



**Town of Merrillville**  
**Town Council Meeting Minutes**  
**January 11, 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 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:**

The Town Council of Merrillville Designating the Month of February as “Black History Awareness Month” – Guest Presenter: Barbara Bolling-Williams

Vice President Hardaway commended the School Board of Hammond Indiana for renaming Maywood Elementary School to Annie Burns Hicks School after Hammond School Cities eldest African American teacher.

Barbara Bolling-Williams presented the Town of Merrillville Proclamation which states the Town Council of Merrillville Indiana will designate the month of February as “Black History Awareness Month”.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to approve the proclamation, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

**Assignment of Council Committees, other Boards & Commissions**

**Budget & Finance**

Chair: Vice President Hardaway

Members: Councilman Pettit, Councilman Minchuk.

**Public Works & Utilities**

Chair: Councilman Minchuk

Members: Councilwoman Uzelac, Councilman Spann

**Council Affairs**

Chair: Councilman Pettit

Members: Councilman Minchuk, Councilwoman Uzelac

**Personnel & Employee Benefits**

Chair: Vice President Hardaway

Members: Councilwoman Uzelac, Councilman Pettit

**Public Safety**

Chair: Councilman Minchuk

Members: Councilman Spann, Councilwoman Uzelac

**Parks & Recreation**

Chair: Councilwoman Uzelac

Members: Councilman Pettit, Councilman Minchuk

**Environmental Affairs/ Public Health**

Chair: Councilman White

Members: Councilwoman Uzelac, Councilman Spann

**Elections, Public Relations, Town Beautification**

Chair: Councilman Pettit

Members: Vice President Hardaway, Councilman Minchuk

**Economic Development Committee**

Chair Councilman Pettit

Members: Vice President Hardaway, Councilman Minchuk

Crossroads of Chambers CEO Dean Patena

Crossroads of Chambers BOD David Lasser

**Abandoned-Blighted Buildings**

Chair: Vice President Hardaway

Members: Vicki Bunnell, Adra Breclaw-Csanyi

**Community Center Project**

Chair: Councilman Pettit

Members: Councilman Minchuk, Councilman White

**Special Town Projects**

Chair: Vice President Hardaway

Members: Councilman Pettit, Councilman White

**Redevelopment Commission**

Council President Reappointed Members: Vice President Hardaway, Councilman Pettit, Councilman White

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to elect Councilwoman Uzelac and Councilman Minchuk as members of the board, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

**Economic Development Commission**

Council President Reappointed Members: Councilman Pettit

Councilman White made a motion to elect himself as a member of the Economic Development Commission Committee, seconded by Councilman Spann.

Councilman Minchuk made a motion to elect Vice President Hardaway as a member of the Economic Development Commission Committee.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to elect Councilman Minchuk as a member of the Economic Development Commission Committee.

Vice President made a motion to close nominations, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

By voice vote Vice President Hardaway and Councilman Minchuk are elected as members of the Economic Development Commission Committee.

**Police Commission**

Councilwoman Uzelac made a motion to reelect Eugene Guernsey as Police Commissioner, seconded by Councilman Spann.

Vice President made a motion to close nominations for Police Commissioner, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to cast a unanimous ballot to reelect Eugene Guernsey as Police Commissioner, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

### **Stormwater Management Board**

By presidential appointment L.J. (Bud) Crist is reelected to serve a 3 year term.

Councilman White objects the appointment as L.J. (Bud) Crist has served on the board for 20 years. Councilman White would like to see diversity & inclusion amongst the board.

With no potential candidates presented L.J. (Bud) Crist is reelected as a member of the Stormwater Management Board.

### **Plan Commission**

No Openings

### **Board of Zoning Appeals**

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to reelect Tim Fortier, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to close nominations, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

### **Fire Territory Board**

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot to elect Councilman Minchuk and Councilman Spann as members of the Fire Territory Board, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

### **Building Corporation**

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to reelect himself, Councilman Pettit, Councilman White, Councilman Minchuk and Councilwoman Uzelac as members of the Building Corporation Board, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

### **Redevelopment Authority**

Councilman Pettit & Councilman Minchuk will remain on the Redevelopment Authority Board until the end of their term 12/31/22, Councilwoman Uzelac, Councilman White, and Councilman Spann will remain on the board until the end of their term 12/31/23.

