

**Town of Vernon  
Vernon Gym  
Regular Meeting (6:30 PM)  
January 08, 2025**

**Regular Meeting:** The Town of Vernon Council meeting at the Vernon Gym, 29 Washington Street, Vernon, Indiana 47282, was called to order by Mayor Brad Bender at 6:30 PM.

Town Officials and employees present:

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Approval of minutes**

Mayor Bender asked if there were any comments or corrections to the December , 2025 Council minutes and recommended approval.

Jeff made a motion to approve the 2025 minutes. Amber seconded.

3 Yes votes, 0 No votes

**III. Petitions or comments by the members of the public present: No one present, comments were made that this was the first time ever for this to happen.**

**IV. Reports from Committees and Officers**

A. Brad Bender - Flower art got pushed down on Christmas eve morning, tried to reset it but did not hold, turned back over and will try to reset it later more permanently.

B. John Post - Council Ward 1

C. Jeff Walker - Council Ward 2 Shared a grant opportunity with the park board, also was asking about open gym hours as a way to get more community involvement...possible reduction of rates for nonprofit groups but not complimentary. Will notify the group of the decision.

D. Amber Fields – Council Ward 3 - New sign looks great, would like to do the other end of town but is too expensive at this time. Closed out the year for the financial portion, per law, can write off checks that are over two years old.

E. Mary Jo Bender – Clerk Treasurer -

F. Brad Kage - Attorney -

G. Marshall - Position vacant

I. Steven Pennycuff - Fire Chief - City donated the generator to the VVFD, left quotes for installation and asked for the town to help with the installation. John Post suggested offering the department a set amount and let them choose. Amber motioned to appropriate \$3000 out of the LOIT fund to take care of the cost. John Post seconded. 3 Yes votes, 0 No votes

Chief Pennycuff left information on a burn ordinance that he gleaned from other communities, council will look this over and possibly act on it at a later date.

## V. Unfinished Business

- a. Next Level Trails grant - Mayor unhappy with finalizing this project, has let the contractor know his displeasure and will possibly go forward with liquidated damages.
- b. OCRA Sewer Project, Lawyer Excavation has been given a Certificate of Substantial Completion.

## VI. New Business

- a. Sewer Rate Ordinance meeting commenced at 7:00 pm. Caitlin Shafer from Reedy Financial was on hand to explain and discuss the rate ordinance. She introduced herself and explained how and why they came up with the figures on the new rate ordinance. She was on hand for questions and answers as to the figures promoted in the rate study. Capital outlays need to be addressed and a suggestion was made to create a fund specifically for these expenses. Bottom line is a 29.3% rate increase plus a set aside for grinder pumps in Indian Hills. April of '26 and '27 to implement and phase in these changes, the charge for the grinder pumps was also explained in more depth. Opened up to public input:

Leon Moore was first speaker, he asked about the grinder pump charges, asked about representation from Indian Hills and that no one from there can be on town council. He asked why Indian Hills is higher, Brad Kage and Caitlin Shafer explained that it has to do with cost of service and because it is more expensive to treat those that are farther away.

Jerry Strickland spoke about the inception of the sewer for the Indian Hills area, why so many grinder pumps were required, asked if we had any records on the maintenance of the pumps and if they have been kept up on a regular basis? He is not happy with the rate increase.

Aaron Amis was questioning how many pumps have been replaced, if we have any idea of the lifespan, if water pits have anything to do with the costs associated with this increase. Also asked about the letter concerning lead in the pipes. It was explained that it is administrative per State requirements and will be required every year.

Jerry Strickland spoke again about taking care of the pumps, knowing there are ones that will last longer and others are abused and will maybe only last half as long.

Aaron Amis asked if anyone had ever considered upgrading the entire system. Jeff addressed his question and stated we have looked into grants and just finished a major project which was partially funded by a grant and that possible future improvements could be made and funded by grants in the future but at this time, the town is still dealing with completing the project on hand. Much discussion still about the grinder pumps and which option is better and because there is such a different cross section of homeowners, it was determined that it's best for the Town Utility to own them and charge extra for the upkeep and maintenance.

Oveda Records asked about how they are affected by homeowners who are at the top of the hill and if they are affected by them. It was explained that everyone is on their own grinder pump and the use is specific to them. A homeowner asked to revisit the issue of the grinder pump fee, especially if most of them have been replaced and the fund has built up to a level to keep maintaining them. Someone asked why NV doesn't take it over since it's their water. Brad Bender tried to explain that our town is not equipped to handle all of these problems and would welcome another entity taking over our operation.

Brian Hatfield spoke about the issue of NV taking over and explained they do not have an interest. Practicing isolationism in that regard. He explained how some of the operations from JNRU and Campbell township work in relation to Vernon and was on hand to just explain more about how other operations work. He addressed the fact that much of these operations depend on county involvement also.

Fields was sympathetic to the \$40 charge for the grinder pumps and was suggesting a gradual increase in rates but not the whole amount at once, this can be addressed in the ordinance itself.

Jeff motioned to adjourn the special meeting at 8:07 pm, Amber seconded, all in favor. Amber then motioned to reopen the regular meeting for action on the sewer ordinance. Jeff seconded. All in favor

John Post motioned to table ordinance and vote next month, Amber seconded. All in favor.

## **VII. Claims**

- a. Jeff made a motion to approve the claims, Amber seconded the motion.

3 Yes votes, 0 No votes

## **VIII. Miscellaneous Business**

- a. Tarp house is not going according to schedule, will go to show cause.
- b. John Post motioned to approve the VVFD contract as the same terms as last year for 2026, Amber seconded. 3 Yes votes, 0 No votes.

**IX. Adjournment** – Regular meeting, Amber motioned to adjourn again @ 8:15 pm, Jeff seconded.

3 Yes votes, 0 No votes

a. **Next Regular Meeting:** The next Regular Vernon Town Council Meeting will be Thursday, February 11, 2025, at the Vernon Gym, 29 Washington Street, Vernon, Indiana 47282. The Regular meeting will begin at 6:30 PM.

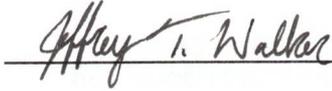
Vernon Town Council



John Post, 1<sup>st</sup> Ward



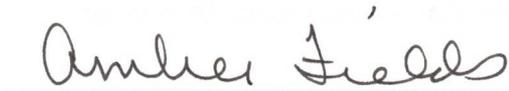
Bradley Bender, Mayor



Jeff Walker, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward



Attest: Mary Jo Bender, Clerk



Amber Fields, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward