

**Town of Vernon
Vernon Gym
Regular Meeting (7:00 PM)
September 2, 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.

Town Officials and employees present:

I. Call to Order – All Members 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
Brit Burgmeier – Town Marshall

Jeff Walker made a motion to suspend the regular meeting for the 2022 Budget Hearing, Eric Genda made the second.

3 Yes votes, 0 No votes

Dan presented the proposed Budget for 2022:

General Fund	93,000
Local Roads & Streets Fund	5,500
Motor Vehicles & Highways Fund	16,000
Capital Cumulation Fund	4,000
Total Proposed 2022 Budget:	\$118,500

Dan & Amber asked if anyone from the public wished to comment on the 2022 Budget.

Damon Davers asked what the Budget was for 2021:

General Fund	78,063
Local Roads & Streets Fund	4,128
Motor Vehicles & Highways Fund	8,000
Capital Cumulation Fund	1,933
Total 2021 Budget:	\$92,124

A resident from Indian Hills asked about the Fire Station Budget and if it was included the Towns budget and Dan explained that they are not part of our budget.

John Post asked how the reductions were made. Amber said that the Town advertises and adopts the proposed budget, then the State makes any necessary changes toward the end of the calendar year.

Meeting continued suspension for the Water Rate Hearing:

Dan explained that the Town buys water from North Vernon, then re-sells it to the Town residents. Dan explained about the tracker is currently in the rates but will be removed. North Vernon makes approximately a 2% increase each year and that is what Vernon has proposed in the newly proposed Ordinance. Dan asked anyone from the public wishing to make a comment on the proposed water study and water rate increases.

A resident from Indian Hills asked why the Vernon Water was double or triple what the North Vernon amounts were with trash pick-up included.

Dan explained that we purchase our water from North Vernon and maintain our system. Lift station electricity, maintenance and repairs, water tower electricity, maintenance, and repairs, reading meters, repairing meters, testing etc.

A resident asked about the hydrant rental cost. Dan explained that there was a cost associated with maintaining the hydrants for fire protection. Dan explained that the water tower was mainly for fire protection as well. Cost to maintaining the water tower include painting, valve maintenance, etc. The town has hired a contractor to maintain the water tower.

Susan Harding asked about the Hearing flyer information. She wanted to know when the rates would take effect. Dan said that the first increase would probably not happen until January of 2022. Susan thought that the increased amount was higher than 2% and if the hydrant cost was in the water rate. Dan explained that the hydrant fee is included in the water rate and that the tracker will go away with the new increase. When the wastewater study is done, the goal is to have the tracker removed as well.

Brad said that the water rates have not been increased for several years. (2013)

A discussion continued about the Indian Hills and the Town of Vernon's Water rates, testing, maintenance, and sewer grants that have been applied for. Dan also discussed the meter replacement plan, and future need for a GIS program.

Dan explained that when the Lift stations in Indian Hills are different than the Vernon Lift Stations. There is a lift station and grinder pump in the Indian Hills neighborhood at least every other house if not every house. Dan also said that water is not as expensive as sewer because sewage must be treated. Amber said that the minimum Sewer cost in Indian Hills is \$47.34, and Vernon is \$40.11.

Amber said that the Water Fund has a payment due in November for the original Water infrastructure, and there is not enough to pay that payment at this date. She also said that the Water Fund is not supporting itself.

Shelly stated as a resident and council member there are a lot of good questions and valid points. We're covering software charges, salaries, percentages of office equipment and mailings, etc. Reminder to other council members that we have things in here that grants have been applied for and those amounts could go down. There are things included in the study that have not yet been approved by the council for purchase. Adjustments could be made so we are not looking at the huge increases that we seem to be headed for. Shelly doesn't want to pay any more for water knowing that a wastewater study is coming. As a council we need to be more budget conscious. In the past, we have not had a budget for water or sewer that was fiscally responsible/broken down into percentages/specific buckets (line mntc., hydrant mntc.). If we're going to move forward with this, as a council we need to consider implementing this budget change to go with it.

Jeff made a motion to adjourn the hearing, Eric made the second.

3 Yes votes, 0 No votes

The Hearing was adjourned, and the regular meeting resumed at 7:48

Eric Genda made a motion to reconvene the regular meeting. Jeff Walker made the second

3 Yes votes, 0 No votes

II. **Approval of August 5, 2021 minutes**

Dan asked if there were any comments or corrections to the August 5, 2021, Council minutes and recommended approval.

