

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 called meeting at the Hope Town Hall in said town at 5:58 p.m. on August 4, 2014.

A quorum was declared present based on the presence of the following council members: Paula Pollitt (President), Tim Shoaf, Jerry Bragg and Greg Sims. Clerk Treasurer, Diane Burton was also present. Absent: Jonathan Titus (Vice-President)

Purpose of meeting: Working Session

The meeting was called to order by Paula Pollitt.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY/WEBSITE – VISIONASRYWEB

Andrew Duffy, General Manager for Visionaryweb, stated we like to think of ourselves as a strategic digital consultancy. We are consultants who help people with all things digital in a strategic way. We've been in business for 17 years. Andrew went over the primary services they provide including insight, managed services and digital services. Andrew spoke about how we as a town can better use the internet – web strategy. Andrew stated one of the first things we do is to look at is industry best practices. What is everybody else doing. What kind of information does the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns put out. The five keys to government websites are: (1) Accountability/openness (2) Efficiency (3) Participation (4) Effectiveness/responsiveness (5) Citizen focused government. Andrew stated this isn't the only framework to think about with town websites. I wanted to present it as an example of the type of thing we would do. We look at what do people say are the best practices for town and city websites. Andrew spoke about competition with other communities. There's this whole movement of going local. People want local food, they want to shop local, they want to move home, they want to move back to rural areas. Andrew stated our biggest competition for what we are trying to accomplish is getting people in the community to get off the couch to be more involved in events and volunteering. The approach we use is just the traditional approach to marketing which is attract, engage, convert, retain and refer. The two key things in there are: Audience, who is it that we are trying to attract to the website; residence, our citizens, town employees, potential employees, vendors, other government entities that regulate you, other towns that may be looking for partnership or competition. We help people identify who those audiences are. Who's coming to the website so we can think about where are they, what are their needs, what are their questions, what are they hoping to accomplish. The other part is objectives, desired action. Getting them to do what we want them to do. We have to know what our desired actions are. For some towns it is trying to get more people to pay their utilities online for example. Sometimes when we work with towns, they feel like they have to put all this information on their website. You don't have to do that but we need to get people to where that information exists. What are the ways that we attract that audience to that objective. These tactics may be related to digital. It may be social media. It could also be traditional; newspaper ads, radio or even word of mouth. How do we engage them. Information on benefits, save a stamp. Converting them. A lot of that is about calls to action. The number one rule for a website is telling people what you want them to do. How do we keep them coming back. That's the retaining. As a company we're really big on tracking metrics, performance indicators so we can see how successful we've been. Is money well spent. If the council were to make a decision to invest x number of dollars and we can show after six months this is the impact those dollars have made, you're going to feel better about your decision. Also when it is time to adjust or make a change, you're going to be more likely to feel positive about it because you've seen what happened. This can seem a little involved to go through a process like this but it's a difference between a website that just sits there and a website that actually does something for the town. It's worth the time to go through the process. Andrew showed some examples of what some other people are doing. If we have three projects going on at time, people think something is happening in this town. We created IRWA's website. We built it using a responsive framework. What that means is their website changes based on the device being used to view the

website. Things adjust for the space of the screen. I would say 90% of the time responsive design takes care of the need to have an app. Basically what I tried to do is to provide an overview of how to think about the web, the internet. Andrew provided an estimate of the cost of their services. Andrew stated we would start with a strategy session. We go back and do a lot more research to deliver a plan. Websites that we build most of them we build in content management system called Word Press which is standard. It is user friendly. As a part of this we train you or whoever needs to be trained. We don't charge for Word Press support. If you asked us to do something, we charge. If you ask us how to do something, we don't charge. Our maintenance rate is \$90 an hour billed in fifteen minute increments. The key is somebody has to keep it updated. There is nothing worse than going to a website and have outdated information. Tim asked for a list of websites they have done.

BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

Mel Fox stated I met with a core group of local leaders. We wanted to do something before our Hope Heritage Days but we're really trying to bump some up before the Arts and Antiques Fair. This is a short term beautification project to help support the events and Hope Heritage Days and hope to get people to buy in to what we want to do in the long term. Everything in the plan was a consensus. Everything is moveable. Even the flowers are perennials. We are going to plant 12 trees in barrels. We got free dirt from Tim. We think we can get mulch donated. Linda is helping with the flowers. We want to put three benches along this north side. Leroy (Swiss Maid) can make these. They're made out of recycled milk cartons. He put that color combination together because they are part of our historic colors. We have about six or seven colors that are our historic colors. We worked with Chuck and Barry on historic colors. If those benches work out, then eventually we would like to have people donate them. Then we could redo some benches in the park and around town. We are also going to decorate the poles for these fall festivals. This winter we will work on a long term project. The last page shows a summary of what all the cost will be with a little cushion for miscellaneous items. Diane Jekel asked so we are not going to try to do the wall at Strawberry Fields. Mel answered both of the owners are doing it and incurring the cost. Again I'm going back to the plan, it says you have to beautify the town. Greg asked is there any conversation once everything is in place to maintain it. Mel answered that is a concern because we have got to get them going. We will work out something between all of us. Greg asked about securing the benches to the ground. Mel answered I am talking to Leroy about that. Greg asked on your long term, I've had to deal with this in other communities, you put a store in and you can't put a sign up because it didn't meet their historical. I think long term if we bring in a business, we have some criteria there. Cindy Boll stated that can be made part of a zoning ordinance for the downtown area. Mel stated I agree. This winter we have to get that standard in place. The second part of this that I was going to ask for because again I looked at the plan is to have a beautification committee. It says to for along SR 9 but I want to for the whole town. I'm trying to put together all the different pieces of what would address that. I want Michael Dean to be the chair of it because he has the engineering ability and he's so passionate about historic preservation. I want Chuck to be on it because of again historic preservation, Barry Beeker because of being an artist, James Kelly and two High School students. Larry Simpson stated I met with the high school today. We're trying to rebuild the greenhouse out there. They would like to help supply plants to the town of Hope in the future. Mel stated the USDA has formed an investment group that wants to put ten billion dollars into rural America. I'm trying to call some of my USDA contacts to see. One of them is water and water projects. I was thinking the water tower.

Tim made a motion to allow up to \$3,000 for this project coming out of Edit Funds. Jerry seconded. Motion carries 4/0.

NEIGHBORHOOD CLEANUP

Tim Shoaf stated if you remember I brought it up a meeting or two ago and in the meantime Indiana Rural Cities and Towns had a workshop over this. We're not the only community suffering this. The catch phrase is blight neighborhood. Abandoned properties are not our biggest problem but it all falls into the same thing as far as

buildings in disrepair or maybe not being used, finding uses for them, how to enforce getting something done with them. One thing that came out of it, we need to have a registry of every property in Hope. You will be required to give your information as to your mailing addresses, phone numbers, emails. Every possible way you can of contact these people. There's a lot of Indiana laws that's already been passed for this. You can pass an ordinance to where you can actually issue fines. It's not going to be a lien. It's a fine. We can pass a new weed ordinance to where they will notify them the first time for that season. After that when it gets to the height, all they have to do is put a note on their door and mow it that day. They don't have to wait fifteen days. Once a season they have to notify them. Greg asked about Sheriff Sales. Tim stated they are several different ways of obtaining them. Cindy stated we have at least one maybe two that are in either sheriff sale or foreclosure that we are having trouble with. Tim stated I think our County Commissioners are going to have to be educated on it. Mel stated its called Certificate sales. Tim stated the way I understood it, you don't get the hundred and eighty days to pay your taxes. If the commissioners want to adopt the ordinance, it can go right then. Cindy stated the registry is really worth looking into. I think it's something that we can get in place pretty quickly. Tim said we are going to have to assign that task possibly to the Deputy Clerk. We'll have to send them certified mail to fill it out to prove that we did make an effort. Discussion. Tim stated they didn't discuss at the workshop how to implement. Mel said she would call IACT and find out. Larry Simpson suggested our small communities should go in mass to talk to the commissioners. Larry asked wouldn't the water department have on file who owns the property. Diane answered I think so. Tim said we would be limited on information. We want phone numbers, emails, every way possible of contacting them. Paula said you would have a starting point. Mel stated I do want you to take a look at this blight elimination program that Tim talked about first because a lot more communities are using it. Tim said it's broken down by population. Mel added there's six divisions. Tim stated they want everybody to have their percentage of it.

