



Town of Merrillville
Town Council Meeting Minutes
February 08, 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: Vice President Hardaway led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Star Spangled Banner sung by the Merrillville High School Choir.

ROLL CALL – Roll Call was taken by Madam Clerk Treasurer White Gibson.

Present were: Councilman Spann- (Ward 1)

Vice-President Hardaway- (Ward 2)

Councilman Minchuk- (Ward 3)

Councilwoman Uzelac- (Ward 4)

Councilman Pettit- (Ward 6)

Councilman White- (Ward 7)

President Bella- (Ward 5)

Seven present (7)

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REMONSTRATIONS:
Merrillville High School Choir Black History Presentation.

The Merrillville High School sung a selection of songs including Wade on the Water by Ramsey Lewis, Every time I Feel the Spirit by Mahalia Jackson and The Lord Bless You and Keep You by Cambridge Singers.

President Bella thanked the Merrillville High School Choir for a great job.

Vice President Hardaway thanked the Merrillville School Superintendent Nicholas G. Brown, Ed. S., Executive Director of Student Support Service Dr. Danny Lackey, and Merrillville School Board Member DeLena Thomas for coming and supporting the Merrillville High School Choir. The Merrillville Intermediate School will present an African American history art display which will be held for display in the Merrillville Municipal Building.

Vice President Hardaway informed the council he will be honored at the City of Hammond's Annual Black History Month Program Thursday, February 17, 2022 at the Hammond Sports Complex.

Councilman White informed the council he would like to honor the first African American Merrillville School Board Members at the February 22, 2022 Town Council Meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval: February 08, 2022

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2022.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET & FINANCE- HARDAWAY – No Report

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT – No Report

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES- MINCHUK – Councilman Minchuk thanked the Public Works Department for their hard work regarding salting and plowing.

Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council of an incident within her ward regarding plowing.

Councilwoman Uzelac thanked Public Works & Engineering Director King for assisting a resident within her ward.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION-PETTIT- Councilman Pettit called an Elections, Public Relations, and Town Beautification committee meeting for Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 5 P.M. regarding town signage over the I-65 Bridge and US30. Councilman Pettit informed the council of the Chamber of Commerce's 2nd annual Business Excellence Awards which will be held Thursday, March 10, 2022 in the Dean & Barba White Mike Anderson Event Center from 5 P.M.-7 P.M. Councilman Pettit asked that Town Manager Reardon secure a \$750 Award Sponsorship under The Town of Merrillville which will secure a table of 8 seats. Councilman Pettit asked that President Bella present the Legacy Award during the awards ceremony on behalf of the Town of Merrillville.

Councilman Minchuk made a motion to approve the \$750 award sponsorship, seconded by Councilman White.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

Councilman Pettit informed the council Tuesday, February 22, 2022 in the Dean & Barbara White Mike Anderson Event Center at 12 P.M. he will be giving the state of the town address during the Crossroads Regional Chamber of Commerce Luncheon. All interested attendees should see Town Manager Reardon or Town Administrator Rosas.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE –Councilman White informed the council of a positive COVID-19 rate. Data can also be collected from the Indiana and Lake County Health Department. Councilman White asked that Town Manager Reardon inform the council of an email received from the Lake County and Indiana Department of Health.

Town Manager Reardon informed the council the Lake County Health Department will collaborate with the Indiana Department of Health to host COVID-19 testing in Lake County. Councilman White informed the council he has searched for facilities within the town for the health departments to host COVID-19 testing.

Councilman Pettit offered the Dean and Barbra White Community Center as a facility to host COVID-19 testing.

Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council 64 Northwest Indiana residents have passed over the February 4-6, 2022 weekend due to COVID-19. Carmen Hogan of Merrillville Indiana has passed due to COVID-19.

President Bella asked that Councilman White connect with Town Manager Reardon to find facilities within the town to host COVID-19 testing.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – HARDAWAY – No Report

PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK- Councilman Minchuk informed the council the first monthly public safety committee meeting is rescheduled to Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 4 P.M. The Merrillville FOP will have a fundraiser on Sunday, February 20, 2022 at the Merrillville Police Station.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilman Pettit called a Redevelopment Commission Workshop for Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 5:30 P.M. to discuss Whitcomb St further.

PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC- Councilwoman Uzelac informed Parks Department Director Price of calls received regarding the Erie Lackawanna bike trail.

Councilman White asked Stormwater Director Lake if Pruzin Park could be expanded.

Director Lake informed Councilman White due to Pruzin Park being a wetland area the park could not be expanded.

