

Regular City Council Committee Meeting
City Of Virden
City Council Chambers
Monday August 4th, 2025

Regular City Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Murphy at 7:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Council Members present: Karrick, Bertolino, Neighbors, Donley, Carter, Boster, Matrisch and Calloway

Absent: None

Also present: Mayor George Murphy and City Clerk Jon Myint, Bookkeeper/Treasure Barry Liss, Chief of Police Steven Snodgrass, Director of Public Works Gary Etter, and Attorneys Don & Joe Craven

Audience:

Terry Davis Otter Lake Water Commission
Rob Wirth from Gillespie Lions Club
Eric Fenton from Lions Club
Karen Engelbrecht from Lions Club
Tess Lane
Lynda Watters

Approval of Agenda 08-04-25

Mayor Murphy requested the agenda be amended to include under "Attorney #5" 220 West Dean St.

Motion made by Boster seconded by Karrick to approve the agenda as amended.

Discussion: None

Ayes: Bertolino, Neighbors, Donley, Matrisch, Boster, Karrick, Callaway and Carter

Nayes: None

Motion Passed with all in favor

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Approval of Meeting Minutes of previous meetings (Regular 07-07-25 and Special 07-24-25)

Approval of Bills Payable

1. Item for bills payable to MD Construction (\$43,000) will be discussed separately because it relates to Public Works and Water.

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Approval of Water Report (07-2025) and Gallons Report (06-2025)

Request for Use of Public Property:

1. Request from VFPD to use the pavilion at the West Park on August 9th from about 11:00 am to 1:00 pm in conjunction with Back to Mac 9:00 am to 11:00 am (book bag program) for water activities for the kids and hot dog lunch.

Motion made by Matrisch seconded by Carter to approve the consent agenda as is.

Ayes: Bertolino, Neighbors, Donley, Matrisch, Boster, Karrick, Callaway and Carter

Nays: None

Motion Passed with all in favor

Comments from Audience

1. **Terry Davis** gave a presentation on Water and Otter Lake.

Route 104 Water Main project is 75% complete; final tie in and clean up remain.

DNR conducted an electric fishing survey, caught were 112 bass per hour (target was 60) and stated that Otter Lake continues to be one of the best Largemouth fishing lakes in the area. Also caught were 148 crappie per hour. Many other fish were caught including Catfish, Blue Gill, Muskie, Shad and Yellow Bass.

The Campground has 254 spaces and at present all but one is leased. The Campground is doing very well, and it is believed that the campground has had and will have a significant positive impact on local businesses.

Dredging project on the north end of the lake has increased the water depth. The dredging is beneficial to help remove the silt/debris which helps improves the quality of the water.

Terry wanted it noted that the Campground and the Water Plant are two separate financial entities and incomes are kept separate.

There were no detectable PFAS (nano plastics) in Otter Lake; no immediate need to participate in the class action lawsuit regarding water contaminants.

2. **Rob Wirth** (District Governor) from Gillespie and Karen Engelbrecht from Chapin IL, shared plans to reestablish a local Virden Lions Club. They outlined the club's community benefit: which includes scholarships, support for schools, food pantry donations, vision/hearing care, and grants.

They requested a call for community involvement and distributed contact information in case somebody in the community may be interested.

Discussion on the reestablishment of the Virden's Lion Club. The club's disbanding a few years earlier are unknown.

3. **Tess Lane**

On behalf of the neighborhood around 331 Holden, she thanked the City Council for all their work and frustration in getting the Holden house demolished.

Reports of Supervisors

City Engineer:

1. Absent

Director of Operations:

1. Nothing currently

Chief of Police:

1. Nothing currently

City Office Manager:

1. Absent

City Attorney:

1. **New franchise agreement with Liberty gas.**
 - a. The agreement was handed out for review

- b. Attorney Craven questioned if the cities facilities follow the provisions of section 5.1 of the agreement.

Mayor Murphy responded yes they are.

- c. Craven clarified that under agreement 5.3 Waving Permit Fees, the contractor will still be responsible for any damages caused by them.

2. Investment funds (1-8A-4F)

- a. Change the code to read, the Bookkeeper/Treasure is authorized to invest city funds in any bank that is a Federal Insured Institution.
- b. Craven will draft up an ordinance and present it at the next City Council meeting.

3. When can liens be put on properties that we have mowed and cleaned up?

- a. Mowing, cleaning, and placing liens on property was discussed.
- b. Liens can be placed as soon as the work is done.
- c. The lot on Holden St has been taken care of for years and lien has yet to be filed.
- d. There are several lots that fall into this category.
- e. Typically liens are batched, and liens are filed monthly or bimonthly for efficiency.
- f. Discussion of specific problem properties such as Holden Street, 231 East Stoddard hazardous material, junk and weeds.
Craven will send the owner a letter stating that if the owner feels the junk has any value remove it now, as the city will be putting the junk in one pile with a front-end loader for ease of mowing and will not be held responsible for damages.
- g. Discussion on past liens the city never has received any monies.
- h. **220 W Dean St.** Tripple Crown will be demolishing the house. The concrete slab will stay, and demolition should be completed by the 15th of August.
- i. A spread sheet was passed out on all the nuisance houses in the city. Discussion on the priority of the list.
- j. Discussion on access into the houses for asbestos testing and removal.

Additional

- a. State grocery tax will be expiring; council can institute up to a 1% municipal sales tax before January 2026.
- b. Discussion on the financial necessity and impact for local retail.
- c. Sales tax on groceries is being referred to the Finance Committee

Reports of City Officials

City Clerk:

1. OMA completion certificates are due (one collected).
2. Required Sexual Harassment training is being researched.

City Treasurer:

1. **Nothing currently**

Mayor:

1. The library will be going thru a renovation and would like to use the Community Center for board meetings and have the usage fee waived. The council agreed to waive the usage fee.

Reports of Standing Committee

Finance:

1. Incentive Fund for Police

- a. Proposal and approval to create new \$10,000 budget line for police retention and hiring incentives; this will require a supplemental appropriation and an addition to the Union MOU.

- b. The line item will be placed under the police personnel budget.

Motion made by Boster seconded by Matrisch to create a line item for police retention and hire in the amount of \$10,000 including the supplemental appropriation to support.

Discussion: Now that budget has already been passed is this something that can just be added.

Yeas: Bertolino, Matrisch, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: none

Motion passed

2. Ask lawyer about retention bonus paperwork

- a. Boster will contact the police union steward to get a draft from the union and hopefully have it for the next police committee meeting.

3. Approved treasurer to borrow funds from any city of Virden bank account to fund short term cash flow shortages in the corporate account as needed.

Motion made by Boster seconded by Carter to allow the Treasurer to borrow funds from any city of Virden bank account other than MFT and water deposit to fund short term cash flow shortages in the corporate accounts as needed.

Discussion: none

Yeas: Matrisch, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: Bertolino

Motion passed

Police:

1. Nothing currently

Public Works:

1. Streets and Alleys

- a. Approve bid on the ditch behind Maltby Row.

Tony Miller's bid was \$1,045 dollars, to clean out the ditch

- b. The city trucks will be used.

Motion made by Bertolino second by Karrick to approve the bid of Tony Miller to clean out the ditch behind Maltby Rd for no more than \$1045.00 with the city hauling away the debris.

Yeas: Matrisch, Bertolino, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: none

Motion passed

- c. Recommendations for rock and oil of alleys is still needed from Bertolino, Neighbors, Calloway, Karrick and Matrisch.

2. Buildings and grounds: nothing currently

3. Parks: nothing currently

4. Water:

- a. Annual ISP WSOA conference September 10th through the 12th 2025 cost \$245 pr person authorization for two people.

