



January 10th, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees: MacKenzie Taylor, Larry & Alice Randolph, Dana & Sheila Rutter, Dean Smith, Jim Winkler, Matt King, Avery Ferguson, Vernon Miller, Ray Rodriguez, Robert Roa, John Veenstra, Colton Hurst, Myra Hernandez, and Vickie Archer.

MacKenzie called the opening meeting to order at 4:58pm. MacKenzie had all of the council members stand together and state the Oath of Office for Larry Randolph, Dean Smith, and Dana Rutter. MacKenzie gave the members the annual nepotism policy certification. MacKenzie then asked for nominations for the 2024 Council President. Larry nominated Dean. Dana seconded the nomination. MacKenzie asked for an Annual Board of Finance President nomination for 2024. Larry nominated Dana. Dean seconded the nomination. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to accept the nominations. Afterwards, Dean stood up and swore MacKenzie into her Oath of Office. MacKenzie then closed the opening meeting.

Dean Smith, Council President called the regular meeting to order. The meeting minutes were reviewed. Dean made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from December 6, 2023. Larry seconded the motion. Upon voice vote the meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

The Council President then went over the following positions for the 2024 calendar year.

Marshal: Raymundo Rodriguez

Utility Superintendent: Avery Ferguson

Maintenance Director: Matt King

Economic Development Coordinator: MacKenzie Taylor

Liability Insurance: Synergy/Selective Insurance

Medical Insurance: Indiana Public Employers/ Anthem for Health, vision, and dental

Engineers: Triad

Annual Board of Finance President: Dana Rutter

Publishing Agency: The Goshen News

Park Maintenance Director: Vernon Miller

Financial Advisors: Suzy Bass, Janet Alexander, Craig Buche, Jackson Beck

Legal Advisors: Craig Buche and Jackson Beck

Financial Institute Bank: Interra Credit Union

Water: Avery started by informing the council he was accepted into the apprenticeship program. He's ordered books and has already begun classes. Avery let the council know he is interested in going to French Lick for a conference that takes place in the spring. The cost would be more than 500 to include the trainings, lodging, and travel. Avery would also be granted

credit towards his apprenticeship program for attending the conference. Dean asked MacKenzie if there were funds available for the training. MacKenzie replied, yes. Upon voice vote by all three council members, it was unanimously approved for Avery to attending the training, expense the travel and lodging that goes along with him attending.

Avery told the council the high-pressure pump was pulled today. It should be down for a day or two and then will be reinstalled. This was previously approved during a council meeting to have the work completed.

Avery went on to give more information over the lead line survey. Right now, the State has said this needs to be complete by October. Avery is still trying to find the best way to reach residents to take inventory of lead lines. EPA wants all lead lines and galvanized lead lines replaced in a ten-year span. The town's responsibility stops at the curb stop; the homeowner is responsible for their section to replace. Note aside, there are still many unknowns.

Myra Hernandez is a resident who is here because of a large water bill she received for the December billing cycle. The billing cycle for January went down a significant amount. Myra stated she had absolutely no leaks. Myra checked the outside spicket, it was never running or dripping, no leaky toilets, faucets, or showerheads. It was asked if her water softener was constantly cycling or if there were any leaks around the water heater. Myra stated there was nothing and she doesn't have a water softener. Myra went on to tell the council she is comfortable about looking for leaks because in the past when she lived with her mother, she was responsible for paying the water bill. Avery said, this will be really hard to judge because whatever may have been going on is fixed. Our Neptune Meter read is a handheld and pulls in the meter reads on its own, everything is pulled through on its own and downloaded into the software to produce water bills. Myra also stated, she did her normal washes and doesn't use as much water as she does during the summer and spring. Larry suggested he would go along with Avery, schedule an appointment with Myra, check out the place and make sure the meter is working properly.

Wastewater: The missing pump was installed the 2nd of January for the lift station. The test equipment came in but Tina and Avery haven't had a chance to unpack it yet.

Avery is still working on correcting measures given by IDEM with Harley. Stouder Services wrote a letter to IDEM on our behalf.

Community Development: MacKenzie met with Rob Hartzler and Chris Stager from the EDC. MacKenzie stated there was a nice dialogue and they'd like to share with you what the EDC is about. MacKenzie briefly explained that their primary is business retention. They offer training programs for employees within the business. Sometimes the business will pay for it or they offer scholarships/grants. All around, they do have grants for businesses. They would like to come to

the February 28th meeting and speak with the council. Jim told the council he knows exactly what MacKenzie is talking about. Jim was invited to sit on the EDC board and found that it was not necessarily beneficial for the town. They will also ask for a membership fee.

