing is needed, the City would repay Black the principle and interest in its entirety.

Council Member Jim Rippy explained that it will be difficult to scrutinize the comparison of the four proposals until the reopening of 7<sup>th</sup> Street tie-in is eliminated with one of the proposals. He believes that the reopening of 7<sup>th</sup> Street is a separate issue and it is ridiculous that it will take three years to reopen 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Rippy stated that he will refrain from voting on this matter until a commitment is made with the railroads and others to reopen the street.

Mayor John Lewis agreed that the reopening of 7<sup>th</sup> Street is a separate issue and he does not like the three-year timeline. He reported that the City has received conflicting reports from four different entities; Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Evansville Western Railroad, and the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). In the meantime, the former Park Plaza Shopping Center has been sitting vacant for decades and the City needs to move forward with a decision.

Council Member Donte Moore agreed that the reopening of 7<sup>th</sup> Street is a separate issue. His main concern is the cost. He stated that he is ready to decide on the former Park Plaza Shopping Center buildings.

Mayor John Lewis stated that whether 7<sup>th</sup> Street is open or closed, the four proposals on the former Park Plaza Shopping Center remain the same.

Council Member Jeff May asked if the Council needs to vote on each proposal or should the Council table the proposals not worthy of pursuing. City Attorney David Leggans explained that the Council will consider each proposal separately and it is in the Council's authority to table action on a proposal or authorize negotiations with none or one or more of the proposals. Mayor Lewis explained if there is no second, the motion is not enforced. The motion is not lost since a vote was not taken and it can return to the table. Leggans explained the Council bring back for reconsideration any proposal if the other party is willing to negotiate. At this point, the Council is trying to identify one or more of the proposals that they want to concentrate on.

Motion to continue Negotiations Concerning the Redevelopment of the Former Park Plaza Shopping Center with Dan Black. **Died to the lack of a Motion.**

Motion to continue Negotiations Concerning the Redevelopment of the Former Park Plaza Shopping Center with Trevor Borowiak/Borowiak's Enterprises. **Died to the lack of a Motion.**

Motion to continue Negotiations Concerning the Redevelopment of the Former Park Plaza Shopping Center with Mary Burgan/Milano Rail Services. Council Member Jeff May requested to add a caveat that any costs for this construction be paid upfront and reimbursed by the City over time. City Attorney David Leggans explained that the caveat would be part of the negotiations. The motion only gives the City Manager authority to negotiate with the party.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to continued negotiations considering the redevelopment of the former Park Plaza Shopping Center with Mary Burgan/Milano Rail Services. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, and Lewis. No: Rippy. Abstain: Young.**

Motion to continue Negotiations Concerning the Redevelopment of the Former Park Plaza Shopping Center with Rondell Swope. **Died to the lack of a Motion.**

## **MAYOR**

Mayor John Lewis reported on the March statistics from the Public Utilities, Fire, and Police Departments.

The Police Department responded to 1,879 total events or 61 calls every day.

Arrests: 115

Criminal charges: 104

Warrants served: 31

Traffic stops: 417, resulting in 283 citations (37 for use of cell phones)

DUI arrests: 9

Drug charges: 10

Traffic crashes: 93

Alarm calls: 86

New Detective cases: 59

Cleared Detective cases: 27 with arrests

Referred Detective cases to the States Attorney: 10

Crime Scene callouts: 2

Tactical Unit deployment: 1

Telecommunication Center calls: 9,847 non-emergency and 1,933 emergency

The Fire Department responded to 268 alarms.

EMS alarms: 245

Fire alarms: 19

Hazmat alarms: 3

Rescue alarm: 1

Motor vehicle accidents: 13  
Structure Fires: 4  
Mutual Aid: 1  
10A Inspections: 62  
General Inspections: 3  
Consultations: 2  
Public Education Seminars: 4

The Public Utilities Department responded to 9 water main breaks and 12 backed up sewer mains. A major break on a 12-inch main was repaired south of Jamison Avenue on 27<sup>th</sup> Street. Sixty-two hours were spent on manhole pumping due to the heavy rains.

### **CITY COUNCIL**

Council Member Donte Moore reported that on Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup> at City Hall from 1 to 3 p.m., the City will host a meeting regarding proposed housing. Representatives from banks, the USDA, U of I Extension, and the City will be present to help citizens with housing issues and financing. The goal is to get home ownership back in Mt. Vernon.

Council Member Jim Rippy asked if the City continues negotiations with one party on the former Park Plaza Shopping Center, how many members of the Council are needed to approve the sale of the property. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel stated that it will take four votes out of five or a super-majority. Rippy asked if Council Member Mike Young be excluded because of his relationship with one of the parties. City Attorney David Leggans replied no.

### **VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE**

Ray Botch, Chairman of the Public Utilities Committee, stated that the City's staff has done an excellent job. With the projects that have been bid, the City has saved over \$1 million through negotiations. He publicly thanked City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel, Council Member Jeff May, Council Member Jim Rippy, Matt Fauss, and Jonathan Younger. Bechtel thanked Ray Botch for his service.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:04 p.m., City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested an Executive Session under 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (6) – The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the City.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to go into Executive Session under 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (6) – The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the City. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

At 8:16 p.m., the Regular City Council Meeting reconvened.

Roll call showed present: Council Member Jeff May, Council Member Donte Moore, Council Member Jim Rippey, Council Member Mike Young, and Mayor John Lewis.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippey, Young, and Lewis.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Jo Pemberton  
City Clerk