

The Common Council of the City of LaPorte

January 04, 2010

Convene

The Common Council of the City of LaPorte met in regular session in the Council Chambers on January 4, 2010 at City Hall Attendance: Councilman Logwood, Present: Councilwoman Renner, Present: Councilwoman Hammons, Present: Councilman Heichel, Present: Councilman Schmitt, Present: Councilman Luscomb, Present: Councilman Pressler, Present.

Pledge

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Renner.

Minutes

As each Council member received an advance copy of the minutes from the previous meeting, Mayor Chrobak stated they would dispense with the reading of same and asked if there were any corrections or additions.

Approval of Minutes

Councilman Pressler moved to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Councilman Logwood and unanimously carried.

Petitions & Comments

None

Standing Committee Reports

Airport Authority: Councilman Luscomb reported the Airport Authority will meet next Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 5:15 p.m. at the Airport.

BID Board: Councilwoman Hammons reported the BID Board meeting for tonight was cancelled.

Fire Department: Councilman Heichel reported the Fire Merit Commission will meet on Wednesday, January 6, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. at the 18th Street Fire Station.

Park & Recreation: Councilman Pressler stated the Park Board will meet on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at the Park Office.

School Board Liaison: Councilman Pressler reported the School Board will meet tomorrow evening, January 5, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the Educational Services Building.

Traffic Commission: Councilman Schmitt reported the Traffic Commission will meet tomorrow evening, January 5, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Chrobak stated if the Council members currently designated as the chair for the various committees no longer wish to be the person who gives the standing reports, to please let her know and she will assign someone else.

Election of President Pro-Tem

Mayor Chrobak stated the first meeting of every year, the Council needs to elect a President Pro-Tem to run the meeting in her absence. She reported in 2009 the President Pro-Tem was Councilman Schmitt and in 2008 it was Councilwoman Renner.

Councilman Luscomb moved to nominate Councilman Pressler; motion seconded by Councilwoman Renner.

Councilman Heichel moved to nominate Councilwoman Hammons; motion seconded by Councilman Logwood.

Councilman Luscomb moved to close the nominations; motion seconded by Councilman Logwood and unanimously carried.

Mayor Chrobak instructed the Council to indicate which Council person they would like to serve as President Pro-Tem when their name is called.

The following roll call was taken:

Pressler: Renner, Luscomb, Schmitt and Hammons
Hammons: Heichel, Pressler and Logwood

Councilman Pressler was elected to serve as President Pro-Tem for the year 2010.

Introduction of a Resolution for an Additional Appropriation for the CDBG Fund

Councilman Luscomb moved to introduce a Resolution; motion seconded by Councilman Heichel and unanimously carried. Councilman Luscomb read a Resolution for an Additional Appropriation for the CDBG Fund in its entirety.

Public Hearing - Additional Appropriation CDBG Fund

As this Resolution requires a public hearing, the Mayor declared the public hearing open and asked if there was anyone present who wished to address the Council regarding this matter.

Teresa Ludlow, Clerk-Treasurer, presented proof of publication for the public hearing.

Mary Ann Richards, Program Director for the Community Development Block Grant, explained to the Council the CDBG Program operates on a Federal fiscal year from October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. As a result, the funds remaining in the accounts as of December 31, 2009 need to be carried over to 2010 so as to reflect an accurate budget approved by HUD. Ms. Richards reported the bulk of the funds to be appropriated include stimulus funds. She noted all expenditures for the CDBG are from grant funds allocated and approved by HUD.

The Mayor asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Council. As no one came forward she declared the public hearing closed.

Motion/Vote - Adopt Resolution R-1-2010

Councilman Luscomb made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented; Councilman Logwood seconded the motion. The motion passed by vote: Councilman Logwood (Yes), Councilwoman Renner (Yes), Councilwoman Hammons (Yes), Councilman Heichel (Yes), Councilman Schmitt (Yes), Councilman Luscomb (Yes), Councilman Pressler (Yes).