ABANDONED -BLIGHTED PROPERTIES-HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway informed the council the Town of Merrillville has a total of 110 parcels for tax sale which is 1.9%. Vice President Hardaway will continue to monitor the parcels within the town.

DEAN& BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER-MINCHUK & PETTIT – Councilman Pettit informed the council of a community center meeting held Tuesday, February 1, 2022 where various items were discussed. The south wall was discussed with potential mural options and a possible a drive in movie wall. Up lighting on the exterior of the building will be looked into further by Director King. The time capsule given during the December 30, 2021 town council meeting will be buried by the cobalt box with a plaque instructed to be open in 50 years. The pedestrian bridge is currently advertised for bid. The Dean & Barbara White Community Center would be considered a warming center if below freezing. Chair damage to the Mike Anderson Event Center wall was also discussed with the anticipation of placing wallpaper over the Mike Anderson Event Center wall.

Councilman Minchuk discussed the possibility of having an outdoor projection placed on the south wall which can be changed seasonally.

Councilman Pettit asked that Attorney Svetanoff offer a plethora of options be presented to the White Family Foundation for the south wall.

Director King informed the council all items buried with the time capsule must be airtight for the protection of all items. The last cargo container was delivered and set in place for the parks department.

Special Projects (F & B Tax, Diversity) – HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway informed the council the first phase of the diversity training is still underway all town employees must take the diversity training to move onto the next phase.

President Bella encourages all town employees to take the training and offers zoom diversity training for employees that prefer.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-WHITE- Councilman White informed the council the Lake County Solid Waste District has safely moved into their new location which is the old Girls Scout Building here in Merrillville. A tour for the council will be announced at a later date.

NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY– Vice President Hardaway informed the council the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission Tiff strategies meeting was held February 08, 2022, during the meeting CARES Act and ARP money was discussed with focuses on economic development and infrastructure.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE- Director Matt Lake informed the council the Town of Merrillville has been designated as “Tree City USA for 2022” by the National Arbor Day Foundation. The Town of Merrillville’s Community Rating System Annual Renewal has been submitted. Stormwater Management interns are working on a climate action plan. A press release will be submitted for the green house inventory. The tree removal phase one will be available for bid the week of February 14, 2022. Director Lake anticipates speaking at the LTAP Drainage Conference Thursday, February 10, 2022 at Purdue University.

SOUTHSHORE VISITORS AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY– Mr. Reardon- Town Manager Reardon informed the council himself along with other members of the tourism board will attend the Legislative Sessions and Reception in Indianapolis, IN February 14-15, 2022. The February board meeting will be held on the 18th, a report will come shortly after.

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD-MINCHUK- Councilman Minchuk informed the council the Fire Territory Board has not had their first meeting. After the first committee meeting a report will be given to the council.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Chief Cuttino informed the council he sent his support and prayers to Chief Brian Evans of Gary, IN for a speedy recovery for one of their injured officer’s. Merrillville Police officers offered their services to the neighboring police department.

Councilman White thanked the Merrillville Police Department and neighboring officers for their services.

Code Enforcement Director Bunnell informed the council of the continuous work within the community regarding the removal of vehicles for snow plows.

Parks Department Director Price informed the council of a checklist created for room/event center rentals. The parks department website is currently underway.

Public Works & Engineering Director King informed the council of the hard work the Public Works Department continues to do. The community crossing for 2022 bid packaging began

Monday, February 7, 2022 once the documents are approved by the town's consultant a recommendation will be given at the next town council meeting.

Planning & Building Director Shine informed the council the department has had two trainings for the new software program. The new software program will be running efficiently by the end of February.

Director King thanked the Fire Department in their assistance with plowing the community centers parking lot.

GENERAL ORDERS

A. Ordinances

First Readings: (Discussion and Roll Call)

None

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

None

B. Resolutions: (Discussion and Voice Vote)

None

C. American Rescue Plan

AP Voucher Register Summary for ARP Purchases for February 8, 2022

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

Councilman Pettit asked Town Manager Reardon if the computer orders have been completed.

Vice President Hardaway asked that a meeting be held to discuss such purchases.

Town Manager Reardon informed Councilman Pettit the computers for the HR and Economic Development department have been ordered and should be delivered soon.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

D. BZA Actions & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS

None

OLD BUSINESS

Vice President Hardaway informed the council the town is currently down to 30 vaccination cards. The vaccination cards are for Merrillville residents only and for residents that have received their vaccination after December 1, 2021.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilman White asked that Police Commissioner Michael Rich attend the towns Diversity and Inclusion training.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Planning Commission Meeting February 15, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

RDC Meeting February 22, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

Town Council Meeting February 22, 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