

**City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois  
Regular City Council Meeting  
Tuesday, February 19, 2019  
7:00 p.m.  
MINUTES**

The Mt. Vernon City Council held a Regular City Council Meeting on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building, Veterans Park, 800 South 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

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

Elder Don Summers of the Christian Fellowship Church gave the Invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**PRESENTATION OF JOURNALS**

The Journals for the January 31, 2019 City Council Workshop and the February 4, 2019 Regular City Council Meeting were presented for approval.

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

**VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE**

No comments were heard.

**APPROVAL OF CONSOLIDATED VOUCHERS FOR ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

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

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to approve the Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable in the amount of \$953,038.00. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

**BIDS AND QUOTES**

No bids and quotes were presented.

### **CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to seek quotes for lounge chairs at the Aquatic Zoo. She explained that the City is expanding the seating at the Aquatic Zoo and desires to purchase 100 additional lounge chairs. The cost is estimated to be \$20,000 and funds will come from the Aquatic Zoo Working Fund. Assistant City Manager Nathan McKenna found three companies that sell the same type of chair that is currently used.

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to grant permission to seek quotes for lounge chairs at the Aquatic Zoo. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to seek bids on four Thermal Imaging Cameras. The current cameras are beyond the service life and parts are no longer available to repair. The total cost is about \$34,000. The Fire Department's budget will fund \$7,000. Chiropractic Wellness Center donated \$3,500 and King City Property Brokers donated \$650. The balance of about \$25,000 will come from the Foreign Fire Tax Fund. Fire Chief Kevin Sargent explained that the cameras are utilized to search for victims in a fire or other situations such as a lost person in an open field by identifying heat signatures at different temperatures or to identify hot spots within a building to locate hidden fires behind walls and concealed spaces.

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to grant permission to seek bids on four Thermal Imaging Cameras. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to seek bids for the mowing of surplus City lots. Previously, this mowing has been done by part-time temporary non-union employees through the Engineering Department. Bechtel explained that it is difficult to keep the positions filled and equipment operational. The contract will only cover the surplus lots and right-of-way that union employees do not mow. If the bids do not show a benefit in the cost to the City, then the bid will not be awarded. The City would then move forward with the purchasing of equipment and hiring for the part-time positions.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to grant permission to seek bids for the mowing of surplus City lots. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to waive the bids to purchase two tandem dump trucks for the Fleet Services and Public Works Departments. One truck was budgeted this year, however there is a need for a second truck due to an accident in the Public Works Parking Lot. The funds will come from the ½ of the 1% Sales Tax. Fleet Services Director Mike Shannon researched existing inventories and found two new International Dump Trucks in Oklahoma City for \$126,000 each. Last year, the State of Illinois' bid was \$134,000 each.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to grant permission to waive the bids to purchase two tandem dump trucks for the Fleet Services and Public Works Departments. Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

**CITY ATTORNEY**

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Establishing Water Rates for Woodlawn, Waltonville, Bluford, Dix-Kell, Northeast Water District, and Belle Rive. Finance Director Merle Hollmann explained that every five years new contractual rates are sent from the Rend Lake Conservancy District (RLCD). The rate to the Villages is currently \$2.609 per thousand gallons. This Resolution would determine the rates for water usage for the next four years. The increase each year to the villages is 5 cents per 1,000 gallons.

The proposed rates are:

May 1, 2019	\$2.659 per thousand gallon
May 1, 2020	\$2.709 per thousand gallon
May 1, 2021	\$2.759 per thousand gallon
May 1, 2022	\$2.809 per thousand gallon

Council Member Jim Rippy stated that he realizes the need to pass the rate increase through to the Villages, but there needs to be a way to place pressure on Rend Lake Conservancy District not to charge so much for the water.

Council Member Jeff May stated that the last time he met with Rend Lake Conservancy District, he found that they were sitting on a ton of cash for capital development. He asked if RLCD developed a capital budget. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel replied that she was not aware of any capital budget. May explained that RLCD had an extraordinary amount of cash at their last audit. He feels that the citizens need to see what the long-term plans are to justify that amount of cash.

Mayor John Lewis reported that he and Council Member Jim Rippy went to a RLCD meeting and received a vague long-term plan. Rippy asked if Mt. Vernon's RLCD representative could come to a Council Meeting to explain the need for increase. Lewis stated that the Jefferson County representatives are outnumbered and outvoted by the Franklin County representatives.

**Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the Resolution Establishing Water Rates for Woodlawn, Waltonville, Bluford, Dix-Kell, Northeast Water District, and Belle Rive. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Granting a Conditional Sign Permit for an Off-Premise Sign by Charles W. Neal at Lot 1 Water Tower Place. The Planning and Zoning Board unanimously approved the request and no objectors were present. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that this is an off-premise directional sign to Dr. Neal's Office.

**Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the Resolution Granting a Conditional Sign Permit for an Off-Premise Sign by Charles W. Neal at Lot 1 Water Tower Place. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for Council's consideration a Resolution to Accept an Agreement for Grant Consultation and other Professional Services by and between the City of Mt.

Vernon and the Greater Egypt Regional Planning Development Commission regarding the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Paving Project. This is in connection with the City's receipt of a \$499,021.33 Community Development Block Grant Assistance Program. The funds would support the City's efforts to replace asphalt pavement and bridge on South 12<sup>th</sup> Street following the water line replacement project. The City will compensate Greater Egypt Regional Planning Development Commission \$25,000 for their grant consultation services.

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to approve the Resolution to Accept an Agreement for Grant Consultation and other Professional Services by and between the City of Mt. Vernon and the Greater Egypt Regional Planning Development Commission regarding the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Paving Project. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

### **MAYOR**

Mayor John Lewis reported on the January 2019 statistics from the various City Departments.

**The Mt. Vernon Police Department** handled 1751 calls which equals to about 57 calls each and every day. 119 people were arrested during the month. There were 113 criminal charges and 19 warrants served. They also conducted 348 traffic stops resulting in 98 citations, of which 6 were for use of cellphones. 12 people were arrested for D.U.I., they had 44 drug charges, responded to 98 traffic crashes, answered 95 alarms and had 126 community contacts. The Detective Division was assigned 46 new cases, cleared 4 by arrest, referred 3 cases to the States Attorney and had 2 crime scene call outs. The Tactical Unit was deployed 1 time and our K9 team had 19 deployments. Our Communication Center answered 9,376 non-emergency calls and 1,812 emergency calls.

**The Fire Department** responded to 295 alarms, of which, 227 were recorded as EMS related, 68 of the responses were recorded as fire related, and 13 of the responses were recorded as hazard related. They responded to 10 Motor Vehicle Accidents, 2 structure fires, 4 cooking fires, 1 vehicle fire, 10 motor vehicle accidents, 17 false alarms, received 1 mutual aid and was requested and gave mutual aid on 5 calls. The Fire Inspection Dept conducted 85 10A Inspections, performed 2 plan reviews, 5 business site inspections, 2 consultations, 7 public education events, 1 blood drive, 2 car seat installations, 1 fire extinguisher training and 3 fire department training sessions.

**Our Public Utilities Department** responded to 15 water breaks, repaired or replaced 22 services, processed 304 work orders, processed 125 JULIE locates, removed 21 idle meter accounts, replaced 1 valve, replaced/repared 3 fire hydrants and had 143 red letter disconnects. On the sewer side, they responded to 12 service calls resulting in 8 backed up sewer mains, 2 sewer mains repaired, 2 manholes repaired, 22 routine sanitary and storm mains cleaned, and televised and dye tested 4 sanitary sewer mains resulting in 3330 linear feet of main cleaned and 250 linear feet of main televised.

**Engineering and Inspection Department.** There have been 14 nuisance postings. There were 2 properties condemned, and there were 9 building permits totaling \$1,794,955.

## **CITY COUNCIL**

Council Member Jim Rippe spoke on the response that he received from State of Illinois Assistant Attorney General Edie Steinberg about the Open Meetings Act. Rippe read the question that he submitted; *“May I ask a few questions for clarification? I serve on a City Council that consists of four council members plus the Mayor, all elected officials. You recently cleared up a violation of the open meeting statute where one council member was discussing an issue via e-mail with two other council members and was able to get their support on the issue with agreed responses via e-mail. Ruling of a violation was acceptable and remedy of posting for public was satisfactory as remedy.”* Assistant Attorney General Steinberg’s response was; *“An e-mail to other City Council members that does not include responses is unlikely to constitute a meeting under section 1.02 of the Open Meetings Act because it does not include contemporaneous interactive communication. This office cannot review e-mails and provide legal advice regarding your other question. However, I have attached a determination that may provide you some guidance.”* Rippe stated that he was not satisfied with the answer and still cannot tell if the emails were legal or illegal and asked that the emails be reviewed. Mayor John Lewis replied that the City Attorney and City FOIA Officer reviewed the emails and everything was satisfactory.

Council Member Donte Moore thanked the Mt. Vernon Police and Fire Departments and other nearby Fire Departments for their professional work at the recent huge fire at Kendrick’s Paper. Mayor John Lewis agreed, and the Departments prevented any additional damage to adjacent buildings.

## **VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE**

No comments were heard.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No Executive Session was held.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May .  
Yeas: May, Moore, Rippe, and Lewis. Absent: Young.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Jo Pemberton  
City Clerk