

Minutes and proceedings of the meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Hope, Indiana.

Be it remembered that the Town Council of the Town of Hope, Indiana held a called meeting at the Hope Town Hall in said town at 5:30 p.m. on January 26, 2021.

A quorum was declared present based on the presence of the following council members: Jerry Bragg (President), John Walstad (Vice-President), Clyde Compton, Ohmer Miller and Ed Johnson. Clerk Treasurer Diane Burton was also present.

The prayer was given by Jerry Bragg.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Jerry Bragg.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes 1/5

Clyde made a motion for the approval of the minutes. Ed seconded. Motion carries 5/0.

APPROVAL OF THE CLAIMS

Clyde made a motion for the approval of the claims. John seconded. Motion carries 5/0.

OLD BUSINESS:

COMMUNITY CROSSING MATCHING GRANT 2020-2021

Tony Akles stated you heard back in December that you received the grant. There is an agreement between the Town and INDOT that needs to be signed and sent back to INDOT by February 8th. They prefer to just have one person sign. This can be done by a motion and a reporting of the meeting minutes. I recommend you have Ohmer sign it since he is the LPA. **Ed made a motion for Ohmer to sign the agreement. Jerry seconded. Motion carries 5/0.** Tony stated by April 8th the Town has to have an agreement between the Town and the contractor to get started on the work. The project must be closed out within eighteen months of the signed contract date. Close out documents are due within sixty days of final payment. This year the project is pretty much all just mill and resurfacing. There is really not a lot to design. Tony proposed a quote not to exceed \$7,500 for their fee for the project. Scott Andrews will prepare the request for proposal and the contract for the Town. Clyde asked if Strand would provide a list of contractors. Tony confirmed. Tony said you have to send it to at least three but we will send it to the ones that you want us to send it to. **Ed made a motion to enter into a service contract with Strand not to exceed \$7500 on this project. John seconded. Motion carries 5/0.**

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION GRANT PROJECT

Tony Akles stated we are waiting on Indiana Custom Fab to finish the brackets so that the Poole Group can install them. Once that is done, this project is pretty much wrapped up. The final pay application should be presented in February.

Trena Carter stated basically we have been working with Poole Group. We have pretty much everything that we required for the labor standards portion of the project. We do need to have the final pay

application at the next meeting because the grant expires March 1st. Then we will be able to start closing the project down once we get that final draw in.

PROJECT UPDATES

COVID 3 FUNDING

Trena Carter stated I was asked to look at COVID 3 funding for small businesses and the food pantry. I did not hear any response from the food pantry as far as the need there and I know the Town is putting in money towards assisting them. Susan did send out the information to the local businesses. We only had interest from one person and with a maximum of \$10,000, that would not be competitive. After meeting with Susan and the OCRA liaison for this area, we determined it wasn't feasible to go in for that funding. There is a different program that Main Street itself can apply for to assist some of the local businesses with having a web presence. Susan is following up with that. Susan sent you an update, but I wanted to explain to you why. It isn't feasible for one entity to apply.

OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING REHAB

Clyde asked when this program will be available again. Trena answered at this time the Office of Community and Rural Affairs has taken all of this funding away to be used for COVID. Indiana Housing Finance Authority is a subrecipient of the Office of Community and Rural Affairs for Community and Development Block Grant funding for that program. Right now, OCRA is having a pilot program in one community. It is a Steller Community. Our office is actually working with OCRA on that program. OCRA may take over the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehab program. We don't know at this point in time. They're looking at having potentially another pilot program. Once they would open it up then we would be looking at all avenues.

FENCE AMENDMENT (2nd Reading Ordinance 2020-07)

Scott Andrews stated if you recall we were here for December with the amended fence ordinance where we added maintenance and enforcement provisions within the ordinance. It was approved for a first reading. It's before you for a second reading and final approval. **Clyde made a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-07. John seconded. Motion carries 5/0.**

PICNIC TABLES AND BENCHES FOR THE PARK

Jerry Bragg shared David Clouse's opinion on placement and number of the picnic tables for the park. David suggested two of the picnic tables be handicapped and four be regular picnic tables for a total of six. **Clyde made a motion to approve the purchase of the six picnic tables with two of them being handicapped accessible. John seconded. Motion carries 5/0.** Jessica Brown shared her recommendation which consisted of fifteen historic facts to be placed on the benches. Jessica stated some of them will probably need to be shortened. There are thirteen benches. The Council will review the list and make their decision at the next meeting. Clyde stated we really need to know the number of letters that will fit on the bench. Jerry stated he will reach out to them.

2021 BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

The Council reviewed the 2021 Boards and Commissions again. The following updates have been confirmed:

Plan Commission

Mary Bragg has agreed to remain on the Plan Commission Board. Carl Lienhoop will be the liaison from the County Plan Commission. Still need two members: one Republican and one Democrat.

Board of Zoning Appeals

Clyde Compton will come off of the Board of Zoning Appeals since you cannot hold an elective office and be on this board. One member is still needed.

Edit Committee

Pam May has agreed to remain on the Edit Committee. Tabatha Tallent has agreed to be added to the Edit Committee.

Police Oversight Committee

Nellie Meek is stepping down from the Police Oversight Committee. One member is still needed.

