

**CITY COMMON COUNCIL
OF HARTFORD CITY, INDIANA
DECEMBER 7, 2020
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 December 7, 2020

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

MOTION TO SUSPEND COUNCIL MEETING FOR PUBLIC HEARING: Mr. Lytle made a motion to suspend the council meeting and open the public hearing. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0

2nd PUBLIC HEARING: PROPOSED ORDINANCE 2020-11 MINIMUM BUILDING & PROPERTY STANDARDS – Mr. Dudelston addressed council and stated that this ordinance will replace 15.04 out of Title 15 Building and Construction. It will address loop holes that currently exist and will give the city minimum property standards. There being no public comment, Mr. Lytle made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to close the public hearing approved 5-0. Mr. Lytle then made a motion to resume the Common Council meeting. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mayor Eckstein stated that we need to amend the agenda and letter "K" under new business to amend the City Employee Handbook. Mr. Lytle made a motion to amend the agenda. Mr. George seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0. Mr. Lytle then made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 2, 2020: Mr. Lytle made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

A.) VACATE ALLEY – E. CONGER ST., E. PERKINS ST., N. OAK ST., N. MULBERRY ST. - Mr. George said that he's had no communication from property owner. Attorney Murphy recommended to take this item off of the agenda until council hears from this gentleman. Mr. George made a motion to remove this item from the agenda. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to remove was 5-0.

B.) 2nd READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 2020-13 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TARGET AREA - Mr. Lytle made a motion to approve this ordinance. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

C.) INTERSECTION ISSUES AT HIGH ST. & KICKAPOO ST. - Mr. George stated that he had talked with 3 of the 4 neighbors and they will try to self-monitor their parking. The homeowners expressed their wish to have a stop sign at that intersection. Chief McKissack made the suggestion in putting in no parking signs through that area. He stated that it's already difficult for emergency vehicles to get through that intersection. Mr. George stated that he thinks that council should approve putting up no parking signs and address any other issues, in the future. Council

decided to put up 4 signs on High St. for no parking from 15 feet to corner. Attorney Murphy stated that no ordinance is needed because state code already spells this out. Mr. George made the motion to approve these no parking signs. Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

A.) DPW – PROPOSED NEW GARBAGE TRUCK: DPW Supervisor J. Thomas addressed the City of Council about the status of one of the city's aging garbage trucks and the need to purchase a new one. He presented the top three bids he had obtained. One is a 2019 new truck and two more 2022 trucks. His recommendation was the 2019 truck that has everything the DPW needs and more. He stated that it only has 1,700 miles and has never had a piece of garbage run through it. This truck is the least expensive of the 3 and is available for immediate possession. This truck has a full factory warranty. The other two bids for the 2022 models are comparing apples to apples. The drawback to the two newer models are obviously price and 5 to 9 months out. Mr. Thomas provided paperwork from Citizens State Bank stating that the interest rate 3.1% or less. He also explained that he has funds in the sanitation savings account to put a down payment of \$50,000 down. He also shared that he has a line item for equipment purchases that has annual funds that can support the loan payments. He invited everyone to come out and see the new truck as Shane from Best Equipment will have it outside City Hall during the meetings this evening.

B.) 1ST READING ORDINANCE 2020-14 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 10.16.040 OF THE CITY CODE: Mr. George stated with all the new improvements being made to the Nature Play area behind the Public Library, he believes this intersection definitely warrants a 4-way stop. There will hopefully being a lot of children playing there. Mr. George has spoken with the neighbor and that person supports the idea of a stop sign being placed there. Mr. George made a motion to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance 2020-14 and schedule a 2nd reading at the January 4, 2021 meeting. Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

C.) B. BACON - PERMISSION TO SPEND MORE THAN \$5,000: Mr. Bacon approached council for permission to purchase a "Plug Hug" apparatus that connects to either a backhoe or bobcat. This then will sit down over a fire hydrant and it spins around it in both directions and will take all the paint and rust off of the hydrant in preparation for repainting. There is an IPEP grant agreement for \$8,000 towards this purchase. This will leave the city's cost at \$5,500. This purchase will be made after the first of the next year. Mr. Bacon feels that this new purchase will keep his guys safe and save hours of work time for this project. Mr. George made a motion to allow Mr. Bacon to spend more than \$5,000. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

D.) M. MCKISSACK - SHOP WITH A COP: Chief McKissack reported to council that the Police Department had collected a tremendous amount of donations throughout Blackford County. After taking applications throughout the county, they ended up helping 54 children and are spending \$150 per child and also spending money on their parents too. With COVID-19, they've had to change how they shopped this year. They were unable to take the children shopping as in years past. They also were unable to have a meal with them, at City Hall, as well. In lieu of that, they purchased gift cards from Pizza Hut so that each family could have a pizza

dinner. Chief McKissack said that the Police Department was very thankful for everyone's support. Councilman Dudelston said that he's glad that the children in our community get to see the good things that our Policemen do. Mr. Dudelston also gave Kudos to the Fire Department for their efforts with the Toy Drive every year.