BUDGET

Diane stated I probably gave you more information than you really wanted. As I pulled this information together I thought it was interesting and thought you might find it interesting too. The first pocket is just some information where I looked at past appropriation balances. I used that to see if I felt like we have enough in the current and with what we have coming up. The Fund Balance Report that's in the very back, I just wanted for myself being new to see the flow of balances. I am thinking we could invest some of this money in CDs and earn more money on it. In the middle is the Form 1 and what I'm recommending. In the back is the reports that I normally send you quarterly anyway. Everything in here I emailed to you. The appropriation report in this folder are just the funds that are budgeted. This is so you can look at where we fell midyear. I included that on the excel spreadsheet as well. I am not recommending that many changes. I sent you a sheet showing you the changes. Diane recommended the following increases be appropriated: The General Fund, Personal Services; a five percent increase in salaries, an additional \$1,000 for Deputy Clerk Treasurer listed under Clerk Treasurer and police to stay the same since they have a cushion already. Services and Charges; increase attorney \$500 for a total of \$7500, increase Fire Department \$3,450 (five percent) for a total of \$72,450, increase postage \$250 for a total of \$750, increase travel and mileage \$200 for a total of \$300, increase liability insurance/property insurance \$2000 for a total of \$18,000, increase professional conferences \$500 for a total of \$2,000 and increase town promotions \$500 for a total of \$1,000. Capital Outlays; police equipment includes \$12,000 for Computer Automated Dispatch (not used in 2014). General has an overall increase of two percent from the previous year. Diane stated this is kind of using cash on hand as well as revenue so obviously we don't want to spend all of this. It's just freeing it up in case we need it. We ended up with at the end of the year right around \$125,000 in General. Right before spring installment we were down to \$12,000 so we really need that cushion to carry us over until our spring installment comes in. The MVH Fund we are spending more than we're receiving. The following cuts are recommended: Supplies; reduce street supplies from \$45,000 to \$25,000. Services and Charges; reduce liability/property insurance \$4500 for a total of \$6,000. Capital Outlays; reduce street projects \$5,000 for a total of \$20,000. Diane stated some things we are spending from MVH that we can use Local Roads and Streets. I wanted to talk to you guys to see if this is what

you're wanting with our Edit Funds and our Town Manager. Of course this year we are paying out of Edit. I think next year we should also pay it out of Edit. I understand it is seed money but we're just starting this process. The following was recommend from the Edit Fund: Personal Services; add salary of \$50,000 for Town Manager and add benefits of \$7,000 for Town Manager. Other Services and Charges; increase development plan \$25,000 for a total of \$175,000. Paula asked when does this all have to be approved. Diane answered this is just to get input from you. It will actually get published this way as my recommendation. The public hearing will be scheduled for September 15th at 6:30 p.m. We can also discuss it. We have another meeting coming up. If you look this over and come up with questions or if you want something a different way. The adoption meeting will be October 20th. At that point it pretty much needs to be ready to go, signed and has to be turned in in two days from that meeting. I will send you the Form 4B which shows the summary once that's out there.

EDIT FUND PLAN

Tim stated one thing that came out of the Edit Fund Committee was the question how important it was for stuff to be going through them anymore. Larry Simpson added there was obviously the need when the town started receiving the CEDIT. You wanted to filter so that at your meetings you weren't having them come in and make presentations, to get budgets and to make sure they are trying to create their own funds as an organization should. David Miller actually brought up you're seeing the same faces year after year. Each group has been told that the funds may not be there forever and that Hope has other aspirations for Economic Development. You guys are elected officials. You want the town folks to start to see the things you have in place. You've hired a new town manager. You've got new initiatives that you're wanting to do. Is there really a need to have a filtering board. Tim stated we have been moving people on to be more self-sustaining in that fact and we're looking at directing a lot of the money towards economic development. Do we want to come up with a formula. If we have a hundred dollars, would we want to look at put seventy toward economic development and thirty for seed money. For people coming in I think we would still need the referral committee to keep from tying up meetings and to keep it consistent. I think we're trying to make a growth happen in Hope. I think the town of Hope may need to have matching funds. If we've got a chance to make growth happen, we don't want to say we didn't hold enough money back. Greg asked are you suggesting first come, first serve. Once it's gone, it's gone. Tim answered I think we would want to sit down and look at what we truly spend out. I would want to look at it realistically and hold back money so we can help places. It gives the town manager a number that they can work with. It gives them a budget to work off of. Paula asked if you don't use the money, do you lose it. Diane answered I haven't heard anything to that affect. You never know how long you are going to receive EDIT Funds. Randy Sims stated but the money generated from that is getting taxed from the working force. Tim confirmed. Randy said if you're wanting to do a bricks and mortar thing why wouldn't the town say we got \$30,000 let's do some sidewalks. You can say to each property owner we'll charge you five dollars a foot. Tim said we've got a person now to look into all these different things. We are going to have to have a funding behind it. To me if it enhances Hope to bring commerce here, that's economic development. We have used part of it for the arts and entertainment and we could still hold back a portion to do it. Mel stated one thing I would like to do is form an Economic Development Advisory Council. This would be key players. All your key people that will say let's make economic development happen. I think it could be very useful. Tim stated I brought it up to have you all think about it. My thought is I would like to see a percentage given to it and make it a council action that is the way we are going to do it. Have a guarantee of a percentage that we are going to use on stuff like that. If it's of interest of everybody, we need to investigate it and decide what that percentage would be. Paula stated that would be a good thing for the Edit Committee to come up with. Larry stated it would be good to have plan in place for when opportunity knocks. Tim stated one thing too that's been discussed, we don't forget want to forget existing businesses. Mel agreed. She stated you might have two of three businesses that want to expand. That's already successful. But I think the facade grants, almost every community is doing that. The council agreed for Tim and Mel to be looking into.

VERIZON AGREEMENT

Cindy Boll stated I did have chance to plow through most of it today. A couple of thoughts, this was obviously prepared by Verizon. It is very pro Verizon in almost every paragraph that you look at. I will by Wednesday have a memo to you with my more specific thoughts on this. I cannot say sign this at this time. Having said that. I don't know how flexible Verizon is with making adjustments to their contracts. I would suggest that I do this memo to you guys and you give me any comments back. At some point then if one of you and me can maybe set up conference call with somebody at Verizon and really kind of talk through some of these points and get a feel for how much they are willing to modify the terms.

Paula stated Monday night we have a Plan Commission Meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Plan. Randy Sims stated along those lines, I was talking to Tim this morning about our thorough fare ordinance. The town of Hope doesn't really have any thorough fares to speak of except for SR 9. Everything else is pretty much local. Tim asked which board would need to make that recommendation for a new ordinance on that. Cindy answered I think being part of the town code, the council would do it. It would be nice to have a request from the board of Zoning Appeals or the Plan Commission. I'll take a look at that and let you guys know. Discussion. Tim suggested that all the setbacks be looked at. Randy stated if you look at the Comprehensive Plan, you plan on building on the west side of SR 9. Dollar General up to Hucks, you don't want everything sitting on the road. Tim asked state won't let them do it, right. Randy answered if that was annexed into the town, the town would dictate the setback. If we annex it, it will go by ordinance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Diane Jekel stated you guys had talked about Farmer's Markets. We're talking to Becky Church who has agreed to mentor our project. She has given me good information. She is the person who does the Farmer's Market in Columbus. Larry stated the USDA supports local heavily. Mel stated there's a new commission that's been appointed, my husbands on it, and they're going to come up with a brand for Indiana. Food products will have our Indiana brand on it.

Bruce Neal asked is O'Mara done paving on Main Street. I've been asked a couple of times why didn't they go to the curve. Randy Sims stated they ran out of money is what I was told. It wasn't in the budget. They underestimated the amount of asphalt it took to finish the project.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Attest