### **Lake County Solid Waste District**

Councilman Pettit made a motion to reelect Councilman White as a member of the Lake County Solid Waste District, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

No further nominations.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

### **Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**

Councilman Pettit made a motion to reelect Vice President Hardaway as a member of the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, seconded by Councilman Spann.

Discussion amongst the council was held.

Motion carried by voice vote with 1 abstention: Councilman White.

### **Southshore Convention & Visitors Authority**

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to reelect Town Manager Reardon as the Town of Merrillville's representative, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval: None

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of December 28 & 30, 2021.

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** – Vice President Hardaway informed the council 85 gift cards for town residents that have received the COVID-19 vaccination or booster shot have been distributed. Vice President Hardaway asks that President Bella and Madam Clerk Treasurer handle the purchasing of 100 new gift cards.

**COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT** – No Report

**PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES- MINCHUK** – No Report

**ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION-PETTIT** - Councilman Pettit reported the anticipation of the 2022 town local and precinct committee elections. The Crossroads of Regional Chambers will give their State of Town Address Tuesday, February 22, 2021 12 P.M. at the Dean & Barbara White Community Center during the monthly chamber luncheon. The Crossroads of Regional Chambers will also have a Business Excellence Recognition Dinner at the Dean & Barbara White Community Center Thursday, March 10, 2022 from 5 P.M.-7 P.M. 8 businesses will be awarded during the dinner. Public Works & Engineering Director Steve King asks that Councilman Pettit meet with him regarding the planting located in the front of the Town Municipal Building.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- UZELAC** – Councilwoman Uzelac reported 3,300 new COVID-19 cases.

Vice President Hardaway informed the council he has spoken with the Lake County Health Department in regards to getting a COVID-19 testing site in the Town of Merrillville. The Lake County Health Department informed Vice President Hardaway due to low staffing the only location available for COVID-19 testing with Lake County would be the Lake County Fairgrounds located at 889 South Court Street, 4H Building, Crown Point, IN 46307 phone number (219)755-3658.

**PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – HARDAWAY** – No Report

**PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK**- No Report

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT** – No Report

**PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC**- Parks Department Director Tarrence Price reported the success of the EPIC Volleyball tournament held the weekend of January 1, 2022 where mini mask were distributed. Director Price thanked the Merrillville Police Department for their security at the Dean & Barbara White Community Center.

Councilman Minchuk reported the progression of a preliminary design from Lehman & Lehman for the Town of Merrillville's first dog park located at 73<sup>rd</sup> Broadway which will be called "Pawsville Dog Park".

**ABANDONED -BLIGHTED PROPERTIES-HARDAWAY** – No Report

**DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER-MINCHUK & PETTIT** – Councilman Pettit reported a meeting held with the Boys and Girls Club regarding their after school program held at the Dean & Barbara White Community Center. All outdoor equipment including a dumpster, a trailer for park equipment has been delivered.

Director King reported bid documents are currently being configured for the pedestrian bridge which will go out for bid in the upcoming winter months and constructed in the spring. The bleachers for outdoor large events have been ordered and will be delivered in July. A punch list will be created for the open house/ ribbon cutting for community centers one year of establishment after March 1, 2022. A council walkthrough will be arranged for the council to add to the punch list for the open house/ ribbon cutting.

**Special Projects (F & B Tax, Diversity) – HARDAWAY** – Vice President Hardaway reported the passing of House Bill 1264. Vice President Hardaway will meet with Dr. Vernon Smith to discuss the food and beverage tax as it regards to the town. Vice President Hardaway encourages all that are interested to join the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade committee.

## **DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS**

### **LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-WHITE- No Report**

**NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY-** Vice President Hardaway informed the council a partnership between the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and Tip Strategies, Inc. based out of Austin, TX. Through the partnership Tip Strategies, Inc. will assist the committee in create an economic recovery and resilience plan, Vice President Hardaway will sit on the board for this planning committee. Vice President Hardaway informed the council of his new Vice President appointment for the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission Board.

