

August 12, 2024

The regular meeting of the Town Board of Vernon was held at the Town Office Building on the above date with the following persons present: Randy Watson, Supervisor; Gene Bennati, Steve Adamkowski, John Peters, Myron Thurston, Council members; Keith Scheibel, County Legislator; Vincent Rossi, Attorney for Town of Vernon; Kevin Sayles, City of Sherrill Commissioner. Also present: 13 community members.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silence. The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Watson at 7:00 p.m.

Supervisor Watson asked the council members if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the July 8, 2024, meeting. There being none, a motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Adamkowski, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

PUBLIC CONCERNS:

James Jacobson asked who was responsible for repairing the roads in the areas of Route 5 and Route 31. Board members advised that they are both State roads. It was believed that they were to be repaired this year.

REPORTS:

The following reports were presented: Town Clerk, Codes Enforcement, Supervisor, Education and Libraries; Bennati received comprehensive monthly report from the Vernon Library; County Legislator Scheibel submitted a written report and highlighted the recognition of Sherriff Maciol and his department, several resolutions that were passed along with his appointment to serve on the Central New York Regional Market Authority. Schiebel mentioned that he believes NYS DPW is possibly behind on paving roads due to the heavy rains and tornadoes that have occurred this summer throughout the state. Many roads have been damaged or completely washed out. He also received information that Peterboro Rd is scheduled to be finished by Oneida County in the coming week.

There were no reports from: Assessors, Zoning/Planning Board, Intergovernmental Relations, Economic Development, Operations, SWOCO or Highway Superintendent.

A motion to accept the above reports was made by Thurston, seconded by Bennati. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to pay bills was made by Peters, seconded by Adamkowski. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

BUSINESS:

Board members had a discussion regarding the Vernon Public Library's submission of a petition to hold a 414 vote to be placed on November's election ballot. The library is proposing a \$60,000 obligation from the Town to be paid forever. Attorney Rossi advised that the state statute gives the library the right to petition taxpayers to vote. The amount can only go up in the future as there is no provision for a petition to be put on the ballot to undo it. He advised that if the town board would like to publicize information to voters, now is the time to do so. Thurston stated that the town operates on a tax of \$374,000. The library is requesting to add an additional \$60,000 to that amount for a monthly average of 154 people who use the library. This vote would increase the Town tax by 20-25%. (Thurston corrected this figure at the following meeting held on September 9, 2024 as he did the figures afterwards and the increase is actually 16%) Thurston advised that as a past supervisor and by being on the Town Board, they have fought to keep taxes low in the Town. One year they were \$150,000.00 short and rather than raising taxes cuts were made. Thurston feels that this petition was snuck in the backdoor as Board members knew nothing about it until recently receiving an email. Rossi had reviewed the

library board minutes for the last several meetings where the library was tentatively intending to disband. Adamkowski asked if this would/could go on as a separate line item on the tax bill, so residents know it is for the library and not for the Town spending. The answer to that question was yes. Adamkowski also questioned the timeline for the petitions to be collected, submitted to the Town Clerk and then to the Board of Elections. The Board of Elections Commissioner advised the Town Clerk and Attorney Rossi that the petitions needed to be submitted by August 5, 2024. Town Bookkeeper Coston mentioned that the 414 rules and regulations procedure states that petitions must be received and submitted to Board of Elections 3 months before the date of “early voting” and it is believed the deadline was not met.

A fully executed signed Agreement for Sale of Surplus Property from NYS Dept of Transportation for land to place water tank on for the Vernon Center Water District was received.

A fully executed Permit for Temporary Use of State Property from NYS DOT Office of Right of Way for the Vernon Center Water District was received.

Completed annual renewal registration for U.S. federal government’s System of Award Management (SAM).

Additional trees have been added to the list for residents to purchase to be planted in the park. The price needed to be increased to \$200 per tree due to increase from nursery and memorial plaques are now purchased through Speedy Engraving which also is an increase from the original engraver who has gone out of business.

A motion to table a decision on the purchase of Gazebo from Tailor Built Structures for Tree Memorial Park for a 12’ x 12’ square, white vinyl blue metal roof with floor delivered in the amount of \$11,500.00 was made by Peters, seconded by Adamkowski. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Peters would like time to gather more information on the details/plans for the placement of the gazebo. Adamkowski advised that there would not be electric to the gazebo. The foundation would be block on stone with trex flooring and a stone walkway.

A motion to approve City of Sherrill CAC Agreement with the Town of Vernon to pay a maximum of \$15,000.00 towards equipment, repairs and enhancements to the CAC for the 2024 calendar year only was made by Peters, seconded by Thurston. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Watson mentioned that he did not feel this written agreement was necessary and that he is bothered by the lack of trust that the City of Sherrill has for the Town of Vernon. Motion carried.

A motion to approve request from VVS Chamber of Commerce to contribute money to cover bands at the Vernon Center Farmers Market was made by Peters, seconded by Adamkowski. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Watson asked Attorney Rossi if they were able to contribute money towards this request and Rossi advised yes, they could. Peters stated that he is on the Board to make Vernon a better town. He believes that supporting the ideas of the VVS Chamber of Commerce for holiday lights, and contributing towards bands is a good idea as it will bring people together and make Vernon a fun place. Watson was concerned about spending additional money in Vernon Center after already spending money on the several roads, new flags and the Water project in that location of the Town. Board members agreed on contributing \$800 as that was the current amount the Chamber members advised was needed. It was mentioned by the Chamber that they are a 501-c6 organization. Motion carried.

A motion to approve quote from Dan’s Landscape for mulch around memorial trees in the amount of \$1325.00 was made by Thurston, seconded by Adamkowski. Ayes 5. Nays 0. No discussion. Motion carried.

Received notification of Black Stallion liquor license renewal application.

A motion to approve adding the title of Motor Equipment Operator Trainee to available position for the Town was made by Bennati, seconded by Thurston. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Town Bookkeeper Coston explained that Oneida County Civil Service has recently approved this as a new title to allow hiring those without the experience or CDL through a traineeship program. Motion carried.

A motion to approve Gates-Cole Annual Insurance renewal proposal through NYMIR with a rate increase of \$3,986.33 for a total of \$42,929.16 was made by Bennati, seconded by Thurston. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Watson explained that part of this increase was due to 3 claims that have been submitted over the last 2 years. Motion carried.

Received a thank you card from Sherrill Post 230 Junior Baseball team for Towns support in purchasing equipment.

American Red Cross held a successful blood drive at the Town office building on 7/31/24. They were a total of 14 donors; 18 units collected. They were pleased and requested to hold another drive in the future.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Thurston requested that Supervisor Watson consider adding funding to the 2025 budget for a pickleball court behind the pavilion as this is a popular sport.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. was made by Thurston, seconded by Adamkowski. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Additions to minutes on file
in Town Clerk's Office.

Jennifer Champney
Town Clerk

This meeting was digitally recorded and is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

COMMUNICATIONS:

None