

**CITY COMMON COUNCIL
OF HARTFORD CITY, INDIANA
OCTOBER 4, 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME: Mayor Eckstein called to order a meeting of the Common Council of the City of Hartford City at 6:00pm October 4, 2021.

ROLL CALL: Members of the council present were Dustin George, Ron Dudelston, Tony Scaggs and Michael Wolfe. Also in attendance were Mayor Dan Eckstein, Attorney, Brandon Murphy and Clerk-Treasurer, Dana Whatley. Jimmy Lytle was absent.

PUBLIC HEARING: Mr. Scaggs made a motion to suspend the common council meeting for the public hearing. Mr. George seconded the motion. The vote to suspend was 4-0-1.

A.) OCRA GRANT FOR WATER PROJECT: Mr. Greg Beumer with Kleinpeter Consulting addressed everyone explaining that the City of Hartford City is pursuing an OCRA grant that will be used to upgrade the Water Treatment facility and some water infrastructure.

Mr. Eric Woodmansee with AME Consulting presented an overview of the Master Utility Water & Wastewater Study.

Mr. Beumer stated that he was here to gather input from the community and Council. There was no public comment. He stated that there will be one more public hearing before December 17, 2021. He asked Council to approve a resolution.

Mr. Dudelston made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. George seconded the motion. The vote to close public hearing was 4-0-1.

Mr. Scaggs made a motion to re-open the council meeting. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: It was decided to take off item "G" under new business and to table the reading of Resolution 2021-41 to the November 1, 2021 meeting. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to amend the agenda. Mr. George seconded. The vote to amend was 4-0-1.

Mr. Dudelston made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Mr. George seconded. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 7, 2021: Mr. George made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 7th meeting as submitted. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

OLD BUSINESS:

A.) 2ND READING OF ORDINANCE 2021-12 APPROPRIATIONS & TAX RATES

(2022 BUDGET): Mr. George made a motion to approve ordinance 2021-12. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

B.) 2ND READING OF ORDINANCE 2021-13 NEPOTISM:

Mr. Dudelston made a motion to accept Ordinance 2021-13. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

C.) ANNE OWEN – INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR BUILDING INSPECTOR:

Ms. Owen addressed Council. She stated that she met with the Blackford County Commissioners earlier that morning and they approved the interlocal agreement authorizing a county wide Building Inspector. This allows the Area Planning & Zoning to get an Inspector in place. Attorney Murphy said he had no legal concerns with this agreement. Mr. Scaggs made a motion to approve this Interlocal Agreement. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

Ms. Owen also stated that the Board of Zoning Appeals met regarding the old Southside School Building and the Grant/Blackford Mental Health's request to use it as their community hub. The BZA approved this request.

D.) SEWER TAP FEE DISCUSSION – NEW TAPS AND REPAIRS AND

REPLACEMENTS: The topic of sewer tap fees was addressed as the Sewer Department has replaced a couple of old taps recently. Mr. Travis Williamson explained that the materials, time, fuel were all figured in to what a sewer tap fee should cost. The current fee for a new tap is roughly \$717. Mr. Williamson said we should raise the tap fee to \$1,200 just to break even. There is also question about replacement taps, if we should charge or not. There was quite a bit of discussion and the council took it under advisement. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to table this topic until the November 1st meeting. Mr. George seconded the motion. The vote to table was 4-0-1.

E.) ANIMAL SHELTER CONTRACT:

Mayor Eckstein asked Council to think about what verbiage they would like to have in the new Animal Shelter Contract. He stated that it will be for a one-year term and would **not** auto-renew. After some discussion, the Council gave Attorney Murphy direction to draft a contract that will have a one-year term, it will require quarterly financial updates from the Animal Shelter and the contract will pay out to them quarterly, as well. Mr. Scaggs made a motion to give Attorney Murphy direction to draft a contract. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

NEW BUSINESS:

A.) RIC FISHER WITH BSM GROUP – PROPOSED JOB AT 2001 RENNER

DRIVE: Mr. Fisher addressed Council with a proposed project for Comcast Cablevision to extend fiber to GTT Americas in an underground run. He stated the project will complete within 1 week's duration. He is requesting right-of-way permission. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to approve the right-of-way. Mr. George seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

