



Town of Merrillville
Town Council Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2023
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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Vice-President Hardaway.

ROLL CALL – Roll Call was taken by Accounts Payable Secretary Angela Lewis

Present were:

Vice-President Hardaway- (Ward 2)

Councilman Minchuk- (Ward 3)

Councilwoman Uzelac- (Ward 4)

President Bella- (Ward 5)

Four (4) were Present at roll call and Two (2) were Absent Councilman Pettit and Councilman White

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

April Employee of the Month – Street Department

Town Manager Reardon read the Certificate of Appreciation.

Town Manager Reardon and Director King presented Richard Niles from the Street Department with a certificate and a token of appreciation. Mr. Niles has worked for the Town of Merrillville for thirty-five years.

President Bella congratulated Mr. Niles.

Consideration of whether to approve the draw request of CRP/CHI Sanders Farm parcel owner, LLC, relating to the \$1,800,000.00 town of Merrillville, Indiana, economic development tax increment revenue bond anticipation notes, series 2022 (CRP/CHI Sanders farm parcel owner, LLC. Project), issued on September 30, 2022.

Town Manager Reardon informed the council that this is a continuation of our collaboration with The Silos at Sanders Farm owners Crown Holdings out of Chicago. This investment will allow Crow Holdings to continue their build-out of the property along Mississippi Street which will not only benefit them, but with the expansion of Merrillville Conservancy District, NIPSCO, Indiana American Water it opens up surrounding property for additional development.

Town Manager Reardon also informed the council that this is what Director Chilcott referenced during the Redevelopment Commission meeting. The Town of Merrillville commitment to this project.

President Bella asked Attorney Svetanoff did he have anything to add.

Attorney Svetanoff informed the council that he has nothing to add at this time.

President Bella asked Attorney Svetanoff if we are just approving statement number one which is requesting disbursement of funds.

Attorney Svetanoff stated that is correct.

President Bella asked Director Chilcott did she have anything to add.

Director Chilcott informed the council that she has nothing to add at this time.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Uzelac to approve the disbursement of funds, seconded by Vice-President Hardaway.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carries by roll call vote 4-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval for June 27, 2023.
Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2023.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Uzelac to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carries by voice vote 4-0.

STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES REPORTS

BUDGET & FINANCE- HARDAWAY – Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that Ordinance 23-16 is coming up later on the agenda which is an amendment to the salary ordinance.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT – Councilman Pettit was absent from the meeting.

President Bella asked Town Manager Reardon did he have anything to report for Council Affairs.

Town Manager Reardon informed the council that he has nothing to report at this time.

STREET DEPARTMENT- MINCHUK – Councilman Minchuk informed the council that he has nothing to report at this time.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION-PETTIT – Councilman Pettit was absent from the meeting.

President Bella asked Town Manager Reardon did he have anything to report for Elections, Public Relations, & Town Beautification.

Town Manager Reardon informed the council that he has nothing to report at this time

President Bella added that Councilman Pettit is at the hospital caring for his Father-in-Law.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE - Councilman White was absent from the meeting.

President Bella asked the council if there was any report from Councilman White.

Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council there is some type of problem with the air in the Town of Merrillville and it affects people with asthma from what she is hearing. The reports are saying after tomorrow Wednesday, June 28, 2023, if the rain falls, it should clear up the haze in the air.

Councilwoman Uzelac also informed the council and residents that if you have asthma try to stay indoors.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – HARDAWAY- Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that he has nothing to report at this time.

PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK- Councilman Minchuk informed the council that he has two things to report. The first being that interviews were conducted to fill permanently the Chief of Police position. We had three candidates that were interviewed. All three candidates expressed great interest to be the Chief of Police for the Town of Merrillville

Councilman Minchuk also informed the council the committee should have a final answer and conclusion for a final vote at the next meeting.

Councilman Minchuk informed the council that he emailed all the council members and Attorney Svetanoff the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Lake County Sheriff's Department (LCSD) regarding the Town's animal control problem. The LCSD is willing to assist

us with this problem. Councilman Minchuk also stated that Attorney Svetanoff has already reviewed the MOU and except for a clerical error he is fine with the agreement. He asked that all council members review the MOU for it to be added to the agenda for the next council meeting.

