

City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois
Regular City Council Meeting
Monday, November 5, 2018
7:00 p.m.
MINUTES

The Mt. Vernon City Council held a Regular City Council Meeting on Monday, November 5, 2018 at the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building, Veterans Park, 800 South 27th Street, Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

Mayor John Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Pastor Tim Brinson of the Jefferson County Ministerial Alliance gave the Invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

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

PRESENTATION OF JOURNALS

The Journals for the October 15, 2018 Regular City Council Meeting and October 15, 2018 Public Hearing were presented for approval.

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

VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Michael Bullard, President of the Village Board of Bluford, sent a letter to Mayor Lewis and City Council Members. He requested that the letter be read at the Council Meeting. Assistant City Manager Nathan McKenna read the letter. McKenna stressed the letter does not represent the views of the City or himself. The letter read:

"To the Mt. Vernon City Council, I am writing this because our Village Board meeting is the same date and time as yours and I cannot attend or address you tonight. I am presenting this, not just as the President of Bluford, but for many thousands of citizens who live east of the Norfolk Southern crossing in Mt. Vernon.

I attended your public discussion on the grade separation of Rt. 15 on the east side of town. Having studied the proposals, it was clear this is a very complex issue. The work on this study was done in 2004 and published in 2005. Most of the traffic data used dates back as early as 2001.

Every option in the grade separation proposal had an impact on local businesses. Even though the City was provided complete funding for the entire project and it would not have cost us a dime, the entire project was dropped.

That's all in the past. Today, there is a renewed interest in the grade separation. 14 years have passed, and the dynamics of the area has changed as well. Continental has nearly doubled in employment, Good Sam, Crossroads, Magnum Steel have all increased as well. The old High School has been demolished. Rail traffic has longer trains.

Today, data is more readily available. I can assure you the rail systems know exactly when and how long crossing arms go down. IDOT has more reliable data on traffic flow. Even though the population of Mt. Vernon has significantly dropped since 2001, employment in the city has jumped up and the number of commuters have increased significantly.

Regarding the study published in 2005, there are numerous facts published that weigh in on the negative side of the justification scale. At the same time there is a very notable lack of statistics on the other side of justification. As an example, how many people died waiting at these crossings? How many police officers waited at these crossings while on an emergency call? How many ambulances have been caught at these crossings? How many fire and rescue trucks were caught at these crossings? How many folks drive around these crossing arms? A good part of Mt. Vernon and half of Jefferson County live east of these crossings and these are reasons for justifying grade separation and it was NOT EMPHASISED in this study. My wife nearly died on the west bound side of the Union Pacific, caught by a stalled train for over 20 minutes. I know why cities like Centralia, Marion and DuQuoin have overpasses and believe me, I HAVE A DOG IN THIS FIGHT! As well as the eastern half of Jefferson County!

Since this is a 14-year-old study, using 17-year-old data, that steps aside of the human needs of the grade separation, on behalf of the thousands of residents living east of these crossings, I am asking the City to authorize a new, comprehensive and objective study to justify grade separation for both rail systems. IN ADDITION, I am asking this study include the risk assessment to health and safety and be completed with considerations of area businesses, the vacated high school property and the future growth of the transloading operation.

The recent struggle and progress of Mt. Vernon's City Council has been very impressive and should be a model for other cities in Illinois to follow. You have a tremendous amount of hard-earned accomplishments to be proud of. For that reason, I am confident that a reasonable solution can be found that assures the needs of everyone involved and offers minimal impact to area businesses.

*I will close with one thought..... Please hold sacred the well-being of our citizens.
Sincerely, Michael Bullard, President of the Village Board of Bluford"*

APPROVAL OF CONSOLIDATED VOUCHERS FOR ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

The Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable were presented to Council for approval. Council Member Jim Rippy asked if the City has a marketing plan for the new Chesley Industrial Park. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel replied not yet, but she will be meeting with Jefferson County Economic Development Director Jonathan Hallberg this week to begin work on the plan. Bechtel stated that Greater Egypt Regional Planning Commission will do a drone fly-over and provide pictures of the area for marketing. Council Member Jim Rippy noted that overtime dropped down to 5% from 20% in the past.

Council Member Mike Young motioned to approve the Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable in the amount of \$2,581,726.58. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: May.

BIDS AND QUOTES

No bids and quotes were presented.

CITY MANAGER

No report was presented.

CITY ATTORNEY

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented a Resolution Approving the Subordination Agreement with Community First Bank related to the Weedy Acres, LLC (Phoenix Modular Elevator, Inc.) Project. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that Phoenix Modular Elevator is expanding in the Chesley Industrial Park. This Resolution subordinates the City's \$125,000.00 mortgage to a \$587,784.00 permanent financing mortgage and a \$470,227.20 interim financing mortgage to Community First Bank of the Heartland and to the subsequent permanent financing mortgage of Small Business Growth Corporation.

Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to approve the Resolution Approving the Subordination Agreement with Community First Bank Related to the Weedy Acres, LLC (Phoenix Modular Elevator, Inc.) Project. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: May.

MAYOR

Mayor John Lewis presented for the advice and consent of the Council the reappointments of the Minority Affairs Commission Members: Aletta Lawrence for School District 80, Michael Koehnke for Mt. Vernon Township High School, Rev. Erie Patton for NAACP, Pastor Tim Brinson as the Religious Representative, Sean Featherstun for the State Attorney's Office, Rolland Mays for At-Large-Member, and Angela Moore for At-Large-Member.

Council Member Mike Young motioned to approve the Mayor's reappointments to the Minority Affairs Commission. Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Abstain: Moore. Absent: May.

Mayor John Lewis reported on the October 2018 statistics from the Fire and Police Departments.

***Police Department** handled 2132 calls for service which equals to about 69 calls each and every day. 132 people were arrested during the month. There were 125 criminal charges and 27 warrants served. They also conducted 434 traffic stops resulting in 254 citations, of which 19 were for use of cellphones. 8 people were arrested for D.U.I.'s, they had 17 drug charges, responded to 121 traffic crashes and they answered 101 alarms. The Detective Division was assigned 55 new cases, cleared 5 cases with arrests, referred 18 cases to the States Attorney and had 1 crime scene call-out. The Tactical Unit was not deployed and our K9 team had 17 deployments. There was a total of 10,238 non-emergency calls and 1,867 emergency calls into our telecommunication department.*

***Fire Department** responded to 309 alarms, of which 234 were recorded as EMS related, 75 of the responses were recorded as fire related, 8 of the responses were recorded as hazard related and 19 were recorded as false alarm or false call. They responded to 5 building fires, 4 passenger vehicle fires, 1 road freight fire, 1 natural vegetation fire, 6 outside rubbish fires, 1 mutual aid given, and 2 mutual aid received. The Fire Inspection Dept. conducted 82 IOA Inspections, 2 plan reviews, 4 business site inspections, 12 public education events, 5 CPR classes and 1 American Red Cross Blood Drive event. The Fire Department also participated in 3 Halloween events handing out candy to our communities' children.*

Council Member Jim Rippy asked for an update on the water meter installation project. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that about 250 meters have been installed. Of the 250 meters, eight had leaks which required additional work. Bechtel reported that installation is running a little behind schedule, but she feels it will progress faster now.

Council Member Jim Rippy asked for an update on the City Park Lake. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel reported that she is meeting with the company that performs mechanical dredging about the results of their comprehensive survey of the lake regarding its depth and sediment. Public Works Director Matt Fauss and Assistant City Manager Nathan McKenna are working on a five-year plan.

Mayor John Lewis introduced Ray Botch to give an update on the Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Botch read the following report:

"INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEDULE 2018 - 2022

The Public Utility Infrastructure Committee was established in May 2017 to provide a Long Range Financial and Construction Plan to replace or repair our dilapidated water and sewer infrastructure. We looked at the overall needs and decided the best method would be to do it in five-year increments. We came up with a Financial Plan that would include sales taxes, 2% annual

water fee, short-term loans and IEPA Loans. We can submit one Water and one Sewer IEPA Loan Application per year. The advantage of the IEPA Loans is that 30% to 50% of the loan may be forgiven. The IEPA Loans scheduled to be submitted are:

2019	(Water)	Opdyke Tower Refurbishing
	(Sewer)	Lift Station #14 and Force Main
2020	(Water)	Yearly Water Main Replacement
	(Sewer)	Sewer Plant Intake Pipes, Yearly Sewer Lining and Replacement
2021	(Water)	New 500,000-gallon L/N Water Tower
	(Sewer)	Replace Maple Street and Wagner Road Lift Stations

