Town of Winona Lake

Council Meeting

January 24, 2024

The Town Council of Winona Lake, Indiana met in a regular session on January 24, 2024, in the Town Hall at 6:00 p.m., some attending in person, others by Zoom (video conference).

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rick Swaim, Jim Lancaster, Austin Reynolds, Austin Reynolds, Ashley McGinnis, and Barry Andrews

**ABSENT:** NONE

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Town Manager Craig Allebach, Clerk-Treasurer Heather James, Park Director Holly Hummitch, Fire Chief Kevin Gelbaugh, Town Marshall Joe Hawn, Town Attorney Adam Turner, and Town Engineer Aaron Carl.

**OTHERS PRESENT (ZOOM):**

**Opening:** Rick opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Craig said the prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Swearing in of Newly Elected Officials**

Adam swore in the new officials. Austin Reynolds, Ashley McGinnis, and Barry Andrews were sworn in as council members of their respective wards. Adam also swore in Heather James as clerk-treasurer. Adam will notarize the forms and submit them to the county clerk’s office.

**Election of Officers**

Rick opened the nominations by stating he was no longer interested in serving as president. He then nominated Jim as president and Austin for vice president. Barry nominated Ashley for president and Austin as vice president. There were no other nominations. Jim motioned to close the nominations. Ashley seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed. The council voted for officers. Jim received three votes and Ashley received two. Jim will serve as president and Austin as vice president.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from November 21, December 11, and December 19, 2023, were presented for approval. Barry moved to approve all three sets of minutes. Rick seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Approval of Claims**

Claims from the clerk-treasurer were presented for approval. Barry asked for clarification of the Siteworx claims. Hather explained it was a contractual service and the claim was for their monthly service. Barry also questioned the claims for Baker Tilly. Heather explained those claims were their assistance with the bank reconciliation of 2023. Barry moved to accept the claims as presented. Ashley seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Winona Happenings**

Now until February 7, 2024 – The parks and police departments are sponsoring a Valentine’s Day Card Contest.

January 27, 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Pajama Party Sale in the Village at Winona.

**MACOG Presentation on Drive Clean Indiana Grant**

Leah Thill of MACOG and Ryan Lisek of Drive Clean Indiana gave a presentation of electric vehicles and their use for police departments. The presentation included cost comparison and usage of EV and traditional vehicles. Leah stated the grant was 100% funding and is hopeful the award announcements will take place in the summer or fall of 2024. The town is applying for three different EV models. After the presentation, there was discussion, questions, and answers. There was discussion on battery usage, longevity, and reliability during the colder weather. The presentation contained very conservative numbers. Leah will work on getting a closer cost estimate based on Winona Lake’s actual gas and electric costs. Model options and police specific needs were discussed, along with the number and location of charging stations. Ashley asked about reimbursement to the officer when charging the vehicles at home. Ryan answered that could be tracked through Nipsco. Barry asked for clarification on if this was a reimbursable grant. Ryan answered yes and discussed the purchase and reimbursement process. Leah clarified that MACOG does not receive any of the grant monies or have admin fees through Drive Clean Indiana Grant. They assist with the application process.

Austin thanked the presenters and expressed his support of EV and their use for police department. Ryan also mentioned there would be a $7500 tax credit for each vehicle the town could take advantage of. The council approved the grant request at the last meeting with the caveat that this presentation take place.

Kevin shared that every fire station in the county has received an EV plug. These plugs would be used on an EV if they were involved in an accident or fire. They work by shutting down the computer. Craig noted that town is the fiscal agent for the grant that was used to purchase the plugs. Kevin clarified that Telsa has a special plug, but the other models use the same one.

