

March 18, 2024

The Common Council of the City of La Porte met in regular session Monday, March 18, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. in Council Chambers.

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilman Buchanan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Feikes, Galloway, Buchanan, Konieczny, Franke, Huffman, West

Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Dermody stated each member received an advance copy of the minutes from the previous meeting and asked if there were any corrections or additions. Councilwoman Feikes moved to approve the minutes as presented, motion was seconded by Councilwoman West and unanimously carried.

Petitions and Comments of Citizens

Emily Robben, 402 Truesdell Avenue, asked to be respected and for her questions and comments to be recognized and answered. Ms. Robben stated she feels she is being ignored and demands transparency from the City. Ms. Robben stated she sent a detailed email to Council, Mayor Dermody, Clerk-Treasurer Parthun and City Attorney Otis requesting a public apology for the “emotional outburst” by Mayor Dermody at the previous meeting. Ms. Robben discussed her right to film in public areas at City Hall, asked for clarification when she cites code and noted she would never personally attack a City Employee or their family. Ms. Robben stated her email was ignored.

Standing Committee Reports

Redevelopment Commission:

Councilman Franke reported the Redevelopment Commission will meet on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 5:15 P.M. in Council Chambers.

Sustainability Commission:

Councilwoman Huffman reported the Sustainability Commission had a working session on Thursday, March 14, 2024, noting the next meeting will be Monday, March 25, 2024, at 4:00 P.M. in Council Chambers.

Park Board:

Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board will meet on Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

Traffic Commission:

Councilwoman Feikes reported the Traffic Commission will be meeting, April 2, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at the Police Department.

Mayor's Veterans Committee:

Councilman Galloway reported the Mayors Veterans Committee met on Monday March 11, 2024. Councilman Galloway reported June 8, 2024, will be the Mayor's Veterans Brick Dedication at 2:00 P.M. and listed the new officers for 2024.

Fire Merit Commission:

Councilwoman West reported the Fire Merit Commission will be having a separate meeting to discuss rules and procedure updates on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 5:00 P.M. Councilwoman West reported the Fire Merit Commission will meet on Wednesday April 3, 2024, at Fire Station #1 on 18th Street.

Urban Enterprise Association:

Councilwoman West reported the next Urban Enterprise Association meeting will be held Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 4:00 P.M.

Business Improvement District:

Councilwoman West reported the next Business Improvement District meeting will be held Wednesday, April 8, 2024, at 5:00 P.M. in City Council Chambers.

Historic Preservation Commission:

Councilman Buchanan reported the Historic Preservation Commission will meet on March 19, 2024, at 5:30 P.M. in City Council Chambers.

Airport Authority:

Councilwoman Konieczny reported The Airport is currently accepting applications for a summer internship program for college students in an aviation related field. Councilwoman Konieczny reported all candidates are welcome to apply, however due to the overwhelming interest and qualified talent pool, they are looking for students who have completed at least two years of aviation related studies. Councilwoman Konieczny reported this internship runs from May 21 – August 5, 2024, and will be paid for two to three days per week of work. Councilwoman Konieczny stated interns can expect to learn real-world skills for Airport Management by shadowing the managers of the Airport and complete a self-directed project, assist in event planning, and learn some of the day-to-day skills needed to become an airport manager. Councilwoman Konieczny stated for more information

or to apply, contact rachel@laportearport.com or visit laportearport.com. Councilwoman Konieczny noted only one intern will be selected for the summer of 2024 and the deadline to apply is April 5, 2024. Councilwoman Konieczny noted registration for Aviation Camp will be open on March 26, 2024 noting spots fill up quickly and keep an eye on the airport's website for additional information. Councilwoman Konieczny reported Airport Authority will meet Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. at the Airport.

Public Hearing and Introduction of a Resolution for an Additional Appropriation for Community Block Grant Fund; Fund No. 2226

Councilman Galloway moved to read a Resolution in its entirety; motion was seconded by Councilman Franke and unanimously carried. Councilman Galloway read a Resolution for an Additional Appropriation for Community Block Grant Fund; Fund No. 2226 in its entirety.

