

January 3, 2024

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at 9:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor Dermody, Jessica Romine

Absent: Mark Kosior

Jessica Spoljaric led the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Each member received an advance copy of the minutes. Mayor Dermody asked if there were any additions or corrections.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Minutes

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Public Comment

None

Claims Approval

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Payroll from December 22, 2023 in the amount of \$480,090.71.

Motion/Vote – Approval of December 22, 2023 Payroll

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the December 22, 2023 Payroll as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented 4th Quarter Quarterly Payroll in the amount of \$1,926.88.

Motion/Vote – Approval of 4th Quarter Quarterly Payroll

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve 4th Quarter Quarterly Payroll as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of \$1,884,954.10. This does include a few semi-annual bond payments.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Civil City Claims

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the Civil City Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Water Claims in the amount of \$143,532.79.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Water Claims

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Water Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Sewage Claims in the amount of \$280,030.99.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Sewage Claims

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the Sewage Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Conflict of Interest Form(s)

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Conflict of Interest Form(s) from Laura Konieczny and Drew Buchanan. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated more will be presented at the next meeting. The conflict-of-interest forms are presented to and approved by the Board of Works, recorded with the county and then uploaded to the State of Indiana's Gateway website.

Request to Pay: La Porte Invitational

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun requested permission to pay the expenses for the officials and half-time entertainment at the La Porte Invitational games. These items will be presented on the January 17, 2024 docket but do need to be paid before then.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request to Pay: La Porte Invitational

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request to Pay: La Porte Invitational as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Conflict-of-Interest Form(s)

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Conflict of Interest Form(s) as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Fire CBA 2023

City Attorney Nick Otis presented Fire CBA 2023. Attorney Otis stated the Board of Works approved a similar agreement with the Police in December. This Collective Bargaining Agreement is between the City of La Porte and the Professional Firefighters Association and covers the years 2024, 2025, and 2026. The CBA was negotiated between Mayor Dermody, the Union, and Clerk-Treasurer Parthun. Attorney Otis highlighted a few changes. The City of La Porte Fire Department will receive a \$14,500 raise over the course of the agreement as follows: 2024 the department will receive \$7,250 per officer, 2025 the department will receive \$3,625 per officer, and 2026 the department will receive \$3,625 per officer. Mayor Dermody expressed his appreciation for the respectful negotiations with both the police and fire. They understood the future and budgets and worked diligently with everyone to come to an agreement that works both for the city and both departments.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Fire CBA 2023

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Fire CBA as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Mayor Dermody recognized Assistant Chief Degnegaard and those that worked to get the federal funds to pay for the utility contract. Attorney Otis stated this does need to be properly bid pursuant to the stipulations of the grant and state law. Attorney Otis stated it appears as if there is only one vendor that can fulfill what is needed, however, the bid process is still necessary. The Police Department and Attorney Otis will work with Clerk-Treasurer Parthun to get the bid advertised and start the process with the anticipation of being able to bring this to the next meeting as an agenda item.

Attorney Otis informed the Board of Works that the Ethics Policy: Ordinance No. 16-2004 was reviewed at last night's council meeting. Attorney Otis stated the Ethics Policy is something that is required to be reviewed on a yearly basis and he has reviewed it and is not recommending any changes at this time as it does mirror the requirements of the state law. Mayor Dermody stated he believes that everyone does an excellent job following their oath and commitment to continue to be ethical and disclose any conflicts of interest in the proper manner.

Department Head Reports:

City Planner: City Planner Craig Phillips reported work is ongoing with several grant opportunities for housing and infrastructure within the city, as well as additional work with specific housing related items. In addition, Mr. Phillips reported they are getting ready to do the comprehensive and transportation plan for the city.

Water: Water Superintendent Tim Werner reminded that public as we are entering colder weather, residents should disconnect their hoses, and ensure there is not a cold breeze or cold air coming through in basements where water lines are located. Mr. Werner noted there is staff on site 24/7, if an issue does arise call 219-326-9540. In addition, Mr. Werner recognized the maintenance crew that was called in on Christmas Eve for a main break for a job well done and thanked them for coming in. Mr. Werner reported they have begun their well maintenance and cleaning program. Mayor Dermody thanked the crew for working until early hours of the morning and stated this is why we continue to work on raising wages across the board to ensure that the city is staffed with well educated and experienced individuals that will retire here. Mr. Werner also recognized Matt McCoy for passing his WT3 test, which has a 15% pass rate in the state of Indiana, and Nate Martin for passing his DSL test.

Wastewater: Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson reported City Council has approved funding for the new vac truck and thanked Clerk-Treasurer Parthun for shopping around and getting a good rate on the loan. The vac truck should be delivered mid-January. In addition, Mr. Jackson reported 96% of the power for the treatment plant last year came from solar power.

