

**Town of Vernon  
Vernon Gym  
Regular Meeting (7:00 PM)  
June 3, 2021**

**Regular Meeting:** The Town of Vernon Council meeting at the Vernon Gym, 29 Washington Street, Vernon, Indiana 47282, was called to order by Dan Wright at 7:00 PM.

Dan asked anyone from the public wishing to make a comment to sign in and let the Council know what they wished to comment on.

Town Officials and employees present:

I. Call to Order - Present

Amber Fields – Clerk/Treasurer  
Eric Genda – Council Ward 1  
Jeff Walker – Council Ward 2  
Shelly Davers – Council Ward 3  
Dan Wright – Mayor  
Ron Hendershot – Maintenance/Works Manager

II. **Approval of May 6, 2021 minutes**

Dan asked if there were any comments or corrections to the May 6, 2021 Council minutes. Shelly Davers made the motion to accept the minutes and Jeff Walker made the second.

Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

III. **Petitions or comments by the members of the public present:**

**Steve Harding** Inquired about the low-hanging trees on South Street. He felt that some of the lower hanging tree branches were becoming dangerous. Eric Genda also mentioned the trees in front of the Baptist Church were making it hard to see when making a turn. Chief Kirkham said the VVFD could drive through and trim trees that needed trimming. Dan also mentioned a complaint about the trees on Poplar Street, and thought this might be a good issue to work together on with the Fire Department to get some trees trimmed and cleaned up.

**Anna Walker** asked the Council permission to keep the “Mon-Arch” art project, made from left over “Mask-up Jennings County” materials, on the Town property on Brown Street until the end of June 2021. The project was created by Karen Chilman’s High School Art Class. They are looking for doners to sponsor the projects. She also

mentioned that the County Council had approved a similar structure for the town square. Shelly Davers made the motion to keep the structure until the end of June and Eric Genda made the second.

Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

IV. Reports from committees and officers

**1. Town Mayor – Dan Wright**

- a. Dan addressed the letter and ordinance pertaining to Bill Miller and his dogs. Bill told the Council that he did not know there was a cap on the number of dogs one could have in the Town of Vernon. He was looking to have the third dog trained, possibly through the 4-H Club. The dog, “Jerry” could have cancer, so it might be a moot point. Dan recommended that if it is Bill’s intent to get the dog trained, he should be given time to do so. Eric made the motion for Bill to get the dog trained by the end of August, Jeff Walker made the second.

Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

b. Update on **Trail Grant**

Dan said that the Trail Grant is officially approved so work will begin soon. He said that this project will be more difficult for contractors because the town is listed as an “Historic District”. He thought that the construction phase of the project might begin in the spring of 2022 and would most likely be a long process. He again mentioned the price of materials going up and that the only part of the project that must be completed is the trail.

c. **2020 Cares Act**

Dan reported on the Cares Act funding and that the funding has been received.

d. **2021 American Rescue Plan**

Dan reported that he planned to submit plans for a water and sewer project with the American Recovery Act Dollars. Water meters, wastewater lift stations and other such projects. He said that our Lift stations were running on borrowed time. The ARP is looking for projects to start in 2021-22 or beyond to bid out work. If the project works out as planned, a 50/50 match would be the best way to proceed. He has talked with the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) on the documentation needed and plans to turn that in tomorrow, Friday, June 4, 2021.

e. **Vernon Volunteer Firehouse Open House and Ribbon Cutting**

Dan mentioned the VVFD Ribbon Cutting last Saturday and said that if anyone missed it, the firemen would be more than happy to give additional tours of the facility.

**2. Ward 1 Council – Eric Genda**

- a. Nothing to report.

