



Town Council of Merrillville
Town Hall
7820 Broadway
Merrillville, IN 46410
Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 26, 2023
6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: Councilor 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Councilor Hardaway

ROLL CALL – Present at the meeting were Councilors Richard Hardaway, Jeffrey Minchuk, Margaret Uzelac, Shawn Pettit, Leonard White, Rhonda Neal, and, Rick Bella. The Clerk-Treasurer, Kelly White Gibson was present to memorialize the proceedings. A quorum was attained.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND REMONSTRATIONS:

Swearing in of a New Officer Troy Glynn Allen

Officer Troy Glynn Allen was sworn in by Madam Clerk-Treasurer Kelly White Gibson.

Chief Nuses gave a brief overview of Officer Allen's qualifications and experience.

September Employees of the Month – Veronica Garcia and Oralia Santos

Interim Town Manager Griffin and Judge Velazco presented Veronica Garcia to the council and audience as one Employee of the Month for the Town of Merrillville. Mrs. Garcia received a certificate of recognition and a gift card on behalf of the Town of Merrillville. Judge Velazco elaborated on Mrs. Garcia's exemplary qualities as an employee in the Town Court.

Interim Town Manager Griffin and Madam Clerk-Treasurer Kelly White Gibson presented Oralia Santos to the council and audience as one Employee of the Month for the Town of Merrillville. Mrs. Santos received a certificate of recognition and a gift card on behalf of the Town of Merrillville. Madam Clerk-Treasurer Kelly White Gibson elaborated on Mrs. Santos's exemplary qualities as an employee in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval for September 26, 2023.
Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2023.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the consent agenda. Upon a voice vote the consent agenda was approved. The motion passed.

STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES REPORTS

BUDGET & FINANCE- HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway reported that later on the agenda will be Ordinance 23-24 for the first reading budget hearing.

It was moved by Councilor Hardaway and seconded by Councilor Minchuk, to approve the ordinance. Upon a roll call vote, there were seven affirmatives and no negatives. With Councilors Hardaway, Uzelac, White, Minchuk, Pettit, Neal, and Bella voting in the affirmative, the motion passed. The ordinance was added to the agenda.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT – Councilor Pettit had no report.

STREET DEPARTMENT- MINCHUK – Councilor Minchuk had no report.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Hardaway, to have a three-way stop sign installed at 93rd Vigo and second by Councilor Hardaway. Upon a voice vote the motion passed.

Councilor Bella asked Attorney Svetanoff to make sure the location gets added to the Town of Merrillville ordinance list of stop sign locations.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION - NEAL- Councilor Neal reported that a couple of things are coming up in the Town and they are as follows:

Trunk or Treat Program

This event will be held at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center on October 26th from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. The information will be included in the Town's newsletter and on the website

Tree Lighting and Family Night

This event will be held at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center on December 1st from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. The information will be included in the Town's newsletter and on the website.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE - Councilor White reported that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendation for Lake County is low for COVID-19 no deaths have been reported, in looking at data from wastewater treatment plants he noticed an upward trend in the virus for Lake County. CDC is recommending people to get the new vaccines.

Councilor Uzelac informed the council that the CDC is recommending the COVID-19 vaccine along with the Flu vaccine.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – HARDAWAY- Councilor Hardaway had no report.

PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK- Councilor Minchuk reported that the Police Department has been very busy.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilor Pettit had no report.

PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC - Councilor Uzelac reported that the Parks are in good shape, but Whitcomb Street has a lot of speeders. She requested that the traffic sign be put back up because of all the calls she has received about speeders. She also asked Chief Nuses about speed bumps.

Chief Nuses informed the council that he has no information regarding the speed bump delivery and another Traffic Blitz is upcoming for that area.

Councilor Bella informed the council that Director King has the information regarding speed bump delivery.

ABANDONED -BLIGHTED PROPERTIES-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway reported that there has been an uptick in abandoned buildings and Chief Nuses has been kept updated on the numbers so that his department can take appropriate action per the Town ordinance.

DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER-PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that a meeting has meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 28th at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center at 4:30 pm.

Councilor Bella asked Councilman Pettit to find out why was the yoga classes halted.

SPECIAL PROJECTS (F & B TAX, DIVERSITY, 4TH of JULY CELEBRATION-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway reported that on October 4th at 10:00 a.m. Councilor Pettit and Attorney Svetanoff will be signing the necessary paperwork to turn over the title to the Boys and Girls Club to break ground on their new building.

Councilor Hardaway also reported to the council that Dr. Lackey has met one-on-one with all department heads the week of September 4th. The application to serve on the Diversity Quality

Inclusion Committee was sent out to department heads on September 12th. The committee will decide on Friday, September 29th regarding who will be serving.

Councilor Pettit reminded the council that Redevelopment Commission members committed \$200,000.00 a year for ten years to the Boys and Girls Club as a matching program to build the building out of the Broadway Tiff District.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-WHITE – Councilman White reported that a meeting was held last Thursday, September 21st. He elaborated on the meeting.

NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway reported that the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission will host an electric vehicle workshop on October 5th. He would like Director King or Kevin Markle to attend.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE – Director Lake reported the following:

Recertification – Tree City USA

All the material and documentation were sent to the National Arbor Day Foundation for recertification.

Kaiser Ditch

Director Lake reached out to Lake County Surveyor Bill Emerson with regards to the Kaiser Ditch.

Director Lake elaborated on several other projects in the works at Stormwater.

SOUTHSHORE VISITORS AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY-PATENA - Deann Patena wasn't present at the meeting.

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD-MINCHUK – Councilor Minchuk reported that no meeting has been scheduled.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/INTERIM TOWN MANAGER

Chief Nuses – Police Department

Chief Nuses reported the following:

High Profile Activity

Once everything is under control that is when information will be released to the public. If at any time the Police Department determines that the public is in danger, the area will be evacuated.

Ordinances

Ordinance violations are being addressed in the Town of Merrillville.

Director Price– Parks Department

Director Price was absent from the meeting. Michael Neal from the Parks Department reported the following:

- 175 young men and ladies participated this past weekend in tryouts for the Under Armor Indiana Game and Nike Lady Gyn Rats Basketball
- Cruise night was successful and had nice participation.
- October 7th Midwest JUCO/ PREP Jamboree will be held at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center (DBWCC). The start time is 10:00 a.m.
 - Featuring the College of DuPage, South Suburban, Waubonsee, Bosco Institute, Indiana Elite, and La Lumiere Prep School.
- October 14th and October 28th Nike EYBL Girls Fall league at the DBWCC.
- October 21st UA Indiana game one-day hoops shoot out at DBWCC.
- October 6th DBW will be hosting Adult Volleyball leagues through December 15th
- Special Olympics has partnered with the Parks Department in a clothes and Shoes drive.
 - There will be a 5 X 5 Bin placed outside where softly worn clothing and shoes can be dedicated. Donations will be picked up weekly.

Director Shine – Building and Planning

Director Shine reported the progress of the Merrillville Comprehensive Plan. The consultant met with the Steering Committee and Momentum Committee last week. She also reported that the open house will be held on Thursday, October 10th from 5:00 pm until 7:00 pm at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center.

Interim Town Manager Griffin– Town Hall

Interim Town Manager Griffin reported to the Councilors that he submitted a detailed report to them and Madam Clerk-Treasurer Kelly White Gibson but will be brief for this meeting. He will continue with the Wednesday 10:00 a.m. meetings with Department Heads.

GENERAL ORDERS

A. Ordinances

First Readings: (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

Ordinance 23-23 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana Appropriation Additional Monies Within the Various Fire Protection Territory Fund for the Year 2023 Not Included in the Current Budget.

It was moved by Councilor Minchuk and second by Councilor Uzelac, to approve the ordinance. Upon a roll call vote, there were seven affirmatives and no negatives. With Councilors Hardaway, Uzelac, White, Minchuk, Pettit, Neal, and Bella voting in the affirmative, the motion passed. The ordinance was approved in the first reading.

Ordinance 23-24 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote) – Public Hearing

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana Regarding Taxes and Budget for 2024

This item was added to the agenda. Financial Advisor Hudson elaborated on the budget process. The budget can be viewed at gateway.ifonline.org

It was moved by Councilor Hardaway and second by Councilor Pettit, to approve the ordinance. Upon a roll call vote, there were seven affirmatives and no negatives. With Councilors Hardaway, Uzelac, White, Minchuk, Councilors Pettit, Neal, and Bella voting in the affirmative, the motion passed. The ordinance was approved in the first reading.

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

None

B. Resolutions: (Discussion and Voice Vote)

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana Transferring Monies of the 2023 Budget Within the PRN Fund.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the resolution. Upon a voice vote the resolution was approved. The motion passed. The resolution was adopted.

C. American Rescue Plan

Councilor Hardaway reported that the AP Voucher Register Summary for ARP Purchases for September 26, 2023 is \$46,812.75.

It was moved by Councilor Hardaway and second by Councilor Minchuk, to approve the ARP AP Voucher Register Summary for \$46,812.75. Upon a voice vote the ARP AP Voucher was approved. The motion passed.

D. BZA & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Franco from Surf Net, Elkhart, Indiana expressed interest in doing business with Merrillville regarding fiber and high-speed internet. Mr. Franco elaborated on his company.

Christ Host, Merrillville Indiana thanked the council for all the work that was done in Turkey Creek, but there is still work that needs to be done regarding a linear sign.

Claudia Wells, Merrillville, Indiana reported that the yoga classes at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center were discontinued, and the students were informed by email.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- BZA Meeting September 27th at 6:30 p.m.
- Town Council Meeting October 10th at 6:30 p.m.
- Trunk or Treat October 26th from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.


Rick Bella, President
Kelly White Gibson, Clerk-Treasurer

Respectfully Submitted By Angela Lewis