**Engagement Letter for Internal Controls**

Baker Tilley is currently evaluating the Internal Control Policy that Ashley put together. Ashley mentioned that she spoke with Todd from Baker Tilly at the training. He is working on the submitted manual and has already previewed it and stated we are at a very good starting point, and this would save the town some money. Baker Tilly has provided the town with an engagement letter for the evaluation of the policy not to exceed $15,000. Ashley motioned to accept the engagement letter. Barry seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Grant Request Approvals**

Craigrequested approvalto apply for a grant from Kosciusko County Community Foundation to help purchase new a tornado siren. If approved, the siren wouldn’t be put in place until May due to the grant timeline. He is estimating this grant would help pay for approximately two-thirds of the purchase cost. Barry motioned to approve the request. Ashley seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

Craig also requested approval for a commitment letter to send to the county and INDOT from the town. He has been working with the county and INDOT on the widening of the bridge on Packerton Road for a trail. This would be at an 80/20 match. The widening will help prepare for future development and growth. It is estimated that the widening will cost $400,00 for the pedestrian portion only. Ashey questioned if this would come from the MVH Fund. Craig answered yes and could come from either restricted or unrestricted and wheel tax. Rick motioned to approve the signing of a commitment letter. Austin seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed. Rick thanked Craig for his leadership and work and on the greenways.

**Travel Authorization**

Austin attended the Newly Elected Officials training in January and is seeking retro approval to attend. Rick motioned to approve. Barry seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Board Appointments**

Craig presented board appointments for Solid Waste District, Redevelopment Commission, and Art Commission. He mentioned that those attending the Newly Elected Officials Training in January learned that council members can and probably should serve on the Redevelopment Commission that it helps with consistency and communication. He will work on that for future appointments. Jim asked if the commission is a total of five members. Craig confirmed it is five but currently has three members.

**Solid Waste District Redevelopment Commission**

Ashley McGinnis Bruce Shaffner

Dennis Daniels

Alan Alderfer

Barry motioned to approve the appointments to the respective boards. Austin seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

Craig then presented the appointments for the Art Commission as follows:

**Art Commission**

Jan & Michael Lugwig

Terry White

Al Disbro

Retha Hicks

Rick Swaim

Rick noted that Retha Hicks began the commission to get artwork on the greenway. Rick has continued this and is working to get more art on the new greenways. Barry motioned to approve the appointments to the respective boards. Austin seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed. Rick abstained from voting.

**Report from Attorney**

Adam reported he has been working on DORA.

**Report from Town Engineer**

Aaron continues work on drainage, fieldwork, and final paver work for Indiana American Water. He mentioned we got the final paperwork for signatures from Indiana American Water for the reimbursement of $231,000.

**Report from Supervisors**

**Parks Department -** Holly planning for summer programs. Rick asked about the $500,00 the parks received. Holly stated she’s not received it yet, just waiting for a signature from the Federal Government. Kristie Maiers said she’s hopeful that will come in 30-45 days along with a timeline to get things started. The park is in a holding pattern for the project until these things are in place.

**Fire Department -** Kevin several runs to Grace.

Ashley shared that she’s been getting a lot of feedback from neighbors and friends on the rink. She likes hearing this but suggested a more formal way to receive this feedback. She suggested a total of 5 locations for the survey at the rink. Jim mentioned having one at the concessions too. QR survey like the park uses be made available at the rink to gather feedback on the rink and pavilion. Holly is willing to help with putting this together. Kristie mentioned she and her family go to a lot of ice rinks and it is common to have the QR surveys available. The survey could be used to track zip codes of guests. Also, this type of feedback and information could help with possible future grants and funding opportunities. Ashley moved to proceed with the survey. Austin seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed. Motion carried.

Barry thanked the team for the training opportunity last week. He stated it was helpful and educational.

**Floor Topics**

Jerry Nelson stated he hasn’t received his utility books and questioned when the utility coupon books would be available. Heather stated there was an issue with the software the town uses and once the issue is corrected the books would be printed and mailed. They are working to correct this error as soon as possible. Residents can make their payments at town hall without a coupon if they wish and a receipt would be issued. They can also wait until they receive the books. Rates stayed the same and there will be no late fee assessed for January. Craig noted the website has information available about the delay. Rick offered to help with the books if needed.

Dan Spaulding of News Now Warsaw questioned the council on their opinions on the use of EV for the police department. Jim stated the council approved the grant request but there were questions on cost, usage, etc. so tonight’s presentation was requested to help answer those questions. Joe confirmed the grant is for three EV and different vehicle models.

Hearing to futher floor topics, Jim asked for a motion to adjourn. Austin motioned to adjourn. Ashley seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

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Jim Lancaster Heather James

President Town Council Clerk-Treasurer