

**City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois  
Regular City Council Meeting  
Monday, April 1, 2019  
7:00 p.m.  
MINUTES**

The Mt. Vernon City Council held a Regular City Council Meeting on Monday, April 1, 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 7:10 pm.

Linola Spann 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, Council Member Mike Young, and Mayor John Lewis.

**PRESENTATION OF JOURNALS**

The Journal for the March 18, 2019 Regular City Council Meeting was presented for approval.

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

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

JoAlice Pierce addressed the proposed eastside railroad overpass. She is happy that a Committee has been formed, but she senses a lack of enthusiasm for the project from the City Council. Without the City Council's total commitment, this project will be impossible. She explained that train traffic has increased over the years and she is stopped by a train a third of the time. Pierce hopes that the City Council will aggressively seek to find a favorable solution. Mayor John Lewis stated that he and the Council are concerned with this issue. There have been discussions with private individuals and their ideas have been passed on to the Overpass Committee. The solution will come down to funding and how many revenue streams the Governor can identify for capital projects. Council Member Jim Rippy explained that the Committee is trying to use Southern Illinois University engineering students involved in the project for a fresh approach. The main items are cost and finding the most practical location.

## **APPROVAL OF CONSOLIDATED VOUCHERS FOR ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

The Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable were presented to Council for approval. Council Member Jim Rippy asked when the construction inspection will end at the Chesley Industrial Park. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel stated that today, a letter was received from the Illinois Department of Transportation approving the final project and they have requested the final report. This will end the construction inspection costs.

**Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable in the amount of \$1,228,363.92. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

## **BIDS AND QUOTES**

Assistant City Manager Nathan McKenna presented the bid results for two diving boards for the Aquatic Zoo. The quotes were received from Westport Pools and Recreonics, Inc.

	<b>Cost per Board</b>	<b>Shipping</b>	<b>Total Quote for 2 Boards</b>
Recreonics, Inc.	\$4,076.75	\$498.50	\$8,652.00
Westport Pools	\$4,918.00	Not supplied	\$9,836.00

McKenna recommended to purchase the two diving boards from Recreonics for a total cost of \$8,652.00. Recreonics supplied a price of \$3,506.07 for each Fulcrum Assembly and Westport quoted \$605.00 for each Diving Board Fulcrum. He recommended purchasing the Fulcrum Kits at a later date when needed. Delivery of the boards is in six to eight weeks.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to purchase the two diving boards from Recreonics for a total cost of \$8,652.00. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

## **CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to seek bids for the demolition of the former Water Treatment Plant at North 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Waterworks Road. Council Member Jim Rippy asked how long this Water Treatment Plant has been idle. Bechtel explained that since the City began purchasing water from Rend Lake, the plant was not needed. The City continued using the plant until it became more expensive to keep it repaired for back up. Rippy asked why there is a rush. Bechtel explained that it is hoped that the building be demolished before the engineer comes to do the historical analysis of the water tower. The goal is to have the building demolished and site cleaned up before the new water tower is constructed. Council Member Mike Young asked if the plant is functional. Bechtel replied no, and said that it has been a source of some large water leaks. The lines have been capped off.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to seek bids for the demolition of the former Water Treatment Plant at North 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Waterworks Road. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested permission to close 9<sup>th</sup> Street from Broadway to Casey Avenue from 10 am to 10 pm on Saturday, May 4, 2019 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Downtown Cinco de Mayo Block Party Event. Jennifer Carmona spoke on the planned events for the day.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to grant permission to close 9<sup>th</sup> Street from Broadway to Casey Avenue from 10 am to 10 pm on Saturday, May 4, 2019 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Downtown Cinco de Mayo Block Party Event. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

### **CITY ATTORNEY**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for second reading an Ordinance Amending the Number of Package Liquor Licenses from Seven to Eight. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that Greg Patel requested Package Liquor License for the sale of all alcoholic liquor at his new business at 26<sup>th</sup> and Veterans Memorial Drive. Bechtel stated that no consumption of alcohol or video gaming will be conducted on the property. In addition, this Ordinance changes the name of the Hotel/Motel Ticket Liquor License to Hotel Patron Liquor License.

