



Town of Merrillville
Town Council Meeting Minutes
November 9, 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 by Pastor Robert Szoke of Impact Church.

Councilman Pettit informed the council that a friend in the Economic Development arena Karen Lauerman from LCEA (Lake County Economic Alliance) has passed away. He asked that Mrs. Lauerman and her family be kept in prayers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Ward.

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

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

Councilman Minchuk- (Ward 3)

Councilwoman Uzelac- (Ward 4)

Councilman White – (Ward 7)

Councilman Spann- (Ward 1)

Councilman Pettit- (Ward 6)

President Bella- (Ward 5)

Seven Present (7)

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REMONSTRATIONS:

Swearing in of Officer Dylan S. Mazurek

Police Officer Dylan S. Mazurek was sworn in by Madam Clerk Treasurer White Gibson. Assistant Chief Nuses and Police Commissioners were present at the swearing in ceremony.

Assistant Chief Nuses gave a brief introduction about Officer Mazurek's career and experience.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval for November 9, 2022

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of October 25, 2022

Councilman Pettit made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilman Spann.

Councilman White asked for a minor correction to page one (1) of the minutes for October 25, 2022. Under Petitions, Communication, Acknowledgements, and Remonstrations, he requested the correct spelling of President Bella's last name. The *a* in Bella was left off under this section.

Madam Clerk Treasurer White Gibson stated that the correction will be made.

No further questions or comments from council.

Motion carried by voice vote.

STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES REPORTS

BUDGET & FINANCE- HARDAWAY – Vice-President Hardaway informed the council an American Rescue Plan (ARP) meeting occurred where two more projects were approved. One project will be a roof for 5,000.00. The other project is for a church. The church's roof and sign was damaged in the June 2022 storm. This will be a 6,000.00 project.

Vice-President Hardaway stated Financial Advisor Eric Cender would give him information on ARP funds spent on projects. Vice-President Hardaway will share the information at the next council meeting.

Vice-President Hardaway also encouraged residents to contact him regarding future projects for next year.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT – Councilman Pettit informed the council a meeting occurred where fourteen different topics were discussed ranging from donation boxes, portable basketball courts, dumpsters, car ports, storage boxes, parking and a host of other topics.

Councilman Pettit also stated that the committee instructed Attorney Svetanoff and his colleagues to prepare ordinances at the recommendations of Director Bunnell and Director Shine. The committee will revisit those ordinances in draft form at the next Council Affairs meeting on November 22, 2022 at 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES- MINCHUK – Councilman Minchuk informed the council leaf pick-up is ongoing.

Director King added there will be one more leaf pickup after the second one is completed.

Councilman Minchuk also stated winter is coming and we know what must be done to prepare.

Vice-President Hardaway stated he is seeing many branches within the community on the curb, and Public Works won't be picking up the branches. He informed the council that residents must bring the branches to North Barn.

Director King stated that the North Barn is closed for the year. Residents may go to the facility located on 13th West 73rd Avenue. The residents can check in at the office and will be direct on what to do with the branches.

Vice-President Hardaway asked Director Bunnell to issue a warning not citation to residents who haven't removed the branches. The residents will be informed that Public Works won't be picking up the branches.

Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council that boats in driveways had to be picked up by October 31, 2022. Vice-President Hardaway stated that Director Bunnell will elaborate about the boats in her report.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION-PETTIT – Councilman Pettit informed the council that mid-term elections in Lake County and Merrillville were very active.

Councilman Pettit also informed the council about the Crossroads Regional Chamber of Commerce annual gala on Saturday November 19, 2022 at Avalon Manor. Officer and Firefighter of the year will be honored at this event.

Councilman Pettit thanked Councilman Minchuk for his work on the entryway that is being developed and installed for the Turkey Creek subdivision of 73rd Avenue in Van Buren.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE – Councilman White informed the council that we had 54 Covid-19 cases in the past 14 days and that's an increase of 25% since the last reading. We also had 35 hospitalizations which was an increase of 11%. There weren't any deaths to report. Councilman White also stated the Covid-19 is still around and a lot of people are becoming infected. He encouraged residents to get their booster.

Councilman White also informed the council he would like to thank a Merrillville School leader for having her students come out and help with the cleanup that started on 57th Broadway and ended at Hidden Lake. He also thanked Nexus Employment Solutions who brought 20 employees from the company to help with the project. One third of a ton in trash was collected.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – HARDAWAY – Vice-President Hardaway informed the council and Elected Officials of the Personnel Policy Acknowledgment Consent Form. He elaborated on the form. He stated that he signed the form and mentioned that Councilman Minchuk, Councilman Pettit, and Councilman Bella signed their form. The signature isn't mandatory. It is to support the employees because the council makes rules that apply to everyone not just the employees. Vice-President Hardaway asked Town Manager Reardon to collect the signed forms.

PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK – Councilman Minchuk informed the council that negotiations are still in progress with Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – No Report

PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC – Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council the Parks are in order and have been mowed. There are some leaves flying around, but other than that everything is in order including the bike trails.

Director Price informed the council there is nothing more to report at this time about the Parks.

ABANDONED -BLIGHTED PROPERTIES-HARDAWAY – Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that he would defer to Direction Bunnell who has a report.

DEAN& BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER-MINCHUK & PETTIT – Councilman Pettit informed the council that bleachers are finally at the Weiss Family Field located at Dean and Barbara White Community Center. He thanked Director Price, Director King, and Councilman Minchuk for their help.

Councilman Pettit also informed the council about an upcoming Zoom call with the Boys and Girls Club regarding the usage and purchase agreements. Councilman Pettit, Director Price, and Town Manager Reardon will be on the call with Boys and Girls Club. Councilman Pettit informed the council that Attorney Svetanoff drafted the usage agreement to be finalized with Boys and Girls Club. The purchase agreement is also in place for the Boys and Girls Club to purchase the vacant three acres at Dean and Barbara White Community Center.

Director Price added that on Friday November 4th Faces of Suicide Seminar was held at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center with Geminus. The event targeted veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The event was well attended. Director Price also stated booking at the center is continuing into 2023.

President Bella asked Councilman Pettit for clarity regarding the purchase of land by the Boys and Girls Club. Councilman Pettit stated the land is being purchased to build a Boys and Girls Club in the near future.

Attorney Svetanoff stated the usage agreement has been reviewed by the Boys and Girl Club's legal team. The purchase agreement is supposed to be reviewed by their legal team over the weekend.

SPECIAL PROJECTS (F & B TAX, DIVERSITY, 4TH of JULY CELEBRATION-HARDAWAY – Vice-President Hardaway stated he would yield to President Bella regarding the Toys for Tots part of his report.

President Bella informed the council regarding the Town of Merrillville's partnership with Hobart's Toys for Tots program. The council was informed by Hobart there is a shortage of toys for teenaged children. The program is looking for skateboard, basketballs, and other toys which are geared towards teenagers.

President Bella also stated the Town will collect toys until the second week of December. The collection box is in the hallway. Individuals interested may drop off toys between 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. The toys must be new and unwrapped.

Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that application will be available online for the Town's Christmas House Decorating Contest from November 14th until December 12th. He briefly went over the application. Vice-President Hardaway also stated the judging will begin between December 14th and December 21st from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. Decorations and lights must be turned on no later than 6:00 P.M. every night of the judging week. The council members will judge each other wards not their own. One winner will be chosen from each of the seven wards. The winners will be notified on December 22nd. Each winner will receive a 100.00-dollar gift card, a yard sign, and decorative award to display in their home. Participants in the contest must keep their houses decorated until January 8, 2023

Vice-President Hardaway also stated the Town of Merrillville will be having an Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest and Staff Holiday Luncheon on December 13th from 11:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. Ballot boxes will be set-up where votes can be cast for the following categories funniest, ugliest, and most creative sweater. Ballots will be counted, and prizes will be awarded by 3:00 P. M. the same day. The contest and luncheon are open to all Town of Merrillville employees.

Vice-President Hardaway also elaborated on many holiday events in the Town of Merrillville such as the Christmas Door Decoration Contest which is open to all departments. The winning department will receive a trophy and bragging rights on December 27th. The turkey giveaway at McDonald's on 61st and Broadway in Merrillville on Saturday November 12th, the turkey

giveaway being held at Dean and Barbara White Community Center on Friday November 18th by Learner and Rowe, and the children's coat giveaway by Impact Church on Saturday November 19th, and the Town's Christmas tree lighting event on Friday November 25th.

Councilman White added that the Northwest Indiana Black Community Connection and Ward 7 are also having a House Decoration Contest.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-WHITE – No Report

NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY – No Report

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE – Town Manager Reardon informed the council there wasn't anything to report from Director Lake.

SOUTHSHORE VISITORS AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY – Town Manager Reader informed the council of the Partnership Network and Legislative Reception events coming up. The Legislative Reception will be on November 10, 2022 at 4:00 P.M. at the Hard Rock Café. The Partnership Network Summit meeting will be held on November 16, 2022 at the Hard Rock Café. There are two sessions for this event morning 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. and afternoon 2:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Town Manager Reardon also informed the council that a board meeting is scheduled for November 17th.

President Bella requested that Town Manager Reardon invite Director Uran to one of the council meeting.