President Bella asked for clarity on the topic that we are going to need multiple agencies to assist the Town of Merrillville with our stray animals and this is just a part of the process.

Councilman Minchuk stated that is correct.

Chief Nuses informed the council that he would like to see three to five agencies helping the Town. He is currently working with some of the Human Societies in Lake County.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilman Pettit was absent from the meeting.

President Bella asked Town Manager Reardon did he have anything to report for Economic Development.

Town Manager Reardon informed the council that the only this he has to report is on the agenda regarding Holiday Properties' preliminary presentation. Holiday Properties will talk about their proposed project and another project at Ameriplex.

PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC – Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council that we had a problem with people throwing garbage over Hendrick Street Park. Director Price dispatched his staff to clean up the garbage at the park. The same problem happened again this week. The Street Department cleaned up the garbage,

Councilwoman Uzelac informed the council and the public to take heed and use the trash cans for their garbage. She also stated that the lawns are being mowed and Director Price is doing a good job with the parks.

ABANDONED -BLIGHTED PROPERTIES-HARDAWAY – Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that he has nothing to report at this time.

DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER-PETTIT – Councilman Pettit was absent from the meeting.

President Bella asked Councilman Minchuk did he have anything to report for the Dean & Barbara White Community Center.

Councilman Minchuk informed the council that he has nothing to report at this time.

SPECIAL PROJECTS (F & B TAX, DIVERSITY, 4TH of JULY CELEBRATION-HARDAWAY - Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that he will yield to Director Shine to give an overview of the Town of Merrillville Juneteenth Freedom Festival.

Juneteenth Freedom Festival

Director Shine thanked all the committee members, departments, vendors, and all who participated to make this event a resounding success. She also elaborated on some of the events at the festival.

Vice-President Hardaway added his thanks to everyone including the Elected Officials and Attorney Svetanoff.

Fireworks July 3rd at 9:00 pm

Vice-President Hardaway also informed the council that the Town's Fireworks will be on July 3rd at 9:00 pm. The event will be held at the Merrillville High School parking lot. The building behind parking lot A is under construction so parking lot A isn't available for us to use, but other parking lots will be available for parking. He recommends that the public get there early so that we can start on time.

Independence Day Parade July 4th at 11:00am

Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that the July 4th Parade kick-off is at 11:00 am. We are still accepting applications. Our count as of today is twenty-seven or twenty-eight. Some elected officials haven't committed to the parade this year. If anyone is interested in participating in the parade this year, you have until Thursday, June 29th please contact Assistant Rosas at the Town Manager Office by June 29th.

Job Fair July 27th from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that the Town of Merrillville Job Fair 2023 will be on July 27th from 11:00 am until 3:00 pm at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center

Vice-President Hardaway also informed the council that we would like to do a Night Out on the first Tuesday in August. This event will also be at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center and more information will be coming out soon.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-WHITE – Councilman White was absent from the meeting.

President Bella informed the council that Councilman White is ill and there is no report.

NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY – Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that he has nothing to report at this time.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE – Director Lake was absent from the meeting and there was no report.

SOUTHSHORE VISITORS AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY – Town Manager Reardon informed the council that he distributed the latest circular flyer from the organization. He will be distributing it to staff and posting it on the Town's website.

Town Manager Reardon also informed the council that at the last Southshore Visitors and Convention Authority board meeting. The board agreed to fund its use study for the proposed Convention Center. The two previous sites touted in Merrillville the White property at 1365 and the Plaza property at 30 and Broadway will be included in the study.

Town Manager Reardon informed the council that he didn't want to confuse anyone and stated that as part of the bill that was passed the Regional Development Authority (RDA) is going to redo the study they commissioned before and the board's study will be a companion study use in the process.