### **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE- No Report**

### **SOUTHSHORE VISITORS AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY- Mr. Reardon- No Report**

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Police Chief Cuttino reported the purchasing of new items given through the ARP Fund from the council including new license plate readers, 2 mobile vehicles, a vehicle for the Merrillville Tactical Apprehension Squad.

Councilman White informed Chief Cuttino he does not agree with the proposal of the license plate readers as he believes this is a form of harassment.

Chief Cuttino clarified the confusion regarding the license plate reader.

Economic Development Director Angie Chilcott reported the planning of the new town hall has begun; an update will be given at the next town council meeting.

Director King informed the council the backup generator will be delivered in March. Keough Mechanical has completed an evaluation of all town buildings regarding touchless faucets and features. The Public Works Department is working out minor issues regarding salt distribution within the community. Training for the new staff within the Public Works Department will begin. Director King informed residents if a mailbox is knocked down by a snow plow the resident can call the Public Works Department (219)769-6784 where the mailbox will then be repaired.

Planning and Building Director Sheila Shine informed the council the Planning and Building Department has completed their 2021 year end review, the book is currently being bowed and will be available at the next town council meeting.

## **GENERAL ORDERS**

### **A. Ordinances**

#### ***First Readings: (Discussion and Roll Call)***

##### **Ordinance 22-01 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)**

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville Indiana, providing that the Zoning Ordinance Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana be Amended by Changing the described Real Estate on an Established Planned Unit Development Zoning Classification to Planned Unit Development Zoning Classification.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-01, seconded by Councilman White. Councilman Pettit elaborated on the ordinance.

Attorney Bower spoke on behave of Edward Rose Properties LLC.

President Bella informed Councilman White a tax abatement was not given towards this residential area.

Councilman Pettit clarified on the purpose of tax abatements.

No question or comment from the council.

Motion carried with a roll call vote of 7-0.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to suspend the rules and read Ordinance 22-01 on 2nd and final reading, seconded by Vice President Hardaway.

No question or comment from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

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

##### **Ordinance 22-01 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)**

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville Indiana, providing that the Zoning Ordinance Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana be Amended by Changing the described Real Estate on an Established Planned Unit Development Zoning Classification to Planned Unit Development Zoning Classification.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-01 on second reading, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

President Bella asked if there was any public comment on this 2nd and final reading ordinance.

No questions or comment from the public.

No question or comment from the council.

Motion carried with a roll call vote of 7-0.

***B. Resolutions: (Discussion and Voice Vote)***

***Resolution 22-01 (Amended) (Discussion and Voice Vote)***

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Transferring Balances Within the Debt Service Funds.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion approve Resolution 22-01, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

Financial Advisor Trista Hudson elaborated on the resolution.

No questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

***Resolution 22-02 (Discussion and Voice Vote)***

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, To Authorize the Transfer of The Cash Change Funds In The Parks Department.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion approve Resolution 22-02, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

***Resolution 22-03 (Discussion and Voice Vote)***

An Amendment to Resolution 21-46, 21-06 And 20-39 Of the Town Of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, To Approve the Issuance of And Use of a Credit Card to Park Director.

Vice President Hardaway made a motion approve Resolution 22-03, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

***Resolution 22-04 (Discussion and Voice Vote)***

A Resolution of The Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Retroactively Transferring Monies Within The 2021 Budget, Fire & Hazmat Fund (Effective As Of 12-30-21)

Vice President Hardaway made a motion approve Resolution 22-04, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

Financial Advisor Trista Hudson elaborated on the resolution.

No questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

***C. BZA Actions & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS***

None

***OLD BUSINESS***

None

***NEW BUSINESS***

Councilman White indicates he believes the 2022 council appointed committees are bias.

***ANNOUNCEMENTS:***

RDC Executive Session January 25, 2022 at 5:30 P.M.

RDC Meeting January 25, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

Town Council Meeting January 25, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

***ADJOURNMENT:***

Motion to adjourn by Vice President Hardaway, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac. Meeting adjourned.

  
Rick Bella, President

  
Kelly White Gibson, Clerk-Treasurer

Minutes Submitted By Chantalle Scott