



**Town of Merrillville**  
**Town Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Municipal Night**  
**May 10, 2022**  
**6:30 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Bella & Trinity Thomas 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 from Richard Augie of Impact Church.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by any veteran in attendance.

**ROLL CALL** – Roll Call was taken by Administrative Secretary Chantalle Scott

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

Councilman Minchuk- (Ward 3)

Councilwoman Uzelac- (Ward 4)

Councilman Pettit- (Ward 6)

President Bella- (Ward 5)

Councilmen White – (Ward 7)

Councilmen Spann- (Ward 1)

Seven Present (7)

**ROLL CALL** – Roll Call was taken by Yiser Abdulhasan

Ward 1-Nylah James

Ward 2- Vice President-Ezra Lopez

Ward 3-Nasir Watkins

Ward 4- Pari Patel

Ward 5-Council President-Trinity Thomas

Ward 6-Amanda Hubbard

Ward 7- Samirah N'Doumy

Town Manager-Prince Patel

Clerk Treasurer- Yiser Abdulhasan

Building Director-Gwenyth Felker

Planning Director-Michael Walls II

Police Chief- Brandon Rush

Parks Director- Terrence Harvey

Fire Chief- Herbert Cambell

Code Enforcement Director- Rayelle Morton

Town Attorney- Mariah Hayes

Stormwater Director- Daniel Martinez

Public Works Director- Haleigh Carter

Economic Development Director- Summer Wallace

Human Resource Director- Tyran Todd

Town Judge – Malachi Whitlow

***PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REMONSTRATIONS:***

Swearing in of new M.P.D officer Nicholas Gould.

Judge Velazco swore in new Merrillville Police Officer Nicholas Gould.

***CONSENT AGENDA***

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval: May 10, 2022

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of April 26, 2022

Motion carried by voice vote.

No discussion from the council.

***STANDING COMMITTEES***

***BUDGET & FINANCE- HARDAWAY*** – Vice President Hardaway and Mr. Lopez informed the council that residents and businesses that were impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic are encouraged to apply for a grant to assist them in any repairs. The grants are matching up to \$5,000 for residents and \$10,000 for businesses. For any questions contact the grant administrator.

***COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT*** – Councilmen Pettit and Ms. Hubbard informed the council the committee met last Tuesday to discuss revising the town council bylaws. Attorney Sevetanoff will make the recommended changes and present them at the next committee meeting Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 P.M.

***PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES- MINCHUK*** – Councilmen Minchuk and Mr. Watkins informed the council that the Public Works Department is looking forward to the spring/summer seasons here in our town. They will continue to upkeep our streets, continue cleanup programs, and help keep our town looking good.

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

***ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE*** – No Report

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

***PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK***- Councilmen Minchuk and Mr. Watkins informed the council our Police Force & Fire Departments continue to work hard and around the clock to keep us safe and provide public service to all. We are still in early plans to a future south station to provide better services.

Councilwomen Uzelac and Ms. Patel informed the council that as of May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 there have been 960 cases of covid since April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 in Lake County. There have been 108 thousand cases in total and 1,826 deaths so far. There were zero new cases reported on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT*** – Councilmen Pettit and Ms. Hubbard informed the council that the Redevelopment Commission met prior to this meeting to begin the process of creating a special sub-allocation area for the new silos at Sanders farm within the Mississippi Street TIF area.



**PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC-** Clean up and mowing has started on all the town's trails and parks.

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

**DEAN& BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER-MINCHUK & PETTIT** – Councilman Pettit and Ms. Hubbard informed the council the center will be hosting the Midwest Championship Volley Tournament on Saturday and Sunday May 14 & 15. Over 1000 players are expected to participate.

Tarrence and Mr. Harvey informed the council that the Dean & Barbara White Community center just hosted a successful Wrestling event, this past weekend. The center is excited to host the Merrillville Intermediate School Paper Resource Fair on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Where we will have a table and share all the programs and activities that will be available this summer. Parks and Recreation are maintaining the parks and working around the weather to keep all the grass cut along with inspecting playground equipment.

**Special Projects (F & B Tax, Diversity) – HARDAWAY** – Vice President Hardaway and Mr. Lopez informed the council that there will be a Juneteenth celebration June 18, 2022 from 12:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the Dean and Barbra White Community Center. There will be live music, a dj, vendors, bouncy houses and children's games. Fireworks will be on July 3, 2022 and there is still planning being taken place. The July 4<sup>th</sup> parade will start at 1:30 P.M. from the Dean and Barbara White Community Center.

#### **DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS**

**LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-WHITE-** Councilmen White and Ms.N'Doumy informed the council that the program information for the Enviromobile and field trips for summer 2022 and the 2022-2023 school year is now available on the lake county solid wastes website. They will be offering in person programs for summer 2022. It is their hope that the new field trip space will be ready for in person field trips in the fall. If not, there educators will come to you. Registration opens on April 25, 2022. Also, the management office is now located in Merrillville at 8695 Broadway and they are looking forward to reopening the environmental education center and Reuz Room this summer.

**NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY-** Vice President Hardaway and Mr. Lopez informed the council that the next meeting is in June

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE-** Director Lake and Mr. Martinez informed the council the Merrillville Storm water utility is busy with many projects to control flooding and improve the environment. Many are on the north side of town including Meadowdale, Georgia Heights and Independence Hill Subdivisions. We also have an audit scheduled with IDEM next month.

**SOUTHSHORE VISITORS AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY-** Town Manager Reardon and Mr. Patel informed the council that special meetings were held on Monday, April 25, 2022 to interview the two top candidates for the position of President/CEO and to select the President and/CEO. The candidate selected was Crown Point Mayor David Uran. Mr. Uran is scheduled to start his job next month. Town Administration and members of the planning and building and Economic Developments have met with and talked to planning consultant regarding a new Merrillville comprehensive plan. We will be circulating a draft copy of a request for proposals to the town council.

**FIRE TERRITORY BOARD-** Councilmen Spann and Ms. James informed the council that Chief Yerga applied for two grants through the federal emergency management agency. The first one is for self-contained breathing apparatuses and the second one is for a new fire safety trailer for the education of fire safety and prevention.

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Chief Cuttino and Mr. Rush informed the council that the police department's March stats are as follows. We had 2,572 calls for service, 131 state accident reports, and 203 false alarms. We would also like to couple months. We have 6 officers in this program. One in each elementary school and one in the intermediate school. The programs are showing great success.

Director King and Ms. Carter informed the council that the public works department started their branch pickup program on May 2, 2022. starting on the north end of town, moving south. The branch program runs through September 30, 2022. Branches can also be dropped off at our North



Barn located at 5750 Tyler St., Monday through Friday from 7:15 A.M. to 2:45 P.M. A pre-construction meeting for our Broadway (east side) sidewalk project as held on May 5, 2022 and construction will begin soon. Milestone is working on the punch list from the 2021 paving program which includes restoration work and other miscellaneous items that need to be addressed.

Director Bunnell and Ms. Morton informed the council that for April we had 387 duties performed. Grass height has started to reach 8 inches and we have issued 23 grass warnings as of May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Director Shine and Mr. Walls from The Planning Department informed the council that the Merrillville Board of Zoning appeals met April 27, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. The board heard the following petitions: variance of use Approval to allow a Led Sign, Special Exception Approval to allow a Restaurant Bar and Grill, special exception approval to allow class room and office additions to a school and special exception approval to allow a medical training school. The Merrillville town council will consider these petitions this evening.

Director Shine and Ms. Felker from The Building Department informed the council as of April 31, 2022 construction activity for the year includes the following: 16 single family permits, 1 duplex permit, 84 commercial permits and 233 miscellaneous improvement permits for a total of 334 permits. Total permit fees are \$110,724.40 and total cost of improvements are \$13,981,160.00.

Director Pettit and Mr. Todd informed the council that the human resources has been posting job openings, interviewing, hiring and training new employees. Last month, we submitted a revised employee manual to the Town Attorney for review. We hope to be following the new manual very soon

Chief Yerga and Mr. cambell informed the council that the year-end service calls from last year were 2,740 for fire service calls and 7,500 for ambulance service calls. This was an increase of 137 for fire service calls and 900 ambulance service calls from the previous year.

Town Manager Reardon and Mr. Patel informed the council that the Town Administration and members of the Planning and Building and Economic Developments have met with and talked to Planning Consultants regarding a new Merrillville Comprehensive Plan. We will be circulating a draft copy of a request for Proposals to the town council. We are receiving a lot of calls from companies and Real Estate Brokers asking about properties in Merrillville to invest in. They've read about Amazon, Midwest Truck & Auto, and Big Lots coming to town as well as the new Residential projects on Taft and Whitcomb Streets. Merrillville will be holding its annual job fair on Thursday July 21, 2022 at 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center. Contact Linda Rosas at (219)769-5711, ext. 303 or Joanna Guardiola at (219)769-5711 for information.

Councilmen Minchck and Mr. Watkins informed the council there are no meetings scheduled at this time.

Town Attorney and Ms. Hayes informed the council that currently the attorney is representing the Town Council, Board of zoning Appeals, Plan Commission, Economic Development commission, and redevelopment Commission. The town sees our opinion to better prepare and evaluate all of their options, and often minimize the likelihood of disputes. I analyze the situation and provide best possible position to avoid litigation or liability. I am committed to ensuring that the town has the guidance and advocacy necessary to manage risk and defend claims.

Judge Velazco and Mr. Whitlow - No Report

Administrative Assistant Jasso and Ms. Wallace informed the council that the goal of the Economic Development is to create more jobs in Merrillville. The job fair will be held July 21, 2022. Applications are available on the Town Website.



