

**City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois
Regular City Council Meeting
Monday, March 18, 2019
7:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

The Mt. Vernon City Council held a Regular City Council Meeting on Monday, March 18, 2019 at the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building, Veterans Park, 800 South 27th Street, Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

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

Pastor Kent Jackson of the Family Life 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, Council Member Mike Young, and Mayor John Lewis.

PRESENTATION OF JOURNALS

The Journal for the March 4, 2019 Regular City Council Meeting was presented for approval.

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

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 Jim Rippy asked for an update on the dredging of the City Park Lake. City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel reported that the dredging is about 50% complete. She stated that the project is more than anticipated, but the contractor is doing a good job.

Council Member Jim Rippy asked when the construction inspection would be completed for the Chesley Industrial Park. Bechtel replied the inspection will be completed when the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Economic Development Group allows the City to close out the grant.

Council Member Donte Moore motioned to approve the Consolidated Vouchers for Accounts Payable in the amount of \$1,640,009.27. Seconded by Council Member Jeff May. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.

BIDS AND QUOTES

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel presented the bid results for four Thermal Imaging Cameras for the Fire Department. Bechtel reported that two companies submitted bids.

	Company	Tic Type	Cost/Unit	# of Units	Trade In	Multi-Unit Discount	Overall Total
1.	Dinges Fire Company	Bullard NXT XT	\$8,495.00	4	\$3,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$29,980.00
2.	Mid America Fire and Safety	Argus Mi Tic 3	\$5,280.45	4	\$2,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$19,121.80

The City will purchase one camera with funds donated from The Chiropractic Wellness Center (\$3,500), King City Property Brokers (\$650), and the City (\$630.45). The Foreign Fire Fund will purchase the remaining three cameras at a cost of \$14,341.35. City staff recommends awarding the bid to Mid America Fire & Safety for \$19,121.80.

Council Member Jim Rippy motioned to accept the low bid from Mid America Fire & Safety in the amount of \$19,121.80 for four Thermal Imaging Cameras. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.

CITY MANAGER

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel presented the bid results for the Two-Year Mowing Contract. Bechtel reported that no bids were received for the non-union mowing contract which covers the City's empty lots and property accumulated through demolition proceedings. She stated that the City will proceed with hiring in-house, part-time seasonal employees. Currently, there are a couple working mowers, but it may be necessary to purchase another mower mid-season.

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel presented for Council's approval the Preliminary and Final Plat for Tyler's Subdivision. The petitioning party is Mike and Teri Tyler. The general location is 200 S. 45th Street. Marshall Davis of Round Table Design explained the petitioners are requesting to subdivide their property into two commercial lots. Bechtel stated that there were no objections at the Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing and the request was approved unanimously.

Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the Preliminary and Final Plat for Tyler's Subdivision. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel requested Council's approval to waive the bidding process and accept the quotes from Vogler Ford and Morrow Brothers Ford to purchase a total of five Ford Interceptor SUVs for the Police Department. Bechtel explained that the Police Department is experiencing an unusual amount of issues with their cars and five Police Department vehicles need replacement. Vogler Ford has four 2019 Ford Interceptor SUVs for \$30,133 each and Morrow Brothers Ford has one 2019 Ford Interceptor for \$32,480. Fleet Services Director Mike Shannon explained that the 2019 Ford Interceptor SUVs are selling quickly due to an early termination of the manufacturing of the vehicles, and the dealers will not promise to hold the vehicles. The 2020 Ford Interceptors will be redesigned to incorporate a hybrid engine costing an additional \$5,000 per vehicle and the regular 2020 Ford Interceptors may cost over \$8,000 more per vehicle. Bechtel stated that Ford Square of Mt. Vernon submitted a quote of \$28,999 for a 2019 Dodge Durango Pursuit. These vehicles have the same engines as the Police Dodge Chargers. The Council discussed the issues that the Police had with the Dodge engines. Bechtel explained that it has been the City's experience that the Dodge engines are a problem. Mayor John Lewis stated that according to a Police blog, several Police Departments have experienced problems with the Dodge engines.

Council Member Jeff May motioned to approve the purchase of five Ford Interceptor SUVs for the Police Department at the best price available and to avoid purchasing Dodge vehicles. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.

CITY ATTORNEY

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for first reading an Ordinance Declaring Surplus Municipal Property. The surplus property is one (1) 8 x 10 used, portable, wood appearance storage building, eighty (80) "Share the Road" signs, and 125 "bike symbol" signs.

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

Council Member Donte Moore motioned to adopt Ordinance #2019-6, An Ordinance Declaring Surplus Municipal Property. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for first 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 26th and Veterans Memorial Drive. Bechtel stated that no consumption of alcohol or video gaming will be conducted on the property. **First Reading was held.**

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for first reading an Ordinance Amending 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 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.
First Reading was held.

Corporation Counsel Bill Howard presented for first reading an Ordinance Authorizing the Ceding of Private Activity Bonding Authority to Southeastern Illinois Economic Development Authority (SIEDA). City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that the City is allocated private activity bonds and is permitted to reallocate to a state agency any portion of its unused allocation of volume cap. The 2019 State of Illinois Allocation guidelines identifies Mt. Vernon's population as 14,956 which makes the 2019 Volume Cap Allocation \$1,570,380. The City desires to cede the total volume cap to the Southeastern Illinois Economic Development Authority (SIEDA) as a way to keep the possible use of the funds in Southern Illinois, otherwise the allocation would automatically return to the State of Illinois.