E.) C. CROUSE - MOVEMENT OF FUNDS: Mr. Crouse came before council to request two things.

1.) He requested permission to spend over \$5,000 to purchase the employees on the SWAT Team new up-to-date vests with rifle plates. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to approve the expenditure over \$5,000. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

2.) Mr. Crouse handed out a list of 9 different line item amounts that the Police Department wants to transfer from one series to the next. Mr. Lytle made the motion to approve the line item amount transfers. Mr. George seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

F.) WARREN BROWN - INTRODUCE POLICE COMMUNICATION SOFTWARE: Mr. Brown said that he was approached by Chief McKissack about upgrading to a new communication software. They had a meeting with Hartford City Police Department, Blackford County Sheriff's

Department and the Montpelier Police Department to discuss the needs of all departments. They are looking at a Spillman software package with a cost of \$355,000 for the entire county. Mr. Brown said they will try and leverage a community/facilities direct loan and grant program through the USDA. Each municipality qualifies for \$50,000 grant totaling \$150,000..

Blackford County's portion is 50% - \$177,500 - \$50,000 = \$127,500 in form of a loan

Hartford City's portion is 30% - \$106,500 - \$50,000 = \$56,500 in form of a loan.

Montpelier's portion is 20% - \$71,000 - \$50,000 = \$21,000 in form of a loan.

Mr. Brown said that this loan can be amortized up to 10 years. He stated the city does not have to take that long to pay off this loan. He cautioned council that he would recommend they stretch out this payment until we see what the impact COVID-19 has on our budgets over the next 2 years. He stated that the loan has an interest rate 2.125% fixed. There is no pre-pay penalty so if the city decides to pay this off earlier they can most certainly do this without penalty. This grant makes this software very affordable. Spillman provides a very top notch software. It gives all the departments everything they need to do their jobs efficiently and well. Mr. Brown said that each municipality can share the same software but write individual, inter-local agreements that suits each municipality individually. Several police officers explained the bells and whistles that this software offers and how it will help each department work together and with other communities, as well. Chief McKissack stated that his department has a plan to pay off their portion within 1 to 2 years using their LOIT funds. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to move forward in pursuing this software package. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

G.) RON DUDELSTON - DISCUSS DRAINAGE ISSUE AT 907 N. JEFFERSON ST.: Mr. Dudelston supplied council with several photos of a drainage issue from one house to another. One homeowner has made improvements to his house which is now causing a drainage issue

for his neighbor. Mr. Dudelston asked Attorney Murphy if this is a civil issue or something for council to get involved? Attorney Murphy stated this is a civil issue and not a council issue. Mr. Dudelston said that he will advise the complainant homeowner.

- H.) ORDINANCE 2020-11 MINIMUM BUILDING & PROPERTY STANDARDS:** Mr. Dudelston stated that he wants to amend 1.11 (b) to read \$25 certification fee per rental dwelling for 2 years with a maximum of \$100 (i.e. landlord owns 12 properties then he will only pay a maximum of \$100 which will cover all 12 properties). Mr. Dudelston made a motion to amend 1.11 (b). Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The vote to amend was 5-0. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to approve 2020-11 as amended. Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.
- I.) BILL SMITH - LARGE ANIMAL RESCUE TRAINING:** Mr. Smith approached council to tell them about a large animal rescue class being hosted by Nature's Way Animal Rescue to teach the Fire Department, Police Department and most importantly children in our community how to perform a large animal rescue. This class consists of 3 - 4 hours of classroom instruction and the remainder of the class will be working with the animals and the heavy equipment required in a rescue. They are looking for children possibly interested in the 4-H program. The cost is \$2,500 for 25 people. He has currently raised \$1,000 and they are continuing to seek donations for the remaining \$1,500. The donations received will be used to allow the children to attend the class. He asked council to please spread the word to anyone they know who would be willing to donate to this program. Mr. Scaggs made a motion that city donate \$750 to this program. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. Mayor Eckstein stated that we can take this money out of Riverboat The vote to approve was 5-0.
- J.) TERESA HENDERSON - ENCUMBERING MONEY FOR PARK'S BUILDING:** Ms. Henderson addressed council and said that the new park's building is moving right along. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 some materials are on backorder. This will slow the completion of the building until after the beginning of 2021. Ms. Henderson is asking council to encumber some of the Parks Department 2020 budget to cover the costs of these items. B. Maddox, Parks Superintendent gave a brief update on the building's progress.
- K.) AMENDMENT TO EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK:** Attorney Murphy said it was recommended unanimously by the Board of Works to consider an amendment to the employee handbook in reference to employees who are charged in a commission of a felony or unlawful act. They are suggesting a change in verbiage to allow flexibility for employee enrolled in a diversion program, deferral program, veteran's program or drug court program where the expectation is the case will be dismissed. This will give the city flexibility to act during the program to suspend employee or allow the employee to continue to work during the enrollment of said program and until the employee's case is completed. After some discussion, Mr. Dudelston made a motion to accept the Board of Works recommendation to draft a resolution to amend the handbook. Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

