

NORTH VERNON CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
CARNEGIE BUILDING  
JANUARY 24, 2022

The meeting was opened at 6:00 by North Vernon Mayor Mike Ochs with a prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor- Mike Ochs

Clerk-Treasurer- R Shawn Gerkin

Attorney- Larry Greathouse

Councilmembers:        Brian Hatfield                                Baron Wilder  
                                 Jack Kelley    Trent Wisner  
                                 Jerry Lamb

Guests Present: Jeff Shinolt, Tina Yeager, Jeff Yeager, Kylan Higgs, Andy Watkins, Charlie Daughy, Terry Sargent, Terry Thompson, Marie Shepherd, Russell Vaught, Mike Cole, John Bright, and Amy Thompson.

Jack made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2022 city council meeting as written and presented and the motion was seconded by Baron. Motion carried 5-0.

John Bright informed council that the city fire department had been awarded a grant from Indiana Public Employers Plan (IPEP) in the amount of \$29,920.00. The grant award was the result of an application completed by Fire Chief Mike Cole. Chief Cole said the funds will be used to purchase a drone for the department.

Amy Thompson, president of the North Vernon Senior Housing Board of Directors, was present to ask for financial relief for Senior Housing due to the recent increase in trash fees. Council recently adopted an ordinance increasing the monthly fee of trash service from \$5.00 to \$7.50 per month per unit. That amount adds up to an annual increase of \$2520.00 for the 84-unit senior housing, an increase that was not budgeted for in 2022. Rather than waive the increase, Trent made the motion to pledge \$2500.00 to North Vernon Senior Housing from the council's civic interest fund to help offset the cost for 2022. The motion was seconded by Jack. Following discussion, the motion carried 5-0.

Jeff Yeager informed council that he was interested in opening and operating a pet store in North Vernon that specializes in reptiles and exotic animals. Mr. Yeager explained that he had all the state and federal permits required to operate the store but was concerned about the potential of older city ordinances that might prohibit his business, a problem he ran into with a similar store located in the city of Columbus. Trent made the motion to resolve to support the new business endeavor and repeal any such ordinances should they exist and the motion was seconded by Baron. Motion carried 5-0.

Council was presented with a letter prepared by Utility Service Board attorney Kayla Zimmerman to Hannah Bright, owner of 203 Jacqueline Blvd, outlining the various damages caused and ordinances violated by hiring a contractor to replace the sewer line at the residence. Neither the contractor nor the homeowner called in for an inspection of the work completed, violated the ordinance for gaining access to the water meter pit, failed to obtain a fee for a road cut permit for working in the right-of-way, and damaged the street. Total damages as of the letter was \$8670.00. Baron made the motion to authorize the city attorney to move forward with collecting

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the damage fees and the motion was seconded by Jack. Following discussion, the motion carried 4-1 (Jerry opposed).

Mayor Ochs named David Fox, Denny Hatton, Bob Ertel, and Daymond Craddock as his 2022 appointments to the Park & Rec Board.

Jack made the motion to appoint Rhonda Hoerle as a council appointment to the North Vernon Redevelopment Commission and the motion was seconded by Jerry. Motion carried 4-0-1 (Baron abstained). Rhonda will replace Keith Stearns who recently submitted his resignation from the board.

Shawn completed the second reading of Ordinance #1006-2022, an ordinance establishing a policy for electronic participation by members of the North Vernon Utility Service Board. Jack made the motion to adopt Ordinance #1006 and the motion was seconded by Brian. Motion carried 5-0.

Interim Street Superintendent Garrie Ritchie informed council of the need for the department to acquire an employee with a commercial driver's license (CDL) due to some upcoming retirements within the department. Discussion included the potential of amending the salary ordinance for CDL drivers within the city to include an increase in pay that is more competitive.

Trent made the motion to pay the claims presented and the motion was seconded by Brian. Motion to pay the claims carried 5-0.

Brian made the motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Trent. Motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.



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R Shawn Gerkin, Clerk-Treasurer



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Mike Ochs, Mayor