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD-MINCHUK – Councilman Minchuk informed the council no meetings are scheduled.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/TOWN MANGER

Director Price informed the council there were two Junior Varsity teams of Pop Warner who won state and qualified for nationals in Orlando.

Assistant Chief Nuses informed the council of September's statistics for the Police Department. There were over 4,000 calls for service. He also warned the council and community to be mindful of their surroundings especially during this time of year. Thefts, robberies, etc. increases this time of year. Assistant Chief Nuses also informed the council telephone scams calls are on the rise. Individuals are posing as Police Offices over the phone and threatening people about jail time for unpaid bills. Assistant Chief Nuses wanted the record to reflect that the Police Department would never ever tell anyone they are going to jail for unpaid bills. Assistant Chief Nuses informed the council there is a problem with traffic. A new directive will be implemented to boost traffic enforcement. He will have more information for the council soon. Assistant Chief Nuses thanked Councilman Minchuk for the project in Turkey Creek.

Director Bunnell informed the council that warnings have been issued to residents who didn't remove their boats, campers, and trailers from the residential property by October 31, 2022. She also stated that her department is informing commercial businesses that cargo containers aren't allowed on commercial property. Warning letters are going out to the businesses asking them to revocontainers be removed.

Councilman White asked Director Bunnell to check out the property at 58th and Taft Street because of the accumulation of tires on the property.

Councilman Spann added that the railroad tracks are blocked off on Taft Street.

Director Shine had no report.

Director King informed the council the paving program is wrapping up for the year. He has a few straggler projects to finish up on 54th Place, 55th Place, and 63rd Place. Weather permitting; the paving project should wrap-up by Thanksgiving.

Director King also informed the council about street closure. He elaborated on the problems with INDOT on the Taft Street closure for the railroad tracks. The 73rd Avenue closure between Taft and Arthur Boulevard is a NIPSCO project. Message boards and signs are up in the town and information is on the Town's website about the closure and detour routes. Director King also informed the council about the additional speed signs, branches in the community, and leaves projects.

President Bella informed Director King about the darkness of the Town because streetlights are out. Director King stated that lights are ongoing problems due to inventory of poles and bulbs blowing out. He is working with Midwestern Electric to help resolve the lighting problems in the Town.

Town Manager Reardon informed the council that staff is working with Butler, Fairman, and Seufert in response to a notification for funding. If awarded, the funding will be used for construction projects in the Town. Town Manager Reardon elaborated on the grant process and construction projects.

GENERAL ORDERS

A. Ordinances

First Readings: (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

None

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

Ordinance 22-25 (Discussion, Public Comment, and Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of The Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Appropriating Additional Monies Within the Various Fire Protection Territory Funds for the Year 2022 Not Included in the Current Budget.

Councilman Pettit made a motion to approve Ordinance 22-25, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

No further questions or comments from council or public.

Motion carries by roll call vote 7-0

B. Resolutions: (Discussion and Voice Vote)

None

C. American Rescue Plan

AP Voucher Register Summary for ARP Purchases for November 9, 2022

Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that the AP Voucher summary is \$179,460.59

Vice-President Hardaway made a motion to approve \$179,460.59, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

Councilman White informed the council he was reviewing HEPA Chapter 78 donation in amount of 1,500.00 and questioned the amount. President Bella informed Councilman White that HEPA is just now receiving the donation because the council was waiting on a W-9 from HEPA Chapter 78.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carries by voice vote.

D. BZA & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS

Director Shine informed the council there are no BZAs or Large Gathering Actions to report.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilman Pettit wished Town of Merrillville football teams good luck.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Minchuk elaborated more on the football teams.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Plan Commission Meeting scheduled for November 16, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. has been cancelled.

ARP Meeting November 16, 2022 at 5:00 P.M.


Redevelopment Commission Meeting November 22, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

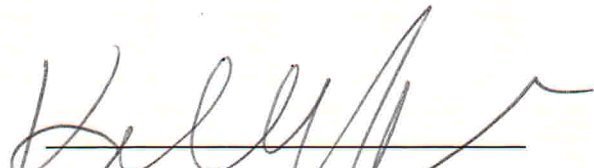
Town Council Meeting November 22, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion and a second were made.

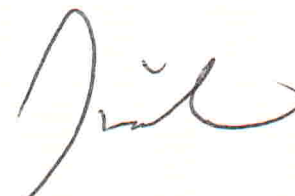
Meeting Adjourned.


Rick Bella, President


Kelly White Gibson, Clerk-Treasurer

Minutes Submitted By Angela Lewis


RICHARD HARSAWAY VP

x 
JEFF MINCHUK