

**City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois
Regular City Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 20, 2018
7:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

The Mt. Vernon City Council held a Regular City Council Meeting on Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building, Veterans Park, 800 South 27th Street, Mt. Vernon, IL.

Mayor John Lewis called the meeting to order.

Harold Quick of West Salem Trinity Church gave the invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

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

PRESENTATION OF JOURNALS

The Journal for the February 5, 2018 Regular City Council Meeting was presented to Council for any additions, deletions or corrections.

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

VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Roger Jacobs spoke on the importance of City Parks and to convince the City to keep all the City Parks opened and maintained. Jacobs reported on the excellent parks located in Schaumburg, Illinois and Highland, Illinois. He suggested that the City use money spent on Fireworks to fund the parks. Jacobs stated that it is time to take care of the parks, not throw them away.

Michael Bullard, Mayor of Bluford and Chairman of the Jefferson County Rural Water Association, spoke on behalf of over 25,000 citizens in Jefferson County regarding the Rend Lake Conservancy District. Bullard explained that Rend Lake Conservancy District has used water revenue to supplement non-water operations at Rend Lake such as the restaurant, golf, hunting, camping, and more. The revenue generated from the non-water operations goes to Franklin County, not Jefferson

County. He urged the Council to reduce the City's payment to the Conservancy by the fair amount that the Conservancy uses to subsidize non-water operations and refuse any 5-year wholesale rate increase. The misappropriation of water revenue inflates the wholesale water rate to the City and Jefferson County residents. Mayor John Lewis stated the City Council supports Bullard's position.

APPROVAL OF CONSOLIDATED VOUCHERS FOR ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

The Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable were presented to Council for approval.

Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable in the amount of \$1,098,540.59. Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

BIDS & QUOTES

No bids and quotes were presented.

CITY MANAGER

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested Council's permission to waive the bidding requirements for the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA) and Telemetry for Water Tanks. Bechtel reported that at the February 9th Public Utilities Meeting, a report was presented from Public Works Director Matt Fauss and Assistant Public Utilities Director Jonathan Younger regarding SCADA and Telemetry. The Public Utilities Committee agreed with Fauss and Younger that the City's system needs to be integrated with Rend Lake Conservancy's system. Bechtel asked that Council approve negotiations with WD Technologies to provide the City's SCADA and Telemetry systems. Council Member Jim Rippy stated that this is a very specialized area and not many companies can do this type of work.

Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to waive the bidding requirements for the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA) and Telemetry for Water Tanks. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

CITY ATTORNEY

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented an Ordinance Approving the rezoning of property at 11675 N. Illinois Highway 37 from Class R-2 - Medium Density Residential to I-1 - Light Industrial. The petitioning party is Mt. Vernon Elevator Company. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that Mt. Vernon Elevator recently purchased property behind their elevators and they desire to use this property for future growth. The Planning and Zoning Commission approved this request unanimously and no objectors were present.

Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve Ordinance #2018-06, an Ordinance Approving the rezoning of property at 11675 N. Illinois Highway 37 from Class R-2 - Medium Density Residential

to I-1 - Light Industrial. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for first reading an Ordinance Revising Article 21-125, Article 21-126, Article 21-127, and Article 21-128 or the Revised Code of Ordinances relating to sign regulations. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that City Attorney David Leggans, Assistant to the City Manager Nathan McKenna, Mayor John Lewis, and others have been working on this to update the City's sign regulations to reflect current sign technology, to incorporate recent Court decisions, and to create a more favorable business environment. Nathan McKenna explained that the current Sign Ordinance has been outdated for decades. The proposed Sign Ordinance is not as restrictive as the current Sign Ordinance because most of the sign variances will be eliminated. It will allow for multiple wall signs based on the percentage of the wall surface area and electronic message centers. The proposed Ordinance updates the standards on building materials and increases sign permit fees. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel stated that the proposed Ordinance is on the City's website for review by the community. Mayor John Lewis stated that he has been pushing to get this Ordinance redone to make Mt. Vernon more pro-business and competitive. Council Member Mike Young asked if the Ordinance contains language about clean up. McKenna replied yes. He said that the proposed Ordinance was started from scratch using a template from a national sign organization. **First reading was held.**

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Tyler Technologies for services related to Credit Card Payments. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that this will allow the City to take more kinds of credit cards. Currently, residents can pay their water bill on-line. This expands the service to allow payment of fees and licenses too. Assistant to the City Manager Nathan McKenna stated that this is the first part of the Agreement to authorize Tyler Technologies to set up a website for customers to check their account and pay their bill. Council Member Jim Rippy stated that Tri-County has a good website. McKenna explained that the City's new website will be similar. Council Member Jeff May asked about electronic billing to save money on postage. McKenna believes this will be included and once the process is implemented the City will move away from the Illinois E-Pay System. He said that there will be a convenience fee to pay with a credit card. Bank drafting will remain free. It will take about three weeks to set up the website.

Council Member Mike Young motioned to approve the Resolution Approving an Agreement with Tyler Technologies for services related to Credit Card Payments. Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Accepting a Professional Services Proposal from Round Table Design, Inc., regarding the IEPA Planning Services for the IEPA Revolving Loan Fund for the Opdyke Water Tower. Council Member Jim Rippy stated that he was very pleased that City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel had the information available and it was competitively bid by qualified bidders.

Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to approve the Resolution Accepting a Professional Services Proposal from Round Table Design, Inc. regarding the IEPA Planning Services for the IEPA Revolving Loan Fund for the Opdyke Water Tower. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Accepting a Professional Services Proposal from Round Table Design, Inc., regarding Engineering Services related to a Precast Box Culvert for the Ambassador Road Bridge Replacement Project. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel reported that the Ambassador Bridge is in a dilapidated state. The plan is to replace the bridge with a concrete precast box culvert. The lowest qualified bidder was Round Table Design, Inc. Bechtel said it is estimated that the cost of structural engineering will be \$22,150 and construction is \$175,000. The 2012 Bond proceeds will fund this project.

Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the Resolution Accepting a Professional Services Proposal from Round Table Design, Inc., regarding Engineering Services related to a Precast Box Culvert for the Ambassador Road Bridge Replacement Project. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Increasing the Water Rate to the Village of Woodlawn, the Village of Bluford, the Dix-Kell Water Commission, the Village of Belle Rive, the Village of Waltonville, and the Northeast Water Company; to comply with notice requirements of the municipal corporation's agreements. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that this Resolution increases the rate for water usage by 2.808% effective May 1, 2018. The rate change is necessary because of a projected rate increase to be imposed upon the City by the Rend Lake Conservancy District. The City Council must approve the rate no later than February 28, 2018 to comply with the notice requirements. The 2.808% rate increase will be adjusted to reflect the actual increase in the rate charged by Rend Lake Conservancy District if the rate received from Rend Lake is less than the 2.808%. Bechtel stated if the City does not notify the water districts by February 28, 2018, then no rate increase can be imposed.

Mayor John Lewis explained that, in prior years, the City received Rend Lake Conservancy District's rates sooner to meet the City's legal notification obligations. He said that the City has not heard anything from Rend Lake. He hopes that Rend Lake keeps the rates the same for this year and future years. Lewis stated that Rend Lake is sitting on \$10.6 million dollars of unrestricted funds. For operations, Rend Lake is spending \$8.9 million per year. Rend Lake is sitting on fourteen months of operational funds compared to Mt. Vernon with three months of operational funds. Mayor Lewis feels that money needs to be returned to taxpayers by rate reductions or abolishing the property tax.

Council Member Jim Rippy agreed that Rend Lake Conservancy District does not need a rate increase because they generate enough income. He said that 35-40% net income is unheard of.

Council Member Jeff May stated that a member of the Rend Lake Conservancy District should come before the City Council to explain their operating budget, cash reserve, and capital plan for the record.

Council Member Jim Rippy stated that he and Mayor Lewis plan to attend Rend Lake's next board meeting.

Council Member Mike Young motioned to approve the Resolution Increasing the Water Rate to the Village of Woodlawn, the Village of Bluford, the Dix-Kell Water Commission, the Village of Belle Rive, the Village of Waltonville, and the Northeast Water Company; to comply with notice requirements of the municipal corporation's agreements. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

MAYOR

Mayor John Lewis asked for the Council's advice and consent to appoint Clarence Mays (appointment ending on 4/30/2022) and Linola Spann (appointment ending on 4/30/2021) to the Police and Fire Commission.

Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to approve the appointments of Clarence Mays and Linola Spann to the Police and Fire Commission. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

Mayor John Lewis asked for the Council's advice and consent to appoint Kris Chamness to the Downtown TIF Advisory Committee.

Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the appointment of Kris Chamness to the Downtown TIF Advisory Committee. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

Mayor John Lewis asked for the Council's advice and consent to reappoint Aletta Lawrence to the Minority Affairs and Human Relations Commission.

Council Member Mike Young motioned to approve the reappointment of Aletta Lawrence to the Minority Affairs and Human Relations Commission. Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

Mayor John Lewis reported on the January statistics from the Public Utilities, Fire, and Police Departments. The Police Department responded to 1,553 total events. The Detective Division was assigned 64 new cases, cleared 17 cases with arrests, referred 31 cases to the States Attorney, and processed three crime scenes. The Fire Department responded to 335 alarms which included 279 EMS calls, 37 fire related calls, 14 hazard-related calls, 13 motor vehicle accidents, 6 structure fires, and 2 vehicle fires. The Fire Inspection Department conducted 63 - 10A inspections, 19 facility inspections, four consultations, and one public education seminar. The Public Utilities Department repaired 33 water leaks and handled 15 sewer incidents.

CITY COUNCIL

Council Member Mike Young reported that a new small business owner had many good things to say about City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel and Nathan McKenna for their assistance. The owner said that they did an excellent job.

Council Member Jim Rippy reported on the 7th Street Reopening Project. He reported that he is seriously looking at public action to show the public's desire to reopen 7th Street. The citizens of Mt. Vernon want 7th Street to be open.

Council Member Jim Rippy asked for a short synopsis of the City Manager's trip to Franklin, Tennessee to look at their water meter systems. Franklin has a water district and is run differently than Mt. Vernon's water system. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel stated that the trip was enlightening, and she feels that the City is on the right path in selecting the correct system for Mt. Vernon.

VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Randy Edwards spoke on behalf of residents on Sparrow Lane who are paying taxes to the Rend Lake Conservancy District but cannot obtain City water. He asked for the City's assistance to help these residents. Mayor John Lewis replied that he would investigate the situation and update Mr. Edwards.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session was held.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Jeff May motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: May, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: Moore.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Jo Pemberton
City Clerk