## **GENERAL ORDERS**

### **A. Ordinances**

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

##### **Ordinance 22-12 (Discussion and 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 Established C-2, Community Commercial Zoning District to CIS/ Commercial / Industrial Special Zoning District Classification

Councilmen Pettit made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-12, seconded by Vice-President Hardaway.

Councilmen Pettit informed the council that this is for 4.5 acre parcel that the miner group is purchasing out of ameriplex. It's the final parcel they're acquiring to complete their acquisition.

Motion carried by voice vote

Seven in favor

Councilmen Pettit made a motion to suspend the rules and read on second reading, seconded by Councilmen White.

Motion carried with a roll call votes 7 in favor.

##### **Ordinance 22-13 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)**

An Ordinance Amending Town Code Section 12-41 Entitled, "Tow Release Services Fee", and Repealing All Town Code Sections and Ordinances, or Parts Thereof, in Conflict Herewith

Vice-President Hardaway made a motion to approve ordinance 22-13, seconded by

Councilwoman Uzelac.

No further discussion from the council.

Motion carried with a roll call votes 7 in favor.

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

##### **Ordinance 22-12 (Discussion and 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 Established C-2, Community Commercial Zoning District to CIS/ Commercial / Industrial Special Zoning District Classification

Councilwomen Uzelac made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-12, seconded by Councilmen Spann.

No discussion

Motion carried by voice vote 7 in favor.

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

##### **Resolution 22-18 (Discussion and Voice Vote)**

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Authorizing a Transfer of Monies within the Funds of the Parks Department.

Vice-President Hardaway made a motion to approve Resolution 22-18, seconded by Councilmen White.

No discussion from the council

Motion carried by voice vote.

### **C. American Rescue Plan**

AP Voucher Register Summary for ARP Purchases for May 10, 2022

Vice President Hardaway made a motion to approve the ARP Purchases payment voucher for May 10, 2022, seconded by Councilman Pettit.

No questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote

### **D. BZA Actions & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS**

**Petitioner:** Father Ted Mauch, Pastor

**Owner:** Diocese of Gary Holy Martyrs Catholic Parish

**Request:** Special Exception Approval

**Purpose:** To Allow 2 additions & 2 temps. Modular Class Rooms



**Location:** 801 West 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave  
**Zoning:** R-2, Single Family Residential Zoning District  
**Case #:** Z7E5-0422

Planning and Building Director Shine elaborated towards the BZA Action.

Councilmen Minchuck made a motion to approve the BZA Action, seconded by Vice-President Hardaway.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote

**Petitioner:** Marvis Wilson  
**Owner:** Skyway Real Estate, Inc.  
**Request:** Special Exception Approval  
**Purpose:** To Allow a Restaurant Bar & Grill  
**Location:** 234 West 81<sup>st</sup> Ave  
**Zoning:** C-3, Highway Commercial Zoning District  
**Case #:** Z5E4-0422

Planning and Building Director Shine elaborated towards the BZA Action.

Councilmen Pettit made a motion to approve the BZA Action, seconded by Vice-President Hardaway.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote

**Petitioner:** Britney Bynum  
**Owner:** Britney Bynum  
**Request:** Variance of LED Message Sign  
**Location:** 5475 Broadway  
**Zoning:** C-2, Commercial Zoning District  
**Case #:** Z4uV1-0422

Planning and Building Director Shine elaborated towards the BZA Action.

Vice-President Hardaway made a motion to approve the BZA Action, seconded by Councilmen Spann.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote

**Petitioner:** SMG School of Healthcare  
**Owner:** EFN Merrillville Property, LLC  
**Request:** Special Exception Approval  
**Purpose:** To Allow a Medical Training School  
**Location:** 8585 Broadway  
**Zoning:** C-5, Office & Research Zoning District  
**Case #:** Z8E6-0422

Planning and Building Director Shine elaborated towards the BZA Action.

Councilmen Pettit made a motion to approve the BZA Action, seconded by Councilmen White.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote

### ***OLD BUSINESS***

None

### ***NEW BUSINESS***

Execution Approval RE: Mesa Ridge Property Owners' Assc.

Councilmen Pettit made a motion to approve the Mesa Ridge Property Owners' Assc.

No further discussion from the council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

### ***Special Presentations***

M.I.S participants were given a certificate for participant by the council.

### ***ANNOUNCEMENTS:***

Plan Commission Meeting May 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm



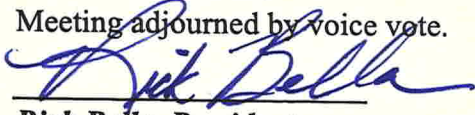



RDC Meeting May 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm

Town Council Meeting May 24, 2022 at 6:30 pm

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned by voice vote.

  
Rick Bella, President

  
Kelly White Gibson, Clerk-Treasurer

Minutes Submitted By Britni Reillo