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD-MINCHUK – Councilman Minchuk informed the council that no meetings have been scheduled at this time.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/TOWN MANAGER

Fire Inspector Hillman

Fire Inspector Hillman informed the council about the updates on Hickory Ridge Lake Apartment Complex. The current management company is working to clean up things around the complex. The potential new owner understands the dynamics of this situation. This is something that he and his partners do take on properties like this and make them better.

Fire Inspector Hillman also informed the council that we are still working with them on fire safety, demolition, lighting, and upkeep of the property. Fire Inspector Hillman elaboration on these items and told the council that Town Manager Reardon and Director Shine are keeping a close watch on the progress.

President Bella asked Fire Inspector Hillman to keep the council updated.

Director Price – Parks Department

Director Price informed the council that extra trash runs will be done for the holiday weekend. He also reminded residents that the Parks are on a first come first served basis, but there are ordinances and rules regarding fireworks.

Director Price also informed the council that tree removal and other debris were picked up on the trails, bridges, and tunnels.

Chief Nuses – Police Department

Chief Nuses informed the council that he has been getting a lot of calls regarding fireworks. The ordinances about fireworks works must be followed, and we have to respect other people's peace. The fireworks are starting from June 29th until July 9th except for the Fourth of July is going to be from 5:00 pm until two hours after sunset. The fireworks are supposed to be consumer fireworks.

Chief Nuses also informed the council we need to practice neighborly etiquette and respect our neighbors and their peacefulness. If anyone is having problems with fireworks, please contact the police.

Director Chilcott – Economic Development

Director Chilcott informed the council she is following up regarding what Town Manager Reardon mentioned for a preliminary resolution requesting a ten-year tax deferral for the Avanti building. This

is a 51,000-square-foot flex industrial building it will be located on 4.73 acres. This is 7.4 million investments to bring about 50 full-time jobs with an annual payroll of 2.5 million.

Director Shine – Building and Planning

Director Shine informed the council that an application for the Momentum Plan is in their packets. We are having a call out for the Community Committee. We are looking for a diverse group of individuals interested in neighborhoods to incorporate their points of view from the community. We are looking for forty members. The criteria are as follows:

- You must attend six monthly meetings or workshops beginning July 19, 2023
- You must commit to collaboration and partnership
- You must have great ideals and great energy
- You must have a dedication to make our town a better place for everyone

Director Shine stated she is encouraging people who would like to be involved to sign up and to please contact her at the Building and Planning Department for an application.

Director King – Street Department

Director King informed the council that he would like to thank the Town for recognizing Richard Niles as Employee of the Month who worked for the Town of Merrillville for thirty-five years. Mr. Niles will probably be retiring at the end of January next year.

Director King also informed the council he along with Chief Nuses, and Chief Yerga met with the schools this morning about the plans for the fireworks and traffic control.

Director King informed the council that he, Chief Nuses, Mr. Markle, and Chief Yerga met to discuss traffic control for the parade. He has the permit to close down Broadway. We are all going to work together to make the Town of Merrillville events safe and fun.

President Bella asked Town Manager Reardon did he have anything to add.

Town Manager Reardon stated he has nothing to add at this time.

GENERAL ORDERS

A. Ordinances

First Readings: (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

Ordinance 23-16 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Amending Ordinances 23-01 and 22-29a, and pay for Employees of The Town of Merrillville, Indiana. For the Calendar Year 2023.

A motion was made by Vice-President Hardaway to approve Ordinance 23-16, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

President Bella asked Financial Advisor Hudson did she have anything to add.

Financial Advisor Hudson informed the council that last budget season a raise was discussed for the Town Manager. It was discussed a split during the year. The split consists of \$5,000.00 in January of 2023 with the consideration of another \$5,000.00 in July of 2023. There is money in the budget for the additional \$5,000.00 for July with approval by the council.

President Bella asked Financial Advisor Hudson about a salary comparison being done taking into consideration of other Town Managers' salaries from other neighboring towns.

Financial Advisor Hudson confirmed that this was done last August or September looking at salaries and benefits.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carries by roll call vote 4-0.

Ordinance 23-17 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Authoring Additional Appropriations in The 2023 Budget.