Motion made by Bertolino second by Karrick to allow Director of Public Works to send two people of his choosing to the IP WSOA conference September 10th through 12th at the cost of \$245 per person.'

Discussion: no per diem will be allowed.

Yeas: Matrisch, Bertolino, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: none

Motion passed

b. Pay application for Murphy Brothers meter installation

Motion made by Murphy second by Boster to approve the application for payment in the amount of \$43,057.80 to Murphy Brothers Construction.

Discussion 1,385 meters have been replaced so far. The project should be completed by the end of August. The balance of the cost should be received in September.

Yeas: Matrisch, Bertolino, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: none

Motion passed

c. Approved loan payback format of loan from corporate to water for new water meters and balance due on the water tower and old meters,

Balance on tower and old meters is \$250,000.

New Meters \$659,940

Installation \$154,621

Engineering \$3200

Total \$1,067,761

Minus CD for \$100,000.

Minus CD for \$70,000

Total loan from corporate to water \$897,761.

Water to set aside \$7,000 per month (for the next 128 months or 10.7 years).

Payments of \$42,000 will be paid back to corporate on a semi-annual basis.

The format and amount is to be reviewed in 6 months and adjusted if feasible.

Motion made by Donley seconded by Matrisch to approve the loan from corporate to water for the new water meters and the payback format as submitted.

Discussion None

Yeas: Matrisch, Bertolino, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: none

Motion passed

Miscellaneous:

1. Utilization of city equipment and city manpower for non-city projects.

- a. Craven will draft up an ordinance on billing other utilities for city resources expended on utility related repairs/investigations.

- b. Ordinance should be ready for review and approval at next month's meeting.

Administrative:

1. Chicken ordinance

Discussion on the chicken ordinance. If approved, a draft was prepared by Karrick and Calloway for submission to Craven for final draft.

Discussion about other towns, permits and cost, ordinance enforcement.

Comments from the Audience Lynnda Watters stated that she had nothing more to say to the council.

Motion made by Karrick second by Carter to have the drafted chicken ordinance approved and go to the attorney for final format with the modification of the current ordinance

Discussion: Bertolino wanted it noted that we have been kicking this chicken thing down the road for quite some time. When you cast your vote you better think what you're doing. Because if you change an ordinance for chickens, then what happens next week when someone wants a change for a horse, cow, lama or any other animal? Are you going to be willing to change the ordinance for them? If you do it for one how is it not fair to do for all, that's all I'm saying. Last month a guy that wanted his ditch filled and we said no, because we have an ordinance there's no difference in that. Sometimes you're not the popular vote when you got to make these tough decisions, but you better think about what you're doing because they're going to be more things coming across the plate here when this happens.

Karrick said you're comparing apples to oranges.

Calloway wants to take the old ordinance and just remove the word chickens.

Bertolino questioned, "Who's going to enforce it? We can't enforce the ordinances we have now.

Mayor Murphy wanted to know, how do we enforce the ordinance.

Yeas: Calloway, Karrick, Donley and Carter

Nayes: Bertolino, Neighbors, Boster and Matrisch

Mayor Murphy said, I'm voting no because there simply is not good enough instruction about how and who is going to enforce it. I just can't vote for anything that doesn't have that in there.

Motion failed

Executive Session:

Motion made by Mayor Murphy seconded by Carter to enter into executive session at 8:44 to discuss pending litigation.

Yeas: Matrisch, Bertolino, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: none

Motion passed

Motion made by Mayor Murphy seconded by Matrisch to approve the executive session meeting minutes of 5 May 2025

Yeas: Matrisch, Bertolino, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: none

Motion passed

Adjournment:

Motion made by Boster seconded by Carter to adjourn at 8:51 pm.

Yeas: Matrisch, Bertolino, Calloway, Karrick, Donley, Carter, Neighbors, Boster

Nayes: none

Motion passed with all in favor

Jonathan J. Myint
City Clerk

Date Approved: