

JULY 6, 2020

The Common Council of the City of La Porte met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Monday July 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge

Councilwoman West led the Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Feikes, Galloway, Cutler, Franke, Vincent, Brown and West

Absent: None

Minutes

As each Council Member received an advance copy of the minutes from the previous meeting, Mayor Dermody asked for a motion to approve. Councilwoman Feikes moved to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler. The Mayor asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes. As there were none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Petitions and Comments of Citizens

Alexandria Masepohl, 107 Grandview Avenue, addressed the Council regarding training, youth resource and support in La Porte as it relates to the LGBTQ community.

Councilman Galloway asked Ms. Masepohl, "LGB, like you're talking gay people, stuff like that, right? Do you know that's against the Bible? Anybody ever read the Bible?"

Ms. Masepohl responded, "I actually have, yes."

Karly (did not wish to share her last name or address) addressed the Council regarding the City's website being outdated, no body cams for Police Department and service call reports not listed on City's website for 2018 and 2019. When she spoke to the Police Department about the service call reports, she was treated poorly. She recommended that La Porte leadership increase transparency and professionalism to the public.

Councilman Galloway stated, "I was in Vietnam. I don't care if they were purple. We fought for each other; we took care of each other. Black Lives Matter? How about the Hispanics, the Asians, the White people? We're all here. I still don't understand, of course I am seventy years old, but let's wake up and take care of everyone in our community... our whole country. I don't understand Black Lives Matter, I probably never will, but it is for all of us, OK?"

City Attorney, Nick Otis advised that if she filled out a Public Records request, he would be happy to get those reports to her.

Christopher Throgmorton, 1607 J Street, stated that he feels Mr. Galloway's comments were best kept to himself. Mr. Throgmorton stated that he filed for a dismissal on his lawsuits against the City. He wants kayaks, bike paths and will be dedicating his YouTube channel to positive things happening in La Porte.

Recognition of Employees ' Service to the City of La Porte

Mayor Dermody wishes to thank and congratulate Officer Bill Bunton who is retiring after 22 years of service to the La Porte City Police Department. Mayor Dermody also thanked and congratulated Todd Taylor, Director of Water, on his retirement after 41 years of service to the City of La Porte. Mr. Taylor addressed the Council and the Mayor, thanking them and previous administrations for their support over the years.

Local Trax Project Presentation

City Engineer, Nick Minich presented an update to the Council on the proposed Local Trax project through INDOT. The purpose of this project is to provide better north-south connectivity through the City of La Porte, while providing a safer railroad crossing. City of La Porte was one of twelve projects awarded across the State of Indiana. The total grant award for the project is \$6,238,880 and is for grade separation (overpass) for the Tipton crossing of the Norfolk-Southern Rail beginning at State Street and ending at Furnace Street, with sufficient bridge span to allow for Washington Street and a westbound connection to Linwood Avenue. The City's financial contribution being 20% of right-of-way acquisition and construction. Train traffic along the Norfolk-Southern line is high; often trains will stop, and multiple crossings are blocked, leaving US 35/SR 39 as the only crossing location in La Porte. Over the last 33 years, there have been 11 crashes at the Tipton Street Crossing involving a train, resulting in 5 fatalities. Another benefit this project will provide is better public safety response times for Emergency Services.

Larry Pinkerton stated he was in favor of the overpass, however, still opposes the closing of Detroit Street. He advised he has talked to the businesses on Detroit Street and they are not in favor of closing the street.

Mr. Minich answered questions from the Council and Mr. Pinkerton.

Mayor Dermody reported he and Mr. Minich will meet with those affected by this when the time comes and noted that without this grant, the City could never afford this project.

Introduction of a Resolution Approving Use of Enterprise Zone Investment Deduction Credits within a Tax Increment Financing District

Councilwoman Cutler moved to Introduce a Resolution; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilwoman Cutler read a Resolution Approving Use of Enterprise Zone Investment Deduction Credits within a Tax Increment Financing District in its entirety.

Bert Cook, Executive Director of LEAP, explained this is using UEA credits versus a tax abatement and will capture 35% of the property taxes for UEA to disburse within the Enterprise Zone. This is for Dhyani Realty, LLC.

Motion/Vote- Adopt Resolution R-8 -2020

Councilwoman Feikes moved to adopt the Resolution as presented; motion seconded by Councilman Franke and unanimously carried.

**RESOLUTION R-8-2020
RESOLUTION APPROVING USE OF ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT
DEDUCTION CREDITS WITHIN A TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT**

Introduction of a Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Real Estate Pursuant to IND. CODE 36-1-11-3

Councilwoman West moved to Introduce a Resolution; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried. Councilwoman West read a Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Real Estate Pursuant to IND. CODE 36-1-11-3 in its entirety.

City Attorney, Nick Otis stated that by State Statute, the City is required to obtain two appraisals and the offer must be at least the average of the two. The offer was at the highest appraisal received, \$375,000. It was noted the demolition of the current fire station will be taken from the sale proceeds.

Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer, advised the funds will be deposited in the General Fund and at a later date, we will be requesting Council approval to move the money to the Rainy Day Fund.

Motion/Vote- Adopt Resolution R-9 -2020

Councilwoman Cutler moved to adopt the Resolution as presented; motion seconded by Councilman Franke and unanimously carried.

**RESOLUTION R- 9-2020
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF REAL ESTATE PURSUANT TO
IND. CODE 36-1-11-3**

Introduction of a Resolution Authorizing the Investment of Public Funds Pursuant to Ind. Code 5-13-9-5

Councilman Galloway moved to Introduce a Resolution; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilman Galloway read a Resolution Authorizing the Investment of Public Funds Pursuant to IND. CODE 5-13-9-5 in its entirety.

The Clerk-Treasurer advised this resolution is passed each year, per State Statute.

Motion/Vote- Adopt Resolution R-10 -2020

Councilwoman Feikes moved to adopt the Resolution as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and carried by a majority vote with Councilwoman Brown abstaining.

**RESOLUTION R- 10-2020
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE INVESTMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS
PURSUANT TO IND. CODE 5-13-9-5**

Other Business

Mayor Dermody announced there is free COVID testing at the Civic Auditorium Monday - Friday 8 AM - 8 PM which is paid for by the State of Indiana. The numbers of positive COVID cases are going up in Porter, Starke and La Porte Counties and the City is supporting the Governor in urging the public to wear masks.

The Clerk-Treasurer stated that the Utility Billing Office is continuing to provide options for residents to pay their water bills and we will be updating the public on more exciting changes as they become available.

Councilwoman Cutler announced the UEA is offering a Neighborhood Grant Program which is a 90/10 grant, 90% paid by the UEA, 10% paid by homeowner, not to exceed \$10,000 for items such as painting, tree removal, etc.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Councilman Galloway moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and unanimously carried.

Approved: _____
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: July 20, 2020