Shelly Davers made a motion to approve the August 5, 2021 minutes. Jeff Walker made the second.

Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

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

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.

Tim Beinke said that his home in Indian Hills was recently sold to his grandson, Cody Brown, was not on the sewer system. He asked that this property be exempt from paying the sewer cost since it was never hooked up. Dan said that Indiana State law did not allow that.

Brad Kage said that in the past, the Town has not enforced a mandatory hook-up if the resident agreed to pay the minimum sewer charge. Cody and Tim also asked about the excessive water/sewer bill for the past month.

A discussion continued about the bill and how it was calculated. Ron said that he went back and re-read the meter to make sure there was not a leak. Cody asked if he was supposed to pay the minimum sewer cost every month. Dan said yes.

The owner said they watered sod two hours a day, twice a day for 7 days, and power washed the house as well. Dan said that we could reduce the bill down by the sewer

cost. Amber explained that the water and sewer were charged on a tiered rate and the gallons used were plugged into the system which calculates the bill and adds the tracker. She said that she would go back to the office and re-calculate the bill to make sure it was correct.

Jeff Walker made a motion to remove the sewer portion of the recent bill for the property. Shelly Davers made the second
Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

Susan Harding asked if there was an update on the soccer field work. Dan said that they planned to start at the end of September.

Steve Harding said that he felt the soccer field was not being taken care of the way the Town took care of it before. He asked if there was a clause to take the property back if it wasn't being taken care of. Dan and Brad both agreed there was a clause for this reason.

Isahia Barber informed the Council of a hole in the road down by the Vernon Commons Lift Station. Dan said that there was a culvert running under that area of the road. Dan said that the situation was being looked at for options to repair.

Isahia also asked about the Historical Society Ghost Walk and if it will be happening this year. Dan thought the Ghost Walk would be cancelled because of the pandemic, but the decision will be made on the 15th.

Isahia mentioned the basketball goal at the Commons because it has been lowered and kids are hanging on it. Dan said it would be locked back up.

IV. Reports from Committees and Officers

1. Town Mayor – Dan Wright

a. SWIF Grant

Dan reported that he checked on the SWIF grants for the Water and Sewer projects but the deadline has been moved back again due to the number of applications.

b. CCMG Grant

Dan also mentioned that he had applied for a CCMG Grant for a paving project. (Pike and Ripley Streets near the tunnel) Dan has received a survey from INDOT on a road survey.

2. Ward 1 Council – Eric Genda

a. Eric said that he did not have anything to add.

3. Ward 2 Council – Jeff Walker

- a. Jeff asked about the Kiosk at the Courthouse square and noted that the bricks and mortar were falling off. He asked when that would be repaired. Dan said that we would hire a mason to look at the brickwork to repair it.
- b. Jeff also commented on the Gym Auxiliary building and how nice it looked.

4. Ward 3 Council – Shelly Davers

- a. Shelly discussed the oversight and segregation of Duties of the Clerk Treasurer's policy that was amended to include (meeting minute) approved changes from the last council meeting on August the 5th . She stated that the policy just needed signed since the changes were already voted on last meeting. Amber made some additional corrections to the Policy; however, the council chose to go with Shelly's version of changes and not make the changes Amber recommended. Shelly thought the policy Amber drafted was too broad in scope when it comes to an audit. Jeff made a motion to accept Shelly's changes to policy (2019.2.R3) for the oversight of the Clerk Treasurers position. Eric made the second.
Three yes votes, 0 No votes.
- b. Shelly reminded the Council of the assignments of Oversight and Segregation of the Clerk Treasurer (Jeff Walker), Maintenance (Eric Genda) and Gym (Shelly Davers) back in April. Shelly does not feel comfortable with the current communication process. The current policy is not being followed at the Gym and would like for someone else on the Council to be appointed over that position. Eric volunteered. Shelly made a motion that she resign from the oversight of the Gym and that Eric become the oversight person of the Gym/gym employee. Eric made the second.
Three yes votes, 0 No votes.

5. Clerk Treasurer – Amber Fields

- a. Amber mentioned the 2022 Budget and that she would be bringing back the estimated and advertised budget to the next meeting in October for adoption.