The Committee has developed an ambitious Five-Year Infrastructure Improvement Schedule

2018 WORK COMPLETED TO DATE

- *Installed Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System - SCADA which is used to regulate, control, and balance water flow and water tank levels*
- *Replaced 20th Street/L & N sewer collapse*
- *Constructed a Sewer on 28th Street between Jones and Veterans Memorial Drive to relieve the Mid-Town sewers*
- *Reconstructed 12th/Casey/ 14th Street water mains*
- *Reconstructed Main Street alley sewer 11th to 10th*
- *Summersville and Mid-Town sewer surveys*
- *Refurbished 1,500,000-gallon Vernwood Water Tank*
- *Install 2 new pumps at Vernwood Tank*
- *Installed 250 of the 6700 Kamstrup Water Meters*
- *Installed Water Tank Equipment Pits*
- *Engineered 24,549 lineal feet of CDAP water mains. Proposals are due at the next City Council Meeting.*
- *Engineering along the submittal of the IEPA Loan Application for the Opdyke Tank refurbishing*
- *Engineering along with the preparation of the IEPA Loan Application for Lift Station #14 and Force Main*

2019 WORK PLAN

- *Refurbish Opdyke Tank*
- *Construct Lift Station #14 and Force Main*
- *Construct 24,549 lineal feet of CDAP water mains*
- *Engineer 26,625 lineal feet of water main replacement*
- *Engineer four Sewer Plant inlet pipes and pipe relining*
- *Sewer survey north and northeast sections*

2020 WORK PLAN

- *Construct 12,090 lineal feet of water main*
- *Replace 4 Sewer Plant inflow pipes*
- *Reline sewer mains*

- *Engineer 27,335 lineal feet of water mains*
- *Engineer Maple Street and Wagner Rd. Lift Station and Force Mains*
- *Sewer survey western section*

2021 WORK PLAN

- *Construct 17,215 lineal feet of water mains*
- *Construct Maple and Wagner Rd. and Lift Stations*
- *Reline sewer mains*
- *Engineer new 500,000-gallon L/N Water Storage Tank*
- *Engineer 27,185 lineal feet of water mains*
- *Engineer sewer main replacement*
- *Sewer survey remaining sections*

2022 WORK PLAN

- *Build new 500,000-gallon L/N Water Storage Tank*
- *Construct 14,535 lineal feet of water mains*
- *Engineer 25,570 lineal feet of water mains*
- *Reline sewer mains*
- *Construct sewer mains*
- *Engineer various sewer mains*

Ray Botch thanked the Public Utilities Committee Members for their hard work. Mayor John Lewis stated that Mr. Botch and the Committee have devoted many hours of work on this project.

Ray Botch spoke on the Mt. Vernon Police Department's Citizen Academy which he attended several years ago. He was amazed how the Police Department has changed and said that the Citizen Academy is a public relations tool that should be continued and available to the citizens. Due to budget cutbacks, funding for the Citizen Academy is not in the budget. Botch donated \$1,500 to the Police Department to maintain the Citizen Academy. The check was presented to Police Chief Trent Page. Mayor John Lewis thanked Mr. Botch for his generosity.

Mayor John Lewis reminded everyone that tomorrow is Election Day and he implored every citizen to vote.

CITY COUNCIL

Council Member Jim Rippe reported that an independent steering committee will be created by a group of concerned citizens to study the Railroad Overpass Project. The committee would guide the City as to what is the best option for the overpass. He hopes that a feasible plan can be developed within the next six months. The support of all citizens will be required along with Federal, State, City, and County assistance. The committee will operate independently from the City. Rippe stated that in the interim, he sees no possible reason for trains to ever block Main and Broadway. He understands that the trains need to pass, but trains should be scheduled so that the roads will not be blocked. Mayor John Lewis stated the committee will have the City's support.

VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

No comments were heard.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:33 p.m., City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested an Executive Session under 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (5) – The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body.

Council Member Donte Moore motioned to go into Executive Session under 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (5) for the purchase or lease of real property. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis. Absent: May.

At 7:51 p.m., Mayor John Lewis reconvened the Regular City Council Meeting.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Jo Pemberton
City Clerk