B.) ANNE OWEN & CINDY GROSS – ART'S COUNCIL OCTOBER TRUNK- OR-

TREAT: Cindy Gross presented paperwork to Council for the annual Trunk-or-Treat. It will be held on October 29, 2021 from 7pm – 8:30pm at Weiler Plaza. They will have a face painter, prizes, spooky music with a DJ, Tyler & Nick's Lounge will be providing hotdogs, chips and apple cider. There was discussion about road closure requests. They will utilize the parking lot north of Weiler Plaza and potentially the parking lot to the east of Amazing Glaze bakery. They have requested that the roads be blocked off on Main Street between High St. & Jefferson St. and also Jefferson St. from Main St. to Franklin St. from 6pm to 9pm. DPW Superintendent, Jeff Thomas said that his department will drop off barricades and trash barrels for this event. Mr. Wolfe made a motion to grant the road closures. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

C.) 1ST READING OF ORDINANCE 2021-16 – SALARY ORDINANCE: There was some confusion about the raises given to the Police Department. Much discussion was had. The Council wanted to confer about this topic more over the next month and address any potential amendments at the November meeting. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance 2021-16. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The vote to approve the 1st reading was 4-0-1.

D.) 1ST READING OF ORDINANCE 2021-14 SEWER RATES: Ms. Jennifer Wilson with Crowe, LLP addressed Council. She gave a brief synopsis of the report that she gave at the September meeting. It has been determined that the Sewer Department needs a 17% rate increase to issue the bonds needed for the CSO Phase III project. This increase will impact the average household about \$8 to \$10 per month.

Mr. Wolfe questioned the \$4.6 million currently in the Sewer Department's operating fund. He asked why some of those funds cannot be used to offset the amount of the sewer rate increase? Ms. Wilson explained that of the \$4.6 million dollars the Sewer Department is required to maintain 2 months of operating expenses, at all times. She explained that the Bond & Interest Account are already being used for part of the bond issue. We will be transferring it over to the Reserve Account. The Reserve Account must be kept at 1 year worth of debt service. \$1.1 million needs to be held in reserve. She explained the Sewage Improvement Fund is for other projects and big expenditures that may come up.

Mayor Eckstein stated that the Wastewater Treatment Plant is in the middle of a Phosphorous Project that is mandated by IDEM. He said that this project is being paid entirely in cash out of the Sewage Improvement Fund with a price tag of roughly \$800,000.

Mr. Williamson also stated that he's looking at a commitment to the Highway 3 north project that will be starting in 2 to 3 years and will look like the project that is currently going on with Highway 3 south. He mentioned several \$500,000 projects coming up in the next few years.

Mr. George asked if 17% was the absolute lowest rate? Ms. Jennifer Wilson stated that is what is being projected right now. That will give the city coverage of 140%. She said that the City must have 125% coverage to sell bonds and since we are 8 months out from issuing bonds it will give us a little margin in case interest rates go up from this year to next or if the project costs come in a little higher than originally projected.

Mr. Dudelston made a motion to approve the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2021-14. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The vote to approve the 1st reading was 4-0-1.

E.) 1ST READING ORDINANCE 2021-15 – ORDINANCE CONDERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SEWAGE WORKS OF THE CITY OF HARTFORD CITY, INDIANA, THE ISSUANCE OF REVENUE BONDS TO PROVIDE THE COST THEREOF, THE COLLECTION, SEGREGATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE REVENUES OF SAID WORKS, THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTERESTS OF THE OWNERS OF SAID REVENUE BONDS, OTJER MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH, INCLUDING THE ISSUANCE OF NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF BONDS, AND REPEALING ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT HEREWITH: Attorney Brandon Murphy explained this is for our bonds for the CSO III project and our Bond Council is present this evening. He introduced Julie Bolling with Kreig DeVault, LLC. Ms. Bolling addressed Council and explained that her firm will be issuing bonds for this project and this is the initial step in the process. She stated that the project will not exceed \$7 million so that bonds can be issued. This ordinance authorizes up to \$7 million in bonds and \$6.5 million in BAN (bond anticipation note). This ordinance sets a maximum interest rate for the bonds at 7%. These are paid for solely out of the sewage works. The ordinance allows for a competitive sale which is what the city did before. 2017 & 2018 is the last time bonds were issued. She explained that the City has 3 outstanding bonds now with one of them thru the SRF that will be paid off in January 2022 and will not be outstanding when the new bond is issued.

Mr. Dudelston asked what the current bond rates are? Ms. Jennifer Wilson with Crowe LLC. Stated that the 2014 bond is 3 to 4.2% and the 2017 is 3 to 4% for the remaining years of life. Mr. Wolfe made a motion to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance 2021-15. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve the 1st reading was 4-0-1.