MAYOR'S REPORT

A.) Mayor Eckstein invited Cheri Brown to talk about a fun idea to celebrate the Christmas holiday while staying safe during the pandemic. Ms. Brown explained that she and SSG Langston with the National Guard had been brain storming about what we can do as a community do celebrate the Christmas holiday in the middle of a pandemic. They came up with a parade where the community can be involved in the parade. This is not a typical parade where groups of people gather to watch it but they can decorate their cars and follow along the parade route to look at houses that have been decorated, sing a long caroling with the radio station WPGW. She stated that this idea is coming together and evolving each day. They hope to have car decorating contest, a house decorating contest, goodie bags, milk & cookies for all occupants of each car, also ADM Custom Creations has created 50 commemorative ornaments for the first 50 cars in the parade. The parade will be led by the Fire Truck with Santa. She said that the parade route is currently being determined. They plan on having an online registration so that they can plan for how many goodies they will need. They have come up with a theme and a theme song "Merry Covid Christmas" The parade is scheduled for December 23, 2020 with line up at the 4-H grounds at 5pm and the parade starting at 6pm.

B.) Fire Department - Chief Parrott asked council permission to spend more than \$5,000 for the purchase of turn-out gear for each of the 26 firefighters. He plans to use the \$20,000 from the CARES Act money. He is also asking for permission to move \$14,000 out of the 361 line item and \$9,000 out of the 362 line item and move the total of \$23,000 to the 364 (fire fighting supplies). They will pay the difference out of the LOIT. This will provide completely new gear for each person that will be good for the next 10 years. They will use the old gear as the back-up. Mr. Scaggs made a motion to give permission to spend more than \$5,000 and Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

C.) Mayor Eckstein brought up the Parks Superintendent position. He talked about the change in duties, and his proposed wage change. He stated that the city will not be pursuing the Communications Director for 2021. He explained that with the retirement of Teresa Henderson, from the Parks Board, the Parks Superintendent position will be taking on several of the tasks that she performed (grants, networking with other communities, etc.) and it will be changing from a seasonal position to a full time year round one. Mayor Eckstein asked the council what is this position worth? He stated that the position currently pays roughly \$21,700 and he feels is very underpaid. He would like to see council bump this salary up to \$30,000. Mayor Eckstein stated that the Park Board will need to revise the job description and the council would need to amend the salary ordinance. Mayor Eckstein and Clerk-Treasurer Whatley met and decided that the \$8,300 proposed increase can be funded for 2021 out of the CARES Act Grant. Going forward we would need to budget for this new salary and any future increases in the annual budget. Ms. Whatley said that she spoke with Amy George the Parks Board Treasurer about the Parks Department's ability to support this new salary. Ms. George stated that yes they would be able to budget for the new salary going forward. There was a lot of discussion and it was decided that the Parks Board needs to write a new detailed job description and the council will discuss it at the January meeting.

CLERK-TREASURER'S REPORT

A.) 1782 Notice - Clerk-Treasurer Whatley told council that she was happy to report that she'd received the 1782 report from the DLGF and the budget came back approved by the DLGF as adopted by council.

B.) Ms. Whatley stated that she has resolution 2020-36 for signatures this evening. This has already been ratified.

COUNCIL COMMENT

A.) Ron Dudelston stated that due to the increase in COVID-19 outbreaks the Property Standards Board meeting has been canceled.

B.) Mr. Dudelston stated that after visiting Rushville, Indiana he has been reviewing complaint software for purchase. This software will be used with the city website where citizens can report concerns and complaints.

C.) Dustin George asked if we know what the status is with the school's salad bar program? Mayor Eckstein said he currently did not know the status. Mayor Eckstein said he would reach out to the school to get an update.

D.) Michael Wolfe asked about an update with the Animal Shelter's situation. Attorney Murphy said that he sent a letter explaining that the \$5,000 that was paid to them is indeed an advance on the 2021 budgeted amount and explained that the city needs a copy of their most recent financial information.

ADJOURNMENT

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

FOLDER 2/REC 14