The Town Council of Winona Lake, Indiana met in a regular session on December 19, 2023, in the Town Hall at 6:00 p.m. some attended in person, others by Zoom (video conference).

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

**ABSENT**: None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Town Manager Craig Allebach, Clerk-Treasurer Heather James, Street Department Shane Parrett, Parks Director Holly Hummitch, Fire Department Kevin Gelbaugh, and Town Marshall Joe Hawn

**PRESENT ON ZOOM:** Town Attorney Adam Turner

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

**Approval of claims:** Heather presented the December 19, 2023, claims for approval. Austin made the motion to approve as presented. Barry seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Winona Happenings**

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

**KEDCO Update & Agreement**

Alan Tio, CEO of KEDCO, was present and gave an update on KEDCO’s previous year and growth. He requested an increase in the town’s agreement for 2024 for a total amount of $32,500. This is the first increase between the town and KEDCO. Barry asked if the 2024 budget would support an increase. Retha, who has been working with Heather, stated the General Fund ended the year with an approximate balance of $200,000 which would support in increase in the agreement. Austin made the motion to accept the agreement at the new rate. Jim seconded the motion. All in favor, Motion carried.

**Ordinance 2023-11-1 Establishment of a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area**

Last month the first reading was approved. Tonight, the Ordinance is being presented for approval on the second reading. Ashley made the motion to approve the second reading of the Ordinance. Barry seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Resolution 2023-12-7 Transfer of Funds**

Heather presented the Resolution and shared that the transfer is necessary for the additional appropriation request and the cash balance supports the request. If approved, the Resolution would transfer $350,000 from EDIT to TIF for the budget year 2023. Austin made the motion to approve the Resolution. Ashley seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Ordinance 2023-12-1 Additional Appropriation**

Heather explained this additional appropriation is necessary for money that has already been spent. She stated she is not requesting the appropriation to spend more money but to cover expenses that have already been paid. Jim motioned to approve the ordinance. Ashley seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Resolution 2023-12-2 Christmas Bonus**

Heather reported the budget supports an end of year Christmas bonus up to $500 per employee. She also stated bonuses are allowed to be given to employees except for the clerk-treasurer whose salary cannot be amended for the current year. Ashley moved to approve a Christmas bonus of $500 per employee. Barry seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Ordinance 2023-12-5 Salaries of Certain Employees**

Barry questioned if the 2024 budget would support an increase. Based on the ending 2023 balances, Heather stated the town was under budget so the 2024 budget would support an increase. Ashley moved to approve a 3% increase. Austin seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Resolution 2023-12-6 Salaries of Other Employees**

Barry moved to approve a 3% increase for all other employees. Jim seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Police Vehicle Purchase Agreement**

Joe requested approval to purchase a 2023 Tahoe for $42,410.00 in 2024. The purchase was budgeted in the 2024 budget. Joe stated that the vehicle will need to be outfitted for police use and wrapped to identify as a WLDP vehicle. He is also looking into trading in a vehicle. Barry made the motion to approve the request. Ashley seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Grant Request Approval**

Craig and Joe have been working with MACOG to apply for a Drive Clean Indiana Grant. They are requesting approval to apply for the grant that would be used to purchase three electric vehicles and charging stations. If the town received the grant, it would cover the cost of up to $200,000 with no match. Discussion was held on the long-term use and financial impact of electric cars for the police department. Joe clarified that these cars would be replacing existing squad cars. Joe shared comments and information he received from discussions with other communities using electric vehicles for the police department. Jim moved to approve the request to apply for the grant with the caveat that more details on the use of electric cars at police departments and information from the MACOG representative be available before accepting the grant. Barry seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Travel Authorization**

Council members Ashley McGinnis and Barry Andrew, Clerk-Treasurer Heather James, and Town Manager Craig Allebach requested travel authorization to attend the Newly Elected Officials Training in Indianapolis January 16-28, 2024. Jim made the motion to approve the travel authorization. Austin seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Request for Waiver of Wastewater Fees**

Merrywood Trailor Court requested a waiver for late fees accessed on their wastewater charges. Discussion was held regarding the late fees. Heather stated that she would like to further research their account and payment history. Barry moved to table the request. Ashley seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Town Attorney Agreement**

An agreement was presented for 2024 between the town attorney and the town.
Rates will stay the same. Barry moved to accept the agreement. Jim seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. Adam reported just working on finishing DORA.

**Town Engineer Agreement**

An agreement was presented for 2024 between the town engineer and the town. Jim moved to accept the agreement. Barry seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. Aaron reported work on drainage projects and some failing infrastructure projects. Issues continue with Indiana American Water regarding the transfer of the water main. Craig asked about reimbursement to the town. Aaron estimated an additional $80,000 reimbursement for the materials and labor moving from 12 to 16 inch pipe. He’s been working with Adam on Dora.

**Reports from Supervisors**

**Street Department:** Shane said preparing for winter. They will be doing interior maintenance and new this year using brine as a pre-treatment on the streets.

**Parks Department**: Holly said working on year end and Santa letters. She has written over 70 letters which will be mailed.

**Fire Department**: Kevin said fire runs are down. He stated tanker support brackets are worn and need replaced in 2024. No update on new engine. Discussed the need for a new tornado siren. Discussion was held on quotes received and number of sirens needed and possible locations. Craig noted it would be preferable to get a system from Federal due to county and city using that system and wanting to have everything work together. Questions were asked about the possibility of a grant to help with costs. So far have nothing has been found. Discussion was had regarding mass communication options.

**Police Department**: Joe reported JAG grant received. This was for five radios, six radar units, and one speed board.

**Floor Topics:**

Alex Hall from Kosciusko County Community Foundation said there is a fund at the foundation that could help with costs of the siren.

Jerry Nelson had questions reading the rink expenses and revenue. Heather stated she is still working on gathering this information. Jim noted last year a conflict-of-interest statement was signed.

Kami Johnson questioned the rink operations and amount of the service contract. She requested a copy of the contract. Craig will email it to her. She also questioned the area for annexation. Craig answered the town is trying to annex farm areas since those areas are not as difficult as already developed areas. She then shared concerns over a new construction site with no erosion barrier present. Craig said the town was aware and would investigate it.

**Adjournment:** Austin made the motion to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rick Swaim Heather James

President Town Council Clerk-Treasurer