Public Hearing: Mayor Dermody opened the Public Hearing at 6:11 P.M. City Attorney Nick Otis stated the affidavit of Publication was published in the Herald Dispatch on March 6, 2024. Mary Ann Richards, Community Development Block Grant Program Manager noted there were some warranty expenses from PY 2023 that needed to be paid and there is no Homeowner Repair Program in 2024, so she needed to appropriate some money for warranty work to be paid this year. There being no further comment Mayor Dermody closed the public hearing at 6:12 P.M.

Motion/Vote: R-6-2024

Councilman Franke made a motion to approve a Resolution for an Additional Appropriation for Community Block Grant Fund; Fund No. 2226 as presented; motion was seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

R-6-2024

A RESOLUTION FOR AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FOR COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANT FUND; FUND NO. 2226

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

Councilman Franke moved to read a Resolution in its entirety; motion was seconded by Councilwoman Konieczny and unanimously carried. Councilman Franke read a Resolution Approving Use of Enterprise Zone Investment Deduction Credits Within a Tax Increment Financing District in its entirety.

Mayor Dermody thanked New York Blower for being a true community partner, not just as a cornerstone employer, but also preparing our children for the future workforce with their welding program. Mayor Dermody invited Bert Cook, Executive Director of La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership to address Council. Mr. Cook provided a recap of the La Porte Urban Enterprise Association's series of incentives; the main credit is called the investment deduction which is a one hundred percent savings on real property tax liability for a period of ten years. Mr. Cook noted that at the end of each year, the Urban Enterprise Association bills the company for thirty five percent of whatever that savings is, so it is a net savings of sixty five percent. The thirty five percent fee that they pay are dollars that go directly back into the community through the different grant programs offered by the UEA, most notable is probably the façade improvement grants. Mr. Cook stated that in scenarios where a company is looking to claim the investment deduction on real property and the location is within an allocation area, or TIF district, Council is engaged for approval to claim the credit. Mr. Cook notes the reason is the ability to be more aggressive in how Tax Increment Financing used. City of La Porte has always taken an incredibly conservative approach to Tax Increment Financing meaning we are only taking on debt that we can service with the increment coming in as of today. Mr. Cook notes that if we were a more aggressive community taking on debt above that, we may need project such as this to service that debt. Mr. Cook stressed that aggressive approach is not the scenario in front of Council today. Mr. Cook stated Personal Property taxes are not collected within TIF districts. Mr. Cook reported New York Blower intends to build a 14,000 sq. ft. professional building along their location at Factory Street which is a \$5 million dollar investment and will bring all their professional staff under one roof. Mr. Cook stated the design is terrific and they will create a green space that will speak to the heritage that they have in the City of La Porte. Mr. Cook asks for Council's support of the incentive on this project.

Scott Hamilton from New York Blower spoke about the details of the project, including the greenspace on Factory Street and Boston Street and the long history of New York Blower. Mr. Hamilton also shared details of the welding program in partnership with La Porte High School.

Motion/Vote: R-7-2024

Councilwoman Konieczny made a motion to approve a Resolution Approving Use of Enterprise Zone Investment Deduction Credits Within a Tax Increment Financing District as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

R-7-2024

A RESOLUTION APPROVING USE OF ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT DEDUCTION CREDITS WITHIN A TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT

Introduction of a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets

Councilwoman Huffman moved to read a Resolution in its entirety; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried. Councilwoman Huffman read a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets in its entirety.

Chief Buell explained the transfer was necessary because the insurance funds were received in 2023, however the expense wasn't invoiced until 2024 and there was not an encumbrance done for the expense, so this is simply a reallocation of funds into repairs and maintenance.

Motion/Vote: R-8-2024

Councilwoman Konieczny made a motion to approve a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets as presented; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried.

R-8-2024

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER FUNDS WITHIN THE 2024 BUDGETS

Other Business

None

Adjourn

Councilman Galloway moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

Approved: _____
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: April 1, 2024