Streets/Code: Director of Streets and Code Jeff Batchelor reported the street department is patching potholes and taking down the holiday decorations around town. Mr. Batchelor reported code enforcement has condemned three houses this week. In addition, Mr. Batchelor stated they have had two snowplows go down in the last week and he will be working with Clerk-Treasurer Parthun to get some new used equipment.

Park: Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber reported the La Porte Invitational will be Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. ESPN will be covering games on Thursday and Friday and Saturday's games can be streamed on League Ready. Mr. Schreiber encouraged everyone to get ticket now if you would like to attend as tickets are selling quickly. Tickets can be purchased at laportecivicauditorium.com. In addition, Mr. Schreiber reminded everyone that Winterfest is coming up on January 26, 27, 28. This is an annual event. Mr. Schreiber recognized Pam Carroll on her retirement after 41 years with the City of La Porte. Mr. Schreiber introduced Sam Back, the new Recreation Director, and a recent graduate of Valparaiso University. Mr. Back spoke briefly about himself.

Human Resources: Human Resources Director Andrea Smith reported the new policy manual is finished and will be going to Attorney Nick Otis within the next few weeks and will be reviewed with Mayor Dermody and Clerk-Treasurer Parthun. In addition, Ms. Smith stated they have received a completed copy of the salary study and will begin going over that internally.

New Business:

Request to Re-advertise and Bid: Stone Lake Trail Phase 2 & 3

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Request to Re-Advertise and Bid: Stone Lake Trail Phase 2 & 3. Mr. Minich stated this was attempted to be bid at the end of last summer but then it was decided to work it in with the wellfield project and bids were never actually taken. Mr. Minich stated he wanted to ask permission to rebid.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request to Re-advertise and Bid: Stone Lake Trail Phase 2 & 3

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request to Re-advertise and Bid: Stone Lake Trail Phase 2 & 3 as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Request to Advertise/Bid: Slicer Pathway

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Request to Advertise/Bid: Slicer Pathway. Mr. Minich stated within the next two to three weeks they will be ready to advertise and bid the Slicer Pathway. This is a Healthcare Foundation Grant and is paired with other funds for sidewalks and drainage. This pathway is helping to provide better access between the high school and Kesling campus.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request to Advertise/Bid: Slicer Pathway

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request to Advertise/Bid: Slicer Pathway as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Pay Request #6 for Contract 2A Letters & Numbers

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Pay Request #6 for Contract 2A Letters & Numbers in the amount of \$320,043.79. This brings the project to 61%.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Pay Request #6 for Contract 2A Letters & Numbers

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Pay Request #6 for Contract 2A Letters & Numbers as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Pay Request #6 for Contract 2B Letters & Numbers

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Pay Request #6 for Contract 2B Letters & Numbers in the amount of \$470,644.35. Mr. Jackson stated this is for the road work portion and brings the project to 44%.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Pay Request #6 for Contract 2B Letters & Numbers

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Pay Request # for Contract 2B Letters & Numbers as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Phosphorus Paving Contract Pay Request #1

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Phosphorus Paving Contract Pay Request #1 in the amount of \$53,472.12. and brings the project to 71%. Mr. Jackson stated they were not able to get the surface down but were able to grind down and get the base asphalt which will get them through the winter.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Phosphorus Paving Contract Pay Request #1

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Phosphorus Paving Contract Pay Request #1 as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

NIES General Service Agreement

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented NIES General Service Agreement. Mr. Jackson stated this is the same type of contract they have made in previous years. The contract is in the amount of \$2500 per month. Ms. Romine stated this item will have to wait until Mr. Kosior returns due to her conflict of interest.

Request Permission to Sell K9 Kennel for Dodge Durango

Assistant Chief Degnegaard presented Request Permission to Sell K9 Kennel for Dodge Durango. Because the Durango's were traded in, the department had to get new inserts and these ones are no longer needed. Mayor Dermody questioned where these would be sold to. Assistant Chief Degnegaard stated they would likely be sold to other law enforcement agencies.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request Permission to Sell K9 Kennel for Dodge Durango

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request Permission to Sell K9 Kennel for Dodge Durango as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Contract for Legal Services: Merit Commission

Assistant Chief Degnegaard presented Contract for Legal Services: Merit Commission. The Merit Commission Attorney is requesting a \$200 retainer per month for their meetings.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Contract for Legal Services: Merit Commission

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Contract for Legal Services: Merit Commission as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Unfinished Business

Other Business:

Next regularly scheduled meeting: Wednesday January 17, 2024 at 9 A.M.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Ms. Romine made a motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Approve: _____
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: January 17, 2024