**Council Member Jeff May motioned to adopt Ordinance #2019-8, an Ordinance Amending the Number of Package Liquor Licenses from Seven to Eight. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for second reading an Ordinance Amending Article 6 of the Revised Code regarding the Hotel-Motel and Hotel Patron Liquor Licenses. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that many hotel brands sell liquor to guests in a pantry area. This would permit Mt. Vernon hotels to do the same. The sale of alcoholic liquor in the original package which is consumed on the licensed premises (not outside or in parking lot) is considered a consumption sale. Consumption sales can be made upon the licensed premises to registered guests and to attendees of the registered users. Consumption Sales shall not be made to the general public.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to adopt Ordinance #2019-9, an Ordinance Amending Article 6 of the Revised Code regarding the Hotel-Motel and Hotel Patron Liquor Licenses. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for first reading an Ordinance Declaring Surplus Municipal Property. The surplus items are vehicles from Fleet Services and the Police Department.

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to suspend the rules on voting on an Ordinance. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to adopt Ordinance #2019-10, An Ordinance Declaring Surplus Municipal Property. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

City Attorney David Leggans presented for Council's consideration a Resolution Reclassifying Certain Public Utilities and Sanitation Accounts for Accounting Purposes. Council Member Jim Rippy asked what the aging process of the accounts are. Finance Director Merle Hollmann explained that each year the City writes off water, sewer, and garbage accounts that are over 3 years past due. The accounts are written off but remain collectible if the customers try to sign up for utility services again. Rippy asked if the accounts are turned over to a collection agency. Hollmann answered that the accounts are turned into the State Comptroller's Office and the amounts are deducted from any funds coming from the State such as income state return, lottery winners, and wages. Rippy stated that these accounts should be called bad debts instead of saying that the accounts are reclassified, and they should be turned over to a collection agency. City Attorney David Leggans explained that a previous City Council changed the bad debt wording to reclassification of accounts. Council Member Jeff May stated the amount of bad debt is small compared to the amount of accounts billed each year.

**Council Member Donte Moore motioned to approve the Resolution Reclassifying Certain Public Utilities and Sanitation Accounts for Accounting Purposes. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

### **MAYOR**

Mayor John Lewis presented for the advice and consent of the City Council, the appointments of Blondel Bluford and John Hundley to the Mt. Vernon Housing Authority.

**Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to appoint Blondel Bluford and John Hundley to the Mt. Vernon Housing Authority. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

Mayor John Lewis reported on the recent deaths of three Illinois State Troopers on the Interstate Highways. He urged everyone to pull over to another lane when emergency vehicles are stopped and to pull over and stop when emergency vehicles are traveling. Lewis stated that today, April 1<sup>st</sup> is Illinois State Trooper Day. He asked that everyone pray for the first responders and the job that they do every day.

Mayor John Lewis reminded everyone that tomorrow, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, is election day and he urged everyone to vote.

## **CITY COUNCIL**

Council Member Jim Rippy addressed two items being discussed on social media. One item was concerning the dredging of the City Park Lake. He stated that it is untrue that City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel gave the Council an option of either dredging the lake or raising property taxes. Bechtel reviewed the audio of the discussion and what was said was that there will always be unexpected expenses and that is the reason for having a healthy working fund balance to meet the unexpected obligations.

Rippy said the second item is concerning the accusation that he was a racist because he did not agree with the election. He said it is untrue and he was very offended by the accusation.

Council Member Mike Young requested an update on the light installation at Veterans Memorial Drive and Davidson. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel stated that the poles have been ordered.

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

Horton Petties expressed concerns about the lack of lights and traffic signals at the new high school. Before someone is injured, he urged the high school prepare regulations to control the traffic. Mayor John Lewis stated that the Jefferson County Sheriff is posting officers by the high school to prevent accidents. Council Member Donte Moore encouraged Petties to attend the next Jefferson County Board Meeting to discuss this matter, because the high school is outside of the City's jurisdiction.

Horton Petties spoke on security at the City Park. He asked if a security officer could be assigned to the Park to deter some of the unlawful activity. Police Chief Trent Page stated that the City Police Bike Patrol is being used at the City Park for additional security. When staffing is available, the Police has double patrols in the City Park area.

Horton Petties spoke on the geese overpopulation at the City Park. Mayor John Lewis stated that the City has been informed that the geese cannot be touched. He explained that the City is working on a five-year program to remove the geese. Assistant City Manager Nathan McKenna explained that IDNR have located about twenty nests with 5 to 7 eggs. IDNR are oiling the eggs to prevent about 120 new geese from hatching. He stated that Canadian geese always return to their hatching location.

Bobby Farris complained of people drinking and speeding on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No Executive Session was held.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jo Pemberton".

Mary Jo Pemberton  
City Clerk