Jerry Bragg asked if his son can be on a board. He has expressed interest in doing so. Scott confirmed. Scott stated you will just have to excuse yourself from the vote. Clyde suggested to put him on the Board of Zoning Appeals. Clyde requested the positions that need filled be put on HSJ Online. Jessica Brown will take care of that. **Ohmer made a motion to approve the updated list. Clyde seconded. Motion carries 5/0.**

NEW BUSINESS:

RETIREMENT PLAN CHANGE REQUEST

Diane Burton stated the Personnel Committee met on January 6th with Brad Polo. Brad has been our advisor for about eight years. He made the decision to leave Wells Fargo last year and wanted to share with us his reasons for doing so. One of the reasons was because he felt Wells Fargo no longer has a focus on the investment area which has made it hard for him to service his clients well. He is now an advisor for Stifel. Stifel has been in the investment service since 1890. Their primary focus is investments. Stifel is willing to pay the cost to transfer our investments from Wells Fargo to them. We all feel this company will be better for our investment needs and we all agreed that we would like to make this switch. I would like to request from the Council permission to proceed with this change. Ohmer clarified the company will absorb the cost for the change so there will be no loss for the employees. Diane confirmed. Ohmer asked how large the company is. Diane did not recall if that information was shared. Ohmer asked if you are locked in. Diane answered no. **Ohmer made a motion to allow the change to Stifel to proceed. Ed seconded. Motion carries 5/0.**

2021 WATER/SEWER BUDGET

Diane Burton stated what you have before you tonight are a budget summary and a breakdown of all the recommended appropriation amounts for both water and sewer. I am proposing minimal changes in the budget from last year. The biggest change is in the payroll, as we have talked about prior, because of the changes with Motor Vehicle Highway. A 5% increase was added to both water and sewer and an additional 3% which is the amount of increase in the budget for all payroll this year. I did get to have a conversation with David today. He doesn't know of anything big this year that is needed. He is okay with this budget. One thing he feels we need to look into more is he feels it is not fair to have water and sewer to pay for what MVH can't afford to pay for anymore. We are limited in our sources. He did mention storm water. I will check to see if that is a possibility. He also feels parks should pay a portion which we did implement that last year, but we may be able to add another employee's payroll to be

covered from parks as well. Diane reviewed a few other changes in the water budget. Diane shared some good news in the water budget. The water debt reserves has been satisfied which saves \$17,000 in the budget. The savings plan for the new town hall is included for each fund. Diane reviewed the summary sheet. The total of expenses for water is \$663,496. The total estimated revenue is \$598,179. Current operating balance is \$253, 193. Revenue minus expenses is (\$65,317). The operating balance after expenses if everything is spent is \$187,876. Diane shared that amount is very close to last year's scenario. Water ended up gaining \$28,023 at the end of the year. The proposed total expenses for sewer are \$330,996. The total estimated revenue is \$264,173. The current operating balance is \$401,648. Revenue minus expenses is (\$76,823). Total operating balance if everything is spent is \$324,825. Ohmer asked if we are still under the executive order that doesn't allow us to turn off resident's water. Diane answered no that ended in either September or October. Ohmer asked if the arrears have been paid. Diane answered we implemented a six-month contract. About half of them have been satisfied. **Clyde made a motion to approve the water and sewer budgets. Ed seconded. Motion carries 5/0.**

TOWN MANAGER POSITION

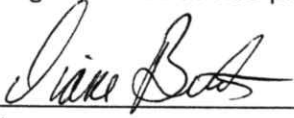
Jerry Bragg stated I really think we need to fill this position. Jerry shared why he feels we need a Town Manager including taking stress off of Matt and Diane who are both handling things that should be handled by a Town Manager. Jerry stated when we had a Town Manager we were flourishing. We need a point a contact. **Clyde made a motion to start accepting applications to fill the job of Town Manager until February 28th. John seconded.** Ohmer stated I feel like there should be a liaison here, but I think that an Executive Assistant would probably be able to do that. This would not be as expensive as the Town Manager position. That is a big expense on the community. Ed also stated he had concern with the expense of a Town Manager. He also disapproved of it being put in the paper before it was brought before the Council. Ed stated he needs to answer to this board, and he needs to do it in a timely fashion. Jerry added I think we need someone who will go out and talk to these businesses and see what they need. Someone to make the contacts that we need and draw people into this Town. When you bring businesses to this Town, it is worth that expense. Ed stated we need to redo this job description. **Motion carries 3/2.** Scott Andrews stated the Indiana statute also has a list of Town Manager duties. I can send that to everybody. It was decided to have an Executive Session on February 2nd at 5:30 to discuss potential changes in the job description.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ABOUT SUBMITTED REPORTS

*A Police and Utilities report has been given to the council prior to the meeting to review and kept on file at the Clerk Treasurer's Office.

Clyde stated I expressed this to Matt Galbraith. We have a series of people that I feel are using us with their trash, cars and stuff like that. They'll get a letter giving them two weeks notice. They will clean it up and a month later you see that same name on the list. I think to stop that we should implement three strikes and you are out. The third time goes directly to our Town Attorney. Scott stated that would need to be done by ordinance because you are talking about penalizing someone. It was a consensus of the Council to amend the ordinance. Matt Galbraith agreed. Scott stated you will need to determine what you want the penalty to be. Matt Tallent added the junk vehicle ordinance will need to be amended as well. There was Council discussion. Ohmer suggested to charge the fine plus attorney fees. Scott will have a proposal at the next meeting to amend both ordinances.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.



Attest