A motion was made by Vice-President Hardaway to approve Ordinance 23-17, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

President Bella informed the council that Ordinance 23-17 funds the Job Fair and July 4th Parade expenses.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carries by roll call vote 4-0.

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

None

B. Resolutions: (Discussion and Voice Vote)

Resolution 23-18 (Discussion and Voice Vote)

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Transferring Monies Within the CCD Fund.

A motion was made by Councilman Minchuk to approve Resolution 23-18, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac.

President Bella asked Town Manager Reardon if Resolution 23-18 will allow us to pay the vendor who did the recent work at the Parks.

Town Manager Reardon stated that is correct.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carries by voice vote 4-0.

Resolution 23-20 (Discussion and Voice Vote)

A Preliminary Resolution of The Town Council of The Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Declaring an Area in the Town as an Economic Revitalization Area and Approving a Real Property Tax Abatement for Merrillville Avanti, LLC.

A representative from Avanti elaborated on the project.

President Bella asked Director Shine did she have anything to add.

Director Shine state not at this time.

President Bella asked Director Chilcott to explain the schedule for the abatement.

Director Chilcott informed the council that Avanti is seeking a ten-year tax deferment with the Indiana scale. The first year is 100% percent then it decreases thereafter. The assessed value is \$53,282.00. The newly assessed evaluation would be approximately 2,400,000.00. The estimated gross tax saving is \$643,500.00 and the tax abatement fee that would be collected is approximately \$96,525.00.

A motion was made by Councilman Minchuk to approve Resolution 23-22, seconded by Vice-President Hardaway.

President Bella asked about Resolution number 23-20 being the correct resolution number.

Councilman Minchuk stated that 23-20, not 23-22 is the correct resolution number and apologized for the error.

A motion was made by Councilman Minchuk to approve Resolution 23-20, seconded by Vice-President Hardaway.

No further questions or comments from the council.

President Bella thanked the representatives from Avanti.

Motion carries by voice vote 4-0.

Resolution 23-22 (Discussion and Voice Vote)

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Establishing a Restricted Fund Within the Town Budget Entitled "Public Safety Building Fund".

A motion was made by Councilman Minchuk to approve Resolution 23-22, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac

Councilman Minchuk informed the council that there are no fire stations South of Route 30. All of our fire stations are North of Route 30. We all the development going on South Route 30 we wanted to build a fire station and safety building in the Southeast of Town to give better services to businesses and residents.

Councilman Minchuk also informed the council that Resolution 23-22 will enable us to accept donations towards the building of a new fire station and safety building.

President Bella informed the council that we already have commitments from companies and before we can accept donations, we have to establish a fund earmarked for the building.

President Bella asked Financial Advisor Hudson to confirm his statement.

Financial Advisor Hudson stated yes. Resolution 23-22 allows the money to be reserved specifically for that purpose. The resolution also states that any balance left over in the fund after the building is built can be used for the same purpose of public safety whether that be new equipment or other buildings.

President Bella added that this idea was also to have space for a Police Department substation or sub-office and space for the Street Department's trucks and salt to save time and fuel driving back and forth.

President Bella also stated that this type of project will help us retain our very good fire protection insurance number.

Attorney Svetanoff stated that is correct. It would enhance our fire protection rating.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carries by voice vote 4-0.

C. American Rescue Plan

AP Voucher Register Summary for ARP Purchases for June 27, 2023

Vice-President Hardaway informed the council that the ARP Voucher summary is \$25,167.50.

Vice-President Hardaway made a motion to approve \$25,167.50, seconded by Councilman Minchuk.

No further questions or comments from the council.

Motion carries by voice vote 4-0.

D. BZA & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Town Council Meeting July 11th at 6:30 pm
- Fireworks will be at Merrillville High School on July 3rd
- The 4th of July Parade will be on July 4th at 11:00 am starting at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center going South.

- Job Fair July 27th from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion and a second were made and passed by voice vote.

Meeting Adjourned.



Rick Bella, President



Kelly White Gibson, Clerk-Treasurer

Minutes Submitted By Angela Lewis