- F.) D. GEORGE – 15 TO 30 MINUTE PARKING SIGN IN FRONT OF AMAZING GLAZE BAKERY:** Mr. George stated that he’s been approached by a business owner requesting that the parking spaces in front of the bakery be marked as limited time parking to 15 to 30 minutes. Mr. George did make the comment that there are 2 parking lots located within a 15 second walk to the businesses located there. There was much discussion and it was decided to table this topic indefinitely. Mr. George made a motion to table this topic. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. The vote to table this topic was 4-0-1.
- G.) M. WOLFE – POSSIBLE STOP SIGN AT RICHMOND ST. & PENNSYLVANIA ST:** Mr. Wolfe said that he’s been approached by a constituent regarding a dangerous intersection at Richmond St. and Pennsylvania St. This intersection was discussed and the Police Chief weighed in and said that he will have the Police Department monitor that area for the next month and report back to Council. Mr. Wolfe made a motion to table this topic until the November 1st meeting pending a report back from the Police Chief. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to table is 4-0-1.
- H.) M. WOLFE – KIDS SKATING ON WEILER PLAZA PLATFORM:** Mr. Wolfe stated that he’s noticed kids are skateboarding at Weiler Plaza even though there are signs posted not to skateboard, rollerblade, etc. He asked if we have a tool of enforcement, for this problem? There was discussion about cameras and drafting an ordinance. Mr. Wolfe made a motion to take the 1st step and give Attorney Murphy direction to draft an ordinance with a \$25 fine attached. Mr. George seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.
- I.) R. DUDELSTON – VACATE ALLEY:** The City has received two petitions to vacate the same alley. Both parties have signed waivers. Mr. Klink spoke on behalf of his petition. He stated that the alley has not been used for years. He has mowed it for years. He said he owns 60% on each side and the other gentleman owns 30%. Attorney Murphy stated that this will be considered the first reading and the 2nd reading and public hearing will be held at the November 1, 2021 meeting. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to approve the first reading to vacate alley. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The vote to approve the first reading was 4-0-1.

MAYOR’S COMMENTS:

- A.) MOVE FORWARD WITH OCRA GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$700,000 FOR WATER PROJECT:** Mayor Eckstein asked Council to please approve to move forward with the application process with OCRA for a \$700,000 grant for the Water project. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to move forward with the grant application process. Mr. George seconded the motion. The vote to move forward was 4-0-1.
- B.) CHIEF PARROT – AIRPACKS:** The Mayor invited Chief Parrott to explain the Air packs. Chief Parrott explained that the Fire Department is currently using air packs that are from 2002 and they are starting to break. The Fire Department has applied to FEMA for the past 3 years to obtain a grant for these but have been turned down all 3 times. He said that the City’s portion will be \$214,000 and he said that financing is available. He

wanted to bring this up as a discussion topic. He is going to talk with IU Health about paying for 6 of these air packs. There was no action taken. This topic will be put on the November 1st agenda.

CLERK-TREASURER COMMENTS: Clerk-Treasurer Whatley presented Council with a bill for light repair around Old Towne Villas. At the Mayor's recommendation she asked Council for input on this bill. Is it the City's bill or the property owner's bill? Mr. George clarified that the bill is indeed the City's to pay but the work is not completed. He said that he will check on the status of work and will report back to Ms. Whatley as to when the bill should be paid.

COUNCIL COMMENT:

A.) MR. GEORGE - STOP SIGNS AT VAN CLEVE ST. AND MONROE ST. AND NORTH ST. AND MONROE ST: Mr. George brought up a discussion topic to be added to the November 1st agenda. He would like to propose putting 4 way stops at the intersection of Van Cleve St. and Monroe St. and the intersection of North St. and Monroe St.

B.) MR. GEORGE – STOP SIGN REQUEST AT KICKAPOO ST. & “B” ST: Mr. George said he was approached by a constituent about placing a stop sign at this intersection. There is a daycare located there and several children use a bus stop located at the same intersection. There have been some close calls there. This topic will also be put on November 1st agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

A.) CHAD SPEIDEL – WATER DEPARTMENT: Mr. Speidel asked if the longevity cap had been lifted for the 2022 budget? It was explained that the salary ordinance that is currently being considered has the verbiage that lifts the longevity cap. It will not come up for a final vote until November 1, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT: With there being no further business, Mr. Dudelston made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.

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