6. Town Legal Counsel – Brad Kage

- a. Brad said there is IC on paying claims before the meeting that are allowed by statute. Brad asked that the Council review the IC that addresses that issue. Amber said that we could table the Payment of Claims policy as well.
- b. Brad discussed the Old Drugstore property on the corner of the Highway and Pike Street (McDonald property). He said the trailer had been removed and the Executive Director of the Area Plan Commission and the County Building Inspector had plans to walk through the building.

7. Town Marshall – Brit Burgmeier

- a. Brit informed the Council of a hearing planned to address the house at 119 N Pike Street. Brad thought there was a "Show Cause" hearing scheduled on the property. Brad asked who owned the property. Amber said there was a sign on the house with a phone number and email address that are both shut down. Amber also said that kids are going in the house almost every day.
- b. Brit said that the battery in the Marshall truck needed replaced. Dan asked if there was a Town account at NAPA. Amber said Yes, there was. Brit was given permission to purchase a battery for the Marshall Truck on the Town account.

8. VVFD Fire Chief – Eric Kirkham

- a. Eric updated the Council on the VVFD Fund Raiser held in August. He said that the gun raffle was successful and brought in a little over \$3,000. Everyone seemed pleased with the food and number of raffles.

9. Town Public Works Manager – Ron Hendershot

- a. **Roof for Auxiliary Gym** – Ron advised the Council regarding the roof replacement for the Auxiliary Gym. Ron has been in touch with Countryside Roofing and they have raised their price from \$17,270 to \$18,500, since their last quote due to the price of metal. Discussion continued on what funds to use to pay for the project.
Jeff made a motion to accept the Countryside Roofing quote and pay for the project from the General Fund (\$10,000) and the Gift Fund (\$8,500) and reimburse the Gift fund as rent comes in from the Muscatatuck Soccer Club. Shelly made the second.
Three yes votes, 0 No votes.
- b. Ron informed the Council on the pricing of a new Volleyball system for the Gym due to increased requests from the public. Discussion continued on the rental rates of the gym and how the project would be paid for. The quote from Lee Company was for \$4,310.
Jeff made a motion to purchase the Volleyball system from Lee Company with 50% coming from the Riverboat Wagering Fund and 50% from the CEDIT Fund. Eric made the second.
Three yes votes, 0 No votes.
- c. Ron discussed the **Pike's Tree Care** work on the tree trimming around the streets in town with the help of the VVFD. Pike's recommended a 5 – 8 year cycle for tree trimming.
The plan is to trim trees along the alleys in 2022.
- d. **Water Rate Study** Brad asked for a copy of the last Water Ordinance so that he could amend for the new Water Ordinance. Shelly asked if the Water Rate proposal could be amended if some of the proposed projects listed in the study were not done or if expenses were cut. Dan said that we would have to hold another hearing to amend the Ordinance, but it could be

modified if we were taking things out versus adding. Jeff Walker made a motion to have Brad prepare a new Water rate Ordinance based on the Water Rate Study provided by Sherman, Barber & Milliken. Eric Genda made the second.

Three Yes votes, 0 No votes.

V. Claims

Shelly Davers made a motion to approve the claims as presented. Jeff Walker made the second.

3 Yes votes, 0 No votes.

A. The Clerk Treasurer provided a **Fund Report** for the month of August 2021.

VI. Miscellaneous Business


A. Donations & Other

a. Dan and Jeff met with some members of the Friends of Historic Vernon regarding the name of the Rat Row Property. Dan asked if the Council would approve re-naming the property the "Vernon Art Park" and consider allowing the Friends of Historic Vernon to use and maintain the property. He thought some type of a lease agreement could be drawn up for the use and care by the group.

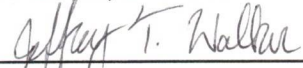
VII. Shelly Davers made the motion to Adjourn the meeting at 9:05 PM, Eric Genda made the second.


3 Yes votes, 0 No votes.

Next Regular Meeting: The next Regular Vernon Town Council Meeting will be Thursday, September 2, 2021, at the Vernon Gym, 29 Washington Street, Vernon, Indiana 47282. There will be an Executive Session beginning at 5:00 PM and the Regular meeting will begin at 7:00 PM.

Vernon Town Council
 10/7/21

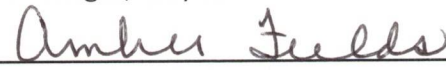
Eric Genda, 1st Ward


Jeff Walker, 2nd Ward

 9 Oct 2021
Shelly Davers, 3rd Ward

Town of Vernon


Dan Wright, Mayor


Amber Fields, Clerk Treasurer

