



Town of Merrillville
Town Council Meeting Minutes
January 25, 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.

Councilwoman Uzelac thanked Pastor Dennis Walton of Faith Temple of Christ Church for his continuous work within the community.

Councilman White asked that a moment of silence be given for former Lake County Officer Willie Stewart who has passed due to COVID-19.

Councilman Minchuk informed the council of three Lake County Officers that have passed due to COVID-19.

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:

Discussion of Fraternal Order of Police

President of the Indiana Fraternal Order of Police William Owensby spoke towards the Police Commission Appointment.

Councilman White clarified his statement made during the appointment.

Public comments were made regarding the FOP.

Discussion of Police Commission Appointment

Town Attorney Svetanoff asked that the town council resend their appointment for Eugene Guernsey as Police Commissioner and appoint Michael Rich as police commissioner.

Councilman White made a motion to remove Eugene Guernsey and appointment Michael Rich as police commissioner.

No discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval: January 25, 2022

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of January 11, 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 – Vice President Hardaway informed the public COVID-19 gift cards are now available for all town residents vaccinated after December 1, 2021 with proof of vaccination and Merrillville residency.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT – No Report

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES- MINCHUK – Councilman Minchuk informed the public all cars in residential areas must be moved away from the street when 2 inches or more of snow falls for snow plow accessibility. Citations will be issued moving forward.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION-PETTIT - No Report

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE – Councilwoman Uzelac reported 1,517 Lake County residents have passed due to COVID-19. 98 Northwest Indiana residents have passed due to COVID-19 as of January 21, 2022.

Councilman White informed the council of a form of technology that informs the council of COVID hotspots within the town using the sewer system. Councilman White would like to feed compost piles with additional nutrients to convert compost in a quicker manner.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway informed the council of a new full-time Code Enforcement Officer position within the Code Enforcement Department. Resumes and applications can be submitted to the towns Human Resource Department. The Dean & Barbara White Community Center currently has a full-time and part time Cite Supervisor position available. Applications for Park Department Cite Supervisors can also be submitted to the towns Human Resource Department. Interviews for all open positions will begin in February.

PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK - Councilman Minchuk informed the council FOP negotiations will be presented to the council at the next town council meeting for final approval. The first monthly committee meeting will begin Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 4 P.M.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – No Report

PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC - Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council all local parks within the town have been rehabbed.

ABANDONED -BLIGHTED PROPERTIES-HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway reported 9,200 properties that have been for tax sale over the years. 90% of the parcels lie within Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago.

Town Attorney Svetanoff informed Vice President Hardaway he would get with Commissioner Kyle Allen to get the Lake County Tax Sales Department generate a list of parcels that belong to the Town of Merrillville.

Economic Development Director Angie Chilcott informed the council she will attend the tax sale conference. Business retention and new business development will be a primary focus of the economic development department.

Vice President Hardaway will work towards becoming a member of a housing committee in Hammond which will help the Town of Merrillville regarding land banks.

Councilman White agrees with Vice President Hardaway with regards to creating a list of parcels within the town. Councilman White thanked Vice President Hardaway for his assistance with the busted water main in his ward.

President Bella asked Engineering & Public Works Director Steve King if the emergency contact information regarding busted water mains could be shared with the council and town manager.

DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER-MINCHUK & PETTIT – Director Price reported the consistent center bookings. The community centers first hosting event will be the weekend of January 28, 2022. Various town parks within the town will be looked over and discussed with anticipation of hosting a soccer league. Bids will be configured for parking lot sanding assistants. Director Price thanked the Public Works Department with their assistance in salting/ sanding the community centers parking lot.

Director King informed Director Price the Public Works Department could sand the community centers parking lot when needed.

Councilman Pettit called a community center executive meeting for Tuesday, February 1, 2022

at 5 P.M. Councilman Pettit informed the public of the community centers brick program which cost \$100 per brick where family members or fellow police officers could have brick placed next to the Bosak Court.

Special Projects (F & B Tax, Diversity) – HARDAWAY – Vice President Hardaway informed the council the Food & Beverage Tax is still being discussed. The 4th of July Committee will begin meeting in February. Vice President Hardaway encourages all council members and residents to join the 4th of July committee. Vice President Hardaway will ask the Merrillville School Corporation to allow high school students to elaborate on the history of African Americans during each council meeting in the month of February.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-WHITE- Councilman White informed the council the Lake County Solid Waste District has begun moving into the former Girl Scout building. From the Lake County Solid Waste board election Rick Long of Lake Station is now the Lake County Solid Waste District Chairman, Christine Cid Lake County Councilwoman is the Lake County Solid Waste District Vice Chair.

NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY– Vice President Hardaway informed the council the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission has a \$17 million grant to complete the Marquette Greenway path from Chicago to Miles, Michigan. The committee is also working with Sauk Village to bring a trail from Sauk Village Illinois into Dyer and Schererville Indiana.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE- No Report

SOUTHSHORE VISITORS AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY– Mr. Reardon- Town Manager Reardon reported the three important items discussed during the latest SouthShore Conventions meeting which where the convention center, the food and beverage tax, and personal relating to permanent leadership within the organization.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Code Enforcement Director Vickie Bunnell reiterated the need for all cars in residential areas to be off the street when 2 inches of snow falls for snow plow accessibility.

Councilman White thanked Director Bunnell, Director King, and Town Manager Reardon for their assistance with an illegal dumping site south of 61st & Taft.

Police Chief Cuttino thanked his officers on a good job within the community.

President Bella reported the License Plate Readers have come in handy with the recovering of vehicles within the town.

Councilman White asked Chief Cuttino if the task force within the town could be discussed.

Chief Cuttino informed Councilman White the matter could not be discussed.

Director King thanked the Public Works Department for keeping the roads clear. Director King thanked Chief Cuttino for his department's assistance in getting cars moved for first responders and snow plows.

Councilman White asked Director King if the roofing for the north barn has been completed.

Director King assured Councilman White the roofing for the north barn has been completed.

Planning & Building Director Sheila Shine informed the council in their packets enclosed the Planning and Building end of the year review.

Councilman White reported the loss of the former Fire Inspector Michael Graham.

Vice President Hardaway asked if discussions for a new fire inspector have begun.

Town Manager Reardon informed Vice President Hardaway discussion has begun regarding a new fire inspector.

Director Shine informed the council the state fire marshal department will cover fire inspections until a new fire inspector is in place.

GENERAL ORDERS

A. Ordinances

First Readings: (Discussion and Roll Call)

Ordinance 22-02 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of The Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Authorizing Additional Appropriations in Various Funds for the 2022 Budget

Financial Advisor Trista Hudson elaborated on the ordinance.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-02, seconded by Councilwoman

Uzelac.

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 22-02 on 2nd and final reading, seconded by Councilman White.

No question or comment from the council.

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

Ordinance 22-03 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of The Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Amending Ordinance 21-29 and Pay for Employees of The Town of Merrillville, Indiana, For The Calendar Year 2022.

Financial Advisor Trista Hudson elaborated on the ordinance.

Councilman Minchuk made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-03, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

President Bella informed the council the addition is done for retention purposes and not to increase salaries.

No question or comment from the council.

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

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to suspend the rules and read Ordinance 22-03 on 2nd and final reading due to the timing of payroll, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No question or comment from the council.

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

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

Ordinance 22-02 (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 22-02 on second reading, seconded by Vice President Hardaway.

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.

Ordinance 22-03 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of The Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Amending Ordinance 21-29 and Pay for Employees of The Town of Merrillville, Indiana, For The Calendar Year 2022.

Councilman Minchuk made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-03 on second reading, seconded by Vice President Hardaway.

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 22-05 (Amended) (Discussion and Voice Vote)

A Resolution of The Town Council of The Town of Merrillville Approving The Issuance of Refunding Bonds of The Town of Merrillville Redevelopment Commission, And Related Matters

Councilman Pettit elaborated on the resolution.

Councilman Pettit made a motion approve Resolution 22-05, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

Councilman Pettit reported error within the resolution.

Town Attorney Svetanoff informed the council a vote could be taken and signatures could be gathered shortly after.

Councilman Pettit's motion stands to read \$6 million in place of \$1.6 million, Councilwoman Uzelac's second stands as well.

No questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

C. American Rescue Plan

AP Voucher Register Summary for ARP Purchases

Councilman White made a motion to approve the ARP Purchases payment voucher including the three additions, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

Financial Advisor Trist Hudson asked that the totals for the Building Maintenance and Sanitation of \$33,243, Aid to nonprofit organization of \$5,000 and the Job training assistance of \$6,137.04 be added to the claims voucher.

Madam Clerk Treasurer agreed with Financial Advisor Hudson and elaborated on the payment voucher.

No questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

D. BZA Actions & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Planning Commission Meeting February 1, 2022.

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

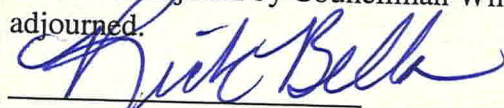
RDC Meeting January 25, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

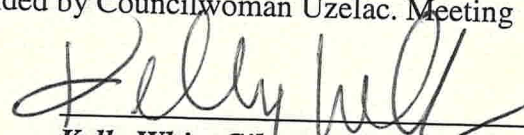
Town Council Meeting January 25, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

Planning Commission Meeting

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

