



Town of Merrillville
Town Council Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2022
6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: President Bella called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE: A brief invocation was given along with a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner Gene Ward led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL – Roll Call was taken by Administrative Secretary Robyn Johnson.

Present were: Vice-President Hardaway- (Ward 2)

Councilman Minchuk- (Ward 3)

Councilwoman Uzelac- (Ward 4)

Councilman Pettit- (Ward 6)

Councilmen White (Ward 7)

President Bella- (Ward 5)

Six present (6) One absent (1) Councilman Spann (Ward 1)

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REMONSTRATIONS:

Approval and signing of the FOP / Town Collective Bargaining Agreement

Councilman Minchuk made a motion to accept the Town of Merrillville FOP Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented, seconded by Vice President Hardaway.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried with a roll call vote 6-1 absent.

Councilman Minchuk spoke towards the founding of the Merrillville FOP and the signing of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Representatives from the Merrillville FOP spoke towards the agreement.

Waste Management: Vendor report of delinquent accounts & why trash is not being picked up at 644 Merrillville Homes

President Bella brought to the council's attention the lack of residential payment for Waste Management.

Various council members presented ideas to resolve the Waste Management problem.

Letter from Town Engineering Administrator endorsing Core Construction's recommendation to approve payment for Application #27 to various vendors for work completed at the Merrillville Community Center.

Vice President Hardaway made a motioned to approve the Core Construction's recommendation, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval: April 12, 2022

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of March 22, 2022.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Vice President Hardaway.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET & FINANCE- HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway informed the council of grant application qualifications for the ARP Residential Business and Grant application. All questions from the council should be directed towards Vice President Hardaway.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT – No Report

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES- MINCHUK – Councilman Minchuk informed the council the Public Works and Utilities committee had a meeting where various items were discussed. Items discussed from the meeting will be presented to the council at the upcoming Town Council Meeting.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION-PETTIT- Stormwater Director Lake informed the council the anticipated planting for the Town Hall from Hubinger Landscaping Corporation is on schedule. Director Lake informed the council the Hubinger Landscaping Corporation is also contracted to reconstruct the planting on 93rd Ave. Councilman Pettit asked that the Elections, Public Relations, and Town Beautification committee meet to discuss the branding of various bridges within the town. Councilman Pettit informed the public by ordinance during election season signs are able to be in residential yards. All signs posted in public right of ways will be removed and can be collected in the Public Works Department by candidates.

Councilman White asked President Bella if the property located at 61st Ave could be reconstructed for beautification.

Councilman Pettit informed Councilman White the property located at 61st Ave is owned by the Boys and Girls Club and must be reconstructed by them.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE – Councilman White informed the council nationwide COVID cases are rising. The COVID rate for Lake County has risen by 6% with 3 deaths in the past week. The state of Indiana changed from blue to yellow.

Councilman White asked Public Works and Engineering Director King if he could look at the IMB compost.

Director King informed Councilman White the area is approved for visit.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway asked to meet with Parks Department Director Price and Public Works and Engineering Director King to discuss the summer hiring for the Parks Department. Councilman White asked where the jobs would be directed to.

Vice President Hardaway informed the Councilman White the summer jobs would be for the Dean & Barbara White Community Center and the Public Works Department.

PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK- Councilman Minchuk thanked the Merrillville FOP for the understanding of the agreement which was settled between the Merrillville FOP and the Merrillville Town Council. Councilman Minchuk informed the council a Public Safety committee meeting was held with the primary concerns being the south police and fire station. During the meeting locations and wants for the stations were narrowed down.

Councilman White suggested partnering with neighboring towns to replace the cost of south stations.

President Bella and Councilman Pettit informed Councilman White funds for a south stations are in place.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilman Pettit informed the council of an Economic Development meeting held April 5, 2022 where two petitions were discussed. A purchase agreement between Chicago Magnesium Casting Co and Albanese Candy to buy the Merrillville Fieldhouse as well as a foundry which manufactures aircraft parts for NASA and the Aircraft Industry.

PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC- Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council all parks would be mowed during the summer months by Park Department employees.

ABANDONED -BLIGHTED PROPERTIES-HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway asked Code Enforcement Director Bunnell monitor and assist residents in obtaining the Waste Management Disposal Service. Vice President Hardaway asks that we collect a data of the number of rental properties that do not have Waste Management, from there the owner of the home will be contacted regarding such matter.

DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER-MINCHUK & PETTIT – Councilman Pettit informed the council EPIC United Volleyball Club had there Midwest championship tournament were various teams from around the state of Indiana competed. Director King informed the council the bleachers for the community center have been ordered. Director Price informed the council the wallpaper project has been completed. Director Price informed the council the weekend of April 15, 2022 the community center will have a maintenance check where the sports floors will be repolished. The Dean & Barbara White Community Center court and workout area will be closed at the time of the maintenance check. During the Merrillville spring break week residents were able to participate in various games held at the community center. College coaches were able to watch Merrillville youth play basketball to potentially scout potential new college student athletes. Open gym will reopen once all furniture is refurbished.

Special Projects (F & B Tax, Diversity) – HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway informed the council the Juneteenth committee will meet Thursday, March 14, 2022 at the Dean & Barbara White Community Center. Vice President encourages all Merrillville residents to participate in the planning of both the Juneteenth and the 4th of July celebrations. Vendors request have been responsive for the for the Juneteenth celebration. Municipal Day will be held May 10, 2022, during Municipal Day students of Merrillville Intermediate School will be able to meet with various department heads. President Bella informed the council the Diversity and Inclusion Training for Merrillville employees are ongoing.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-WHITE- Councilman White informed the council a Lake County Solid Waste Management meeting was scheduled to be held at the Dean & Barbara White Community Center however the meeting canceled. Councilman White informed the council he would ask the Lake County Solid Waste committee to provide dumpsters for a town cleaning.

NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY- No Report

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE- Director Lake informed the council the Meadowdale area residents have responded well from the tree removal. Engineering for the Hickory Ridge Regional Tension Basin has begun. The Taney Ditch Crossing Project will go out for bid. The first bid of data from the micro back out fall monitoring is currently being analyzed. Engineering for Southmoore Park will begin shortly. A proclamation for Arbor Day will be presented to the council at the next Town Council Meeting.

SOUTHSHORE VISITORS AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY- Mr. Reardon- Town Manager Reardon informed the council of a legislative rap up held April 13, 2022, a report for the council will be given shortly after. A Southshore Visitors and Convention Authority committee meeting will be held April 21, 2022 where long term bureau decisions will be made. A form regarding what is acceptable and what is not acceptable for Waste Management was discussed regarding bulk item pick up.

President Bella informed the council and public Waste Management has a 50 pound limit on large items, items over 50 pounds will not be removed.

Councilman Pettit, Vice President Hardaway, and Councilman White discussed the acceptable and unacceptable items for Waste Management.

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD-MINCHUK- No Report

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Economic Development Director Chillcot informed the council the second annual Job Fair will be held Thursday, July 21, 2022 from 11 A.M. - 3 P.M. at the Dean & Barbara White Community Center.

Code Enforcement Director Bunnell informed the public plans to maintain grass cutting should be made now for the upcoming summer months.

Councilman White asked if he could meet with Director Bunnell's department regarding the Ellendale area.

Police Chief Cuttino informed the council of calls from neighboring cities regarding carjacking's on US 30 where vehicles were able to be found and recovered prior to vehicles from carjacking's were not as successful to be found. A class was held at the North Police Station for the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention for both police and fireman.

Councilman White informed the council of a letter received from the Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter where Police Chief Cuttino was praised for his departments work within the Town of Merrillville.

Police Chief Cuttino thanked his staff for keeping the community safe.

Director King informed the council summer projects including the community crossing, construction on Harrison and Madison St. from the Gary Merrillville line to 68th Pl, and 83rd Ave from Randolph St. to the Hobart boarder. Local detours will be in place. The 2022 local pavement program will start early May 2022. Wards 2 and 6 will be targeted in this year's pavement program. Small projects with Milestone Contractors will take place this summer. Director King gave the council an explanation as to why potholes were bad this year. Pothole patching will begin this summer. Director King informed Councilman Pettit he has spoken with INDOT with regards to potholes.

GENERAL ORDERS

A. Ordinances

First Readings: (Discussion and Roll Call)

Ordinance 22-11 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of The Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Amending Ordinances 21-15, 21-10 & 20-16, The Park User Fees for The Town of Merrillville.

Councilman Minchuk made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-11, seconded by Vice President Hardaway.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried with a roll call vote 6-1 absent.

Second Readings: (Discussion, Public Comment and Roll Call Vote)

None

Resolutions: (Discussion and Voice Vote)

Resolution 22-13 (Discussion & Voice Vote)

A Preliminary Resolution of The Town Council of The Town of Merrillville, Indiana, Declaring an Area in The Town As An Economic Revitalization Area And Approving a Real Property Tax Abatement For CRP/CHI Sanders Farm Parcel Owner, LLC.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to approve Resolution 22-13, seconded by Vice President Hardaway.

Councilman Pettit read Resolution 22-13 for a 10 year abatement. Years 1,2, and 3-100% abated, Year 4-87.5% abated

Year 5-70% abated

Year 6-62.5% abated

Year 7-50% abated

Year 8-37.5% abated

Year 9-25% abated

Year 10-12.5% abated

Year 11 they will pay the full property tax bill per a previous ordinance.

Petitioner Matt Kurucz of Crow Holdings spoke towards the resolution.

Councilman Pettit asked that the petitioner hire 10% Merrillville residents.

No further discussion from the council.

Motion carried with a roll call vote 6-1 absent.

C. American Rescue Plan

AP Voucher Register Summary for ARP Purchases for April 12, 2022.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to approve the ARP Purchases payment voucher for April 12, 2022, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

Vice President Hardaway withdrew his motion to approve the ARP Voucher for April 12, 2022

Councilman Pettit withdrew his second.

Vice President Hardaway presented an addition to the ARP Voucher for \$111,155.15.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to approve ARP Voucher for \$2,112.50 as well as \$111,155.15, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No questions or comments from the council.
Motion carried by voice vote.

D. BZA Actions & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

President Bella informed the council of a request for qualifications for an engineering traffic study for Whitcomb St.

Councilman Pettit & Councilman Minchuk spoke towards the Whitcomb St traffic study.

President Bella asked that the council approve the request for qualifications to be sent to qualified companies where quotes will be considered by developers.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to put Whitcomb St engineering traffic study for bid, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

Councilman Pettit amended his motion to also allow the town to investigate proper funding, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

No questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

President Bella informed the council a proclamation will be made at the new Town Council Meeting to support Bens Blue Bags of Crown Point, IN in awareness for autism. Blue shirts will be worn by all town council members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Plan Commission Meeting April 19, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

RDC Meeting April 26, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

Town Council Meeting April 26, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn by Councilman White, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac. Meeting adjourned.


Rick Bella, President
Kelly White Gibson, Clerk-Treasurer

Minutes Submitted By Chantalle Scott