**3. Ward 2 Council – Jeff Walker**

- a. Jeff asked Ron about the weeds at the Commons and on the “Rat Row” property. Ron said that the only solution is spraying, which he does on a regular basis.
- b. Jeff also mentioned that the bricks around and inside the Tunnel are falling; and is there any solution to keep this from happening. Dan said that the historic integrity of the tunnel is most important and he would look into more signage before trucks and taller vehicles enter the tunnel. Dan also mentioned that two Jennings County Covered Bridges have been registered as historic structures and he would like to get the Tunnel registered as well.
- c. Jeff also inquired about placing trash cans in the “Rat Row” green space and down by the kayak/canoe put-in at the Commons. Everyone thought that was a good idea.
- d. Jeff asked about the stone tables in the “Rat Row” greenspace and was there any way to get those installed. Dan said that the tables were part of a student project that was dropped. The tables and benches need a foundation before they can be set.

**4. Ward 3 Council – Shelly Davers**

- a. Shelly asked Dan if the Council could get a copy of what he submits for the ARP. Dan said yes, but that the submission was not in report format but rather an online submission, but he would send what he could.

**5. Clerk Treasurer – Amber Fields**

- a. Amber emailed the months legal notice to the Council prior to the meeting.
- b. Amber reported on the NBA Grant and the possibility of having a “Grand Opening” later this summer or fall. She said that she would bring details to a later meeting.
- c. Amber emailed the Council the Resolution letter from the State regarding the Formal Complaint made by Damon Davers.

**6. Town Legal Counsel – Brad Kage**

- a. Brad said that he had not heard from Sarah Arnold, Steps Dance instructor, regarding the legal notice sent. However, Dakota Collins was in attendance

and spoke at length about the amount rental of the space and the proposed amount he owes the Town. Brad will provide the letter sent by Dakota Miiller. Dakota spoke about wanting to keep the room for Karate. He would also like to continue to use it for US Armored Combat training, as he is the only representative from Indiana. He started his karate career at the Vernon gym and would like to continue renting the space as he has a sentimental attachment to the facility. He would like to proceed with a rental agreement in the future. Brad asked if there was ever a rental agreement. Dakota said "No, there wasn't". Dakota also believes that he is up to date on his rent as Danny Stark had never given him a receipt. He feels that if he owes money, he will pay it, but also feels that he does not owe anything toward the rent.

Dan suggested that due to a lack of a written contract, the slate should be "wiped clean" and start over with a lease for Mr. Miller. Dakota was instructed that he could pay his rent at the Clerk/Treasurer's office and would be provided with a receipt in the future. Brad said that he could have a contract ready by the next meeting on July 1, to cover the period July 1 to December 31, 2021. Dan said that we could do a lease until the end of the year, and then start over in January so that we have an annual lease starting in January going forward. Brad suggested that Dakota be at the next meeting. Dan said that the Council could execute the lease at the next meeting. Nothing too complicated. Dakota Miller's phone number is (812) 799-6921 or 812-372-0245, and his address is 4123 N Tally Road, Columbus, Indiana.

Brad said that he would file a small claim for past due rent and eviction on Sarah Arnold and the Step's Dance studio. Brad also said that the Council would need to wait for an eviction order to clear the rooms of the Dance Studio belongings. Shelly Davers made a motion to file a small claim to collect past due rent and evict. Jeff Walker made the second.

Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

#### **7. Town Marshall – Brit Burgmeier (Not in attendance)**

## 8. Town Public Works Manager – Ron Hendershot

- a. **Proposal from WTHGIS** – Ron discussed the proposal from the WTHGIS program and mentioned that the only response he received from the Council was an email with several questions from Shelly Davers, which he answered and sent to the whole Council and Executive Board. Shelly asked if the Council wanted to drop Pub Works. Ron said that “No”, Pub Works is an asset management program where WTHGIS is a mapping software that interacts with Pub Works, and can have multiple layers within the WTHGIS program to get a better visual on the town and the programs. Madison uses WTHGIS as well as another town in northern Indiana that Ron has been invited to see. Dan said that the WTHGIS would benefit us when we go for grants and loans.

Shelly asked if we had digital copies of the maps, Ron said yes but we really do not have any way to review them. WTHGIS would give him the ability to look at the different layers and programs.

The Council asked how adding this program will help the town.

The Council also would like to know what Pub Works software does and why we would need both programs. Ron said that Pub Works is not a GIS program. Pub Works is the first layer. WTHGIS would be able to bring in all the information from the County. Currently the property lines are mapped within 20 feet, the new program would be within 6 inches. Next year our area is scheduled to be mapped.

Shelly said that the Town has paid a lot of money for Pub Works. She requested to have a list of what has been added and what it cost. She would like to look at other avenues for GIS. Ron said that right now, WTHGIS is the only program that integrates with Pub Works. Ron initiated the coordination between the two programs. Ron said that we only have the sewer system on Pub Works at this time. WTHGIS allows you to click on each asset and look at it.

Shelly says she does not believe anyone knows how to use the WTHGIS program or how it integrates with Pub Works. The current GIS program that the County has online allows an individual to look at property owners but not infrastructure. Pub Works cannot be used for infrastructure. Jeff asked when it would be mandatory to have a GIS program? Dan said it will be mandatory for future grants and have not said if an asset management alone will be good enough. Dan said that it would be better to have the asset

management program as a layer. Both programs give different results. Shelly thought that Pub Works should do all of the required functions, and that no one has done enough to investigate the WTHGIS program or why we need it. Shelly would like to make a motion to table this request and have someone from Pub Works come in and explain the situation to the Council and why it is needed before she votes on it. Eric said that he agrees with Shelly and that if only two other places are using both programs, he would like to have more information as well. Ron said that he initially chose Pub Works because it was more moderately priced.

Eric again asked if the Pub Works program would be enough to apply for future grants. Dan said yes, but the GIS program would be better and a more complete program. Ultimately, Dan thought we would need a GIS program. Jeff asked what will it cost and what will it save? Jeff would also like to hear from Madison and find out what the benefits were. Shelly said that she has a problem with Ron being the only person that knows the Pub Works Program. Ron said that he was the only person who knows the system and would be happy to show any Council member how it works. Dan said that maybe we could have additional training on Pub Works and get additional information from Madison.

Shelly made a motion to table the purchase of the WTHGIS program and come back in 3 to 6 months to review. Eric made the second. Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

**b. Water Rate Study**

The Council was emailed the completed Water Rate Study for the meeting to review. Shelly thought some of the numbers were skewed. Shelly said that she was going to call Sean from Sherman, Barber Mulliken, and talk to him about the study.

**c. Vernon Gym Policy and procedures**

Brad thought the rules and use agreement were very thorough. He would recommend approval. Dan asked for a motion to adopt the Gym use policy and procedures. Jeff made the motion and Eric made the second. Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

**Vernon Gym Rules and Use Agreement** – Dan said there was no need for a vote.

**Job Description for Scheduler.** Dan said the description goes beyond scheduling. Title-wise it may be better to describe the job as

scheduler/property manager. Dan thinks the title of the position is misleading because it includes maintenance and cleaning. Maintenance would fall back to the town.

Jeff Walker made a motion to change the Job Description name to Gym Keeper and accept the description. Eric Genda made the Second.

Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

## V. New Business – None at this time

## VI. Claims

### A. Shelly Davers asked about four claims:

- a. **Check/Claim 9628 for Day of Caring Supplies.** Shelly wanted to know from which account the supplies were paid for. Amber said the General Fund.
- b. **Check/Claim 2880 for ARW Conference.** Shelly wanted to know why the conference was paid from the Wastewater account. Dan and Amber both answered that there were wastewater programs at the conference and the cost was allowable from that fund.
- c. **Check/Claim 2882 to reimburse Ron Hendershot for conference expenses for his spouse.** Dan said that he had pre-approved the conference and for Ron's wife Trish to attend since she helps as a volunteer to read the meters with Ron. Shelly Davers made the motion to deny to reimburse Ron for the claim (2882) for \$318. The motion died for lack of a second.  
Eric said that in the future, conferences should be pre-approved by the Council, especially if a spouse was going to attend. Shelly Davers made the motion that pre-approval of conferences should come to the Council first. Jeff Walker made the second.  
Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.
- d. **Check/Claim 9633 to pay Ron Hendershot for extra mowing during the mowing season.** Shelly said that the \$200 was incorporated into Ron's salary of \$16,500 per year and that he should not receive the additional \$200. His salary was calculated so that he would receive at least the minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, for a 40-hour week. Dan suggested that a motion be made to approve the claims as presented and pull out the \$200 in the future. Shelly did not agree. Eric Genda made the motion to pay the claims, Jeff Walker made the second.  
Two Yes votes, 1 No vote (Shelly Davers)

### B. The Clerk Treasurer provided a Fund Report for the month of May 2021.

## VII. Miscellaneous Business

### A. Donations & Other

- a. Dan said that the next round of CCMG call for projects will happen most likely in July. There is usually a short turnaround from the call to the deadline for submittal with the deadline being around the end of July, but we will have another town meeting early in July so we can make the decision regarding CCMG at that time. Dan's suggestion was to do Ripley from the highway to the bridge and then do Pike from Ripley to least through the tunnel as a part of this CCMG application, but I would get some cost estimates together to see what we can afford.
- b. Dan mentioned that Ron will be on vacation next week. Also, Ron will be having surgery and won't be able to mow grass while he is out recovering from his surgery on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June for 2 – 6 weeks. Dan said that he would like to hire someone to mow while Ron is out. Ron said that he spends approximately 6 hours per week mowing and picking up sticks and limbs through the Town. The Council chose to cover the mowing with volunteers. Dan said that Jon Robertson had volunteered to mow some of the areas and also had cleaned the flower bed area. Dan said that the Town owed Jon a "Thank you."
- c. A man from the audience said that there were several young men playing basketball that would be willing to volunteer and help out the Town.
- d. Shelly asked about the electricity for the soccer building and said that it should be transferred to the Muscatatuck Soccer Club.
- e. Dan mentioned that a man from the Indianapolis Blues Baseball Club called and will be playing next year at the Sassafras festival. The Friends of Historic Vernon will be selling food and ice cream will also be sold at the ball game.
- f. Brad brought up the mobile home parked behind the old Drugstore building and said there was no ordinance addressing the placement a mobile home.
- g. Shelly asked if the Council would like to place an ad for the Gym Keeper, and have an executive session regarding hiring. Everyone agreed.
- h. Dan said that the Gym was only being rented out for basketball rentals and nothing else. No volleyball yet.
- i. Eric Kirkham, VVFD Chief thanked the Town of Vernon again for providing \$5,000 to help pay for the rescue boat. Chief Kirkham also said they are having a hard time putting the rescue boat in the water. The only place they can safely put the boat in is the Green Bridge at Crosley. He thought it would also help kayakers to put a ramp in Vernon at the Commons. Dan said that everything on the river has to be approved by the DNR, and that he was investigating a place along Water Street for a boat put-in.

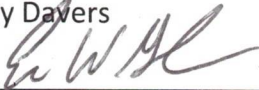


- VIII. Jeff Walker made the motion to Adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM, Shelly Davers made the second.  
3 Yes votes, 0 No votes.

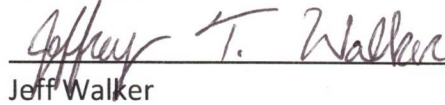
**Next Regular Meeting:** The next Regular Vernon Town Council Meeting will be Thursday, July 1, 2021, at the Vernon Gym, 29 Washington Street, Vernon, Indiana 47282. The Regular meeting will begin at 7:00 PM.

**Vernon Town Council**

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Shelly Davers



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Eric Genda

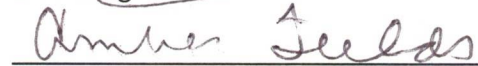


Jeff Walker

**Vernon Mayor**



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Dan Wright



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Amber Fields, Clerk Treasurer