Town of Winona Lake

Council Minutes

February 20, 2024

The Town Council of Winona Lake, Indiana met in a regular session on February 20, 2024, in the Town Hall at 6:00 p.m., some attending in person, others by Zoom (video conference).

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

**ABSENT:** NONE

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

**OTHERS PRESENT (ZOOM):**

**OPENING**: President Jim Lancaster opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Joe Hawn introduced Boy Scout Troop #715. They led the prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes**

Heather presented the minutes from the January 23, 2024, and February 6, 2024, meetings for approval. Barry motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Rick seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion carried.

**Approval of Claims**

Heather presented the claims for approval.Rick motioned to approve the claims as presented. Austin seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion carried.

**Annual Financial Report Update**

Heather gave a report on the status of the Annual Financial Report. She shared the State Board of Accounts recommended to submit the report by the due date with the information we have and make changes to the report as bank reconciliations for 2023 are completed. Changes to the report can be made up until the next audit.

Heather stated that Northwest Bank is requiring the president and vice president’s signatures on a bank form for the changes she made related to credit cards to be effective. Ashley motioned to approve their signatures on the form, and Austin seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Winona Happenings**

February 24, 2024 – 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. – Wine About the Winter in the Village

March 2024 – Village Madness Passport in the Village

March 7 – Cereal Collection Kickoff

March 7, 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. – Free Community Breakfast at the Community Center. It is a free event for the community. In lieu of donations, cereal boxes are requested. Cereal boxes will be used for a cereal run at Lakeland Schools, then donated to Combined Community Services.

March 17 – Leprechaun Trap Contest

March 25 – 3:00 p.m. Cereal Run at Lakeland

March 29 -30 Egg My House

**Waiver of Utilities Late Charges**

The clerk-treasurer requested approval to waive any utility late charges from October 2023-February 2024 due to software-related issues affecting the billing and coupon mailing. Rick motioned to approve the waiver of these late fees; Ashley seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Ordinance 2024-2-1 Establishing a Fund**

This fund is being established for the DNR-NPS (National Park Service) Capital Grant.

Austin moved to approve establishing this fund, Barry seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Resolution 2024-2-2 Transfer of Appropriations**

Transfer of Appropriations from the Park & Recreation Fund to the various Park & Recreation Fund appropriations are necessary for the completion of the Annual Report. Ashley motioned to approve the transfers; Rick seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion carried.

**Approval for Shade Sail Replacement**

The park department requested approval to replace the shade sails in the park playground area due to wear. The cost for replacement is $15,797.25. Discussion was held on where the money will come from and what steps will be taken to care for the new sails. The cost will be covered using funds from the Cigarette Tax Fund. Holly stated she and Shane have discussed the maintenance of the new shades and moving forward the street department will take the shades down every fall. Ashley motioned to approve this request; Barry seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Approval of Pavilion Concrete Pad & Sidewalk**

The park received a grant from the Grossnickle Foundation to install a second picnic shelter on the west end of the splash pad. The total cost for the shelter is $12,856.00. The grant will cover $10,000 and the remaining balance will be paid from the Cigarette Tax Fund. Barry motioned to approve the request and Rick seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Merrywood Utilities**

In December 2023, a request to waive late utility fees by Merrywood Mobile Home Park was tabled until more information on their account could be obtained. Heather shared information and history of their account. Discussion was held regarding their payment history. Rick motioned to deny their request for a waiver of late fees, Austin seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion to deny their request was passed.

**Travel Authorization**

The clerk-treasurer requested approval to attend the ILMCT Institute and Academy in Plainfield, IN from March 17-21. The town manager requested approval to attend the Purdue Road School March 12-13. Austion moved to approve the requests, Barry seconded. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Report from Town Engineer** – Aaron stated work continues on drainage issues, sidewalks, roads, and construction bids.

**Report from Attorney** - Adam nothing to report.

**Report from Supervisors**

**Park Department** –Holly stated she’s been busy with summing planning and program brochure will be printed March.

**Fire Department** – Carson stated the department has been busy with runs and training. Mike Cox requested approval to apply for a matching grant from the DNR to purchase firefighting gear and PPE. It is a 50/50 matching grant with a maximum of $5000. If approved, the grant would cover $2500, and the town would need to contribute $2500. The grant would be used to provide each firefighter with a second set of gear when needed.

**Police Department** – Joe nothing to report.

**Council Members –** Ashley thanked Holly for her work on ice rink surveys. We have received one so far.Ashley stated we should be receiving an update soon from Todd at Baker Tilly regarding the Internal Control Policy.

**Clerk-Treasurer** – Heather thanked Lisa and Holly for their work on the utility coupon book mailings. She stated the books were mailed two weeks ago and people should be receiving them anytime.

**Floor Topics**

Leo Patino from Lexington Manor questioned if stripping is complete in that area. He stated there were changes to his property due to the construction work. Craig answered the work is finished but may there be some additional finishing work. He said if there were properties that had damage related to the construction residents should contact him. Residents could use their own people to repair damage, or the town could repair. We would look at each individual situation.

Brad Butler questioned the ACH utilities payments. He thought he was double billed for one month. Heather explained there were issued with the ACH billing, but residents were not double billed. She further explained amounts were current, but payments were not withdrawn on the correct date due to software-related issues. She stated he or other residents could bring in paperwork to the office for the staff to review for errors or further explanation.

**Adjournment -** Barry motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ashley seconded. With a favor of 5 ayes and 0 nays the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

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Jim Lancaster Heather James

President Town Council Clerk-Treasurer