RESOLUTION R-1-2010 RESOLUTION FOR AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE CDBG FUND

Introduction of an Ordinance Amending 2010 Salary Ordinance

Councilman Logwood moved to introduce an Ordinance; motion seconded by Councilman Heichel and unanimously carried. Councilman Logwood read an Ordinance Amending 2010 Salary Ordinance in its entirety.

Mayor Chroback informed the Council this is not new money and if approved, will be paid from the Police Department's current budget. She stated she understands this would involve a total of eight individuals.

Councilman Luscomb asked if Tom Heath, Assistant Police Chief, would come forward to answer questions. Councilman Luscomb inquired how the \$500.00 shift differential pay is determined and how officers are assigned to the Detective Bureau. Assistant Chief Heath explained officers sign up to be placed on shifts, whether it is first, second or third shift. He stated the shift differential pay is given to those officers who work the second or third shift. He reported normally the Chief assigns an officer to the Detective Bureau based on volunteer, but of late the department is running out of volunteers. The Assistant Chief noted those officers on the Detective Bureau rotate to be on call and earn comp time.

Councilman Luscomb reported in talking with the Fire Chief he is have trouble finding funds within the current budget because what is on paper in reality is not available. He stated the City is requiring every expenditure to be pre-approved. Councilman Luscomb stated right now there are surpluses in all the line items that departments haven't spent because the City is in such a tight situation financially. He stated, at this time, he believes this is a bad precedent no matter how small the raise given the City's financial situation. He stated the City has 200 employees and he does not believe the perception would be a reality if this is passed and certain people are given a raise and the rest are not. If the City is at bare bones right now, how can you say the money is available in the budget when all departments have trimmed their budgets as much as they can. Councilman Luscomb stated he cannot see how the Council would be doing their job by passing this Ordinance as it seems impractical to him at this time. He stated he has no doubt the detectives are deserving of the additional pay and if the time comes when the City can give every employee a raise he would be in favor of adding the shift differential for detectives, however, at this time he cannot support this Ordinance.

Councilman Logwood asked the Assistant Chief to confirm that the Council is not appropriating additional funds by passing this Ordinance. He stated it will allow the Police Department to find the funds to transfer from appropriation to another. The Assistant Chief stated that was correct.

Councilman Pressler stated currently patrol officers receive the same number of holidays as the Fire Department which is seven. He stated when an officer moves to the Detective Bureau they realize the same holidays as the rest of the City employees which is an additional perk. Assistant Chief Heath stated that was correct. Councilman Pressler reported he has spoken to several patrol officers, some were in the Detective Bureau previously, and when asked if they were currently a detective, would they be in support

of this Ordinance. He reported the lion's share of the guys he spoke with stated they would have a hard time swallowing it right now for the simple fact of the financial situation the City is in. Councilman Pressler stated he is sure if he asked the detectives they would be in support as he would be if he was in their position. He stated under different circumstances he would not have an issue with the increase.

Councilman Luscomb stated if this is passed, he is concerned with the perception that this may give to other departments that is they can find money within their budget that they also can give raises. Councilman Luscomb stated he certainly does not have anything against the Police Department, but given the City's current financial situation and 2010 being the worst yet, he does not feel the Council can afford to do this at this time. He stated he has no doubt the detectives deserve the additional money but until the City can afford to do it, he cannot in all good conscious support the Ordinance.

Second and final reading will take place at the next regular Council meeting.

Other Business

Don Baugher, City Attorney, requested the Council set an executive session to discuss litigation, preferably within the next few days.

Motion/Vote - Executive Session

Councilman Logwood moved to set an Executive Session for Thursday, January 7, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Office to discuss litigation; motion seconded by Councilman Schmitt and unanimously carried.

Boston Street Project

Mayor Chrobak noted she provided the Council with a copy of a press release regarding the closing of streets for the Boston Street Project. She reported the project was to begin today but due to the weather has been pushed back to tomorrow, weather permitting.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Councilman Heichel moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilman Pressler and unanimously carried.

Signatures

APPROVED: _____
Kathleen A. Chrobak, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Teresa L. Ludlow, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: January 25, 2010