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

Council Member Donte Moore motioned to adopt Ordinance #2019-7, an Ordinance Authorizing the Ceding of Private Activity Bonding Authority to Southeastern Illinois Economic Development Authority (SIEDA). Seconded by Council Member Jim Rippy. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.

MAYOR

Mayor John Lewis presented a Certificate of Recognition to the Mt. Vernon Lowes Store. The Certificate of Recognition was presented to Jonathon Ross, Store Manager and Mark Hammer, Assistant Store Manager, for their support of local veterans. Council Member Donte Moore explained that Lowes provided new fencing for Veterans Memorial Park, assisted a Purple Heart Veteran with repair work, and provides reserved parking spaces for veterans.

Mayor John Lewis requested Council's approval for the appointment of two At-Large Representations to the Minority Affairs and Human Relations Committee. Lewis recommended the appointments of Valerie Dabney and Stephanie Caldwell to this Committee.

Council Member Donte Moore motioned to approve the appointment of Valerie Dabney and Stephanie Caldwell to the Minority Affairs and Human Relations Committee. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.

Mayor John Lewis read a statement regarding the newly enacted minimum wage law. The statement read: *"We have always been transparent in trying to keep the public up to date, so in that vein, I will let you know some more of the new obstacles we are facing. Gov. Pritzker and the legislature enacted a new \$15 minimum wage legislation that will cost the taxpayer more money. The State of Illinois predicts this new legislation will cost just the State at least 1.1 BILLION dollars, just the Department of Health will have to finance at least 250 million dollars of increased wages. I directed our City personnel to try and assess the impact to the taxpayers. The only concrete figures that can be obtained would be for our minimum wage employees and through 2022 would cost us about*

\$250,000. We are probably looking more in the range of 1 to 3 million at least, depending on which scenario you believe or how compressed the wage differences become or how fast you believe the wage differences will decompress.

Many of us would like to see our working fund balance reach the 5 to 6-month level, which is the median range of all municipalities and some of us believe that until we get to the 5 or 6-month range in reserves, we are not in a sound financial condition. It would also give us a cushion to weather the months our revenue is down. ALL predictions, I have seen in the financials indicate that you will see decreased revenues and a slowing in the economy within the next 2 years, since we are 9 years in to a bull market. So, looking at the budget in August of 2017, we had a working fund balance of 2.6 months and at the end of April 2022, our working fund balance was projected to go down to 1.9 months. That is going the wrong direction. A couple of years ago, we had 176 employees, today we have 145. So, in the last few years we have decreased our workforce by 17 ½%. Our Police Department is still down about 13% from its highs, but we are trying to manage at the level we are at now. None of our departments have had an increase in their operational budgets for years and most all were decreased even though our cost for materials has skyrocketed the last few years. Because of these actions and thankfully seeing an increase in revenue, by April of 2019 we had 3.5 months in reserve. The disheartening thing about all of these cuts is our increase in revenue is nowhere near enough to keep pace with expenses. So bottom line is even with the increased revenue and all of our cuts so far, our working fund capital was going to decrease from our present 3.5 months to only 3 months in 2022. We are still going the wrong direction and now we are facing, because of this legislation, at least another \$250,000 which takes our working fund capital in 2022 from 3 months to 2.8 months. Personally, I believe that \$250,000 figure will realistically be well more than a million dollars and by 2025 be in the 3 to 4-million-dollar range or more. Also, my personal opinion is that these projections are not conservative enough and we will end up in even worse shape. If you look at the historical data for Mt. Vernon tax revenue over the last 8 years, you will see that we had 2 spikes in revenue just like we just experienced, and after each of those spikes, the City experienced a major reduction in the revenue stream for a few years following, so we shall see what the future holds. Our work is cut out for us and we will continue to make tough decisions and we will continue to try and build on our tax base as well as decrease expenses.”

Mayor John Lewis reminded everyone to vote on April 2, 2019 for City and School members and issues.

CITY COUNCIL

Council Member Jim Rippey requested an update on the installation of the water meters. Assistant Public Utilities Director Jonathan Younger reported that 87.5% of the installation is complete and vetted through the quality control process. Roughly 90% of the meters are installed. Residential meter installation is scheduled to be complete within the next twelve days and business meter installation to be completed within the following thirty days. Rippey asked if there has been a trend established since the installation of the meters. Younger replied that there has been a slight increase in under-metered accounts. He explained the old meters were accurate to a half-of-gallon of water. The new meters are accurate to two-tenths of a gallon, set up with several alarms, and read electronically.

Council Member Jim Rippy stated that he was shocked to learn that the City is required by the Illinois Department of Public Health to hire an architect to draw up plans for a new concrete decking project at the Aquatic Zoo. Mayor John Lewis stated that due to this requirement the concrete expansion will not take place before the opening of the Aquatic Zoo and construction will take place next fall. The Illinois Department of Public Health issues the City the license to operate the Aquatic Zoo.

Council Member Mike Young spoke on Central Christian Church's neighborhood clean-up project scheduled for May 4. In addition to the neighborhood clean-up project, the Church is looking for other projects to help the community residents.

VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

No comments were heard.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session was held.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Jo Pemberton
City Clerk