Maintenance: Matt stated the Street Department is getting ready for crummy weather. Matt said with the blast of cold we are expected to get, it'll be a long month. Dean asked if the equipment was all ready? Matt replied, yes and everything is working flawlessly. Larry mentioned he noticed that you were pretreating the roads. Matt said, that's correct so we don't have to come in at 2 in the morning.

A price increase was given to the council and Matt in regard to Quality Cablevision. This is for the internet at the maintenance department and basic cable (free portion). Matt said he is okay with dropping them, he would like to switch to Surf. Matt told MacKenzie, don't call them yet until I have it all lined up with Surf.

Marshal: Ray began by telling the council he was notified from Bart (used to be Sorg Dodge) that the Durango is scheduled for the vin and. Ray is hopeful they'll have more information and the Durango will be on the line to be build soon.

Ray said, this was an actual report but we got a complaint about scammers being at the Marathon here in town. Ray looked into this but didn't see any scammers. Robert asked if the council has received any complaints about them charging more than what they should be at the Marathon? Larry said, he has seen complaints on Facebook. Dean stated, he has never personally been ripped off. Dana stated he hadn't heard anything. Robert said, if anything does happen or you hear anything, tell us.

Ray said to the council, if you could think about this when we do hire someone to help MacKenzie, maybe make it a part time officer as well. That will give the Police Department more leeway when we aren't in town.

Park: Vernon said things are great! He hasn't really had to work in a week and a half. He has more trees to cut down. The stump grinder came in and Vernon has already got 14 completed and 6 more to go. Vernon said, he doesn't plan on working in this weather, he is just getting over being ill.

Clerk Treasurer: MacKenzie gave the council a quote to continue using Joe Wells for his asset services. MacKenzie told the council, this is a state requirement and something that has to be done every year. MacKenzie expressed she is not comfortable with assets because she doesn't fully understand the process and what all goes into it. MacKenzie said, Joe Wells will also step in if needed when we receive our audit and he can help us answer to the State Board of Accounts. Larry said, this is also in our policy handbook for each department head to give an inventory

report to the council after the first of every year. Matt said, we usual get print outs from the Clerk's Office but that hasn't happened since Patricia was in office. Dean said, it would be a good idea to have this guy. The cost is \$5,000 for the year. MacKenzie invited the council to come in and meet with Joe when they're together next. Dean motioned to approve for the town to continue services with Joe Wellls. Larry seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to stay with Joe Wells.

MacKenzie told the council she is in full force with year-end. On Monday MacKenzie will work with Suzy Bass to get everyone their W2's, complete the 1099's, and other electronic uploads that are due January 31st.

New Business: Vickie Archer said she came because she hasn't attended a council meeting in years. Vickie stated she lives on the east side of Washington Street. Some of the neighbors have gotten together to discuss their concerns in the area. Vickie started by stating the old house on the corner is disgusting and they constantly leave their trash out. It gets left on the sidewalk and sometimes it gets knocked over by animals and this person keeps populating these animals. There's a constant stench of marijuana over there too. Vickie said, whatever you do in the home, that's on you but I prefer it to not be brought outside. Vickie mentioned because of the trash never being taken back up to the home, she always has trash in her yard that blows over from this property. In the spring and summer, the grass is horribly long. Kurt has gone over to mow it because it's such an eye sore. Vickie has spoken to the land lord about these issues as well and he isn't managing his properties. Matt spoke up and said I know who it is and now the son is managing some of his properties for him. Vickie said when she was in the process of moving, she could have placed her home anywhere. She made the decision to stay here in town because it is peaceful. It disturbs her that the town is going downhill. There are several homes that aren't occupied and some houses look even worse that are occupied. We would like to see some respect to our town and getting it cleaned up.

Another issue I have, Vickie stated, is the blue house that sits on the alley. I was told it's abandoned. Someone just threw a tarp over it and left it. There's mice and rats and animals living in that garage. Half of the windows are gone and broken and it's sat in that shape for a long time. Kids have been seen going into that home and animals. It sits at the corner of my alley and it disturbs me. Gene Miller used to live there and some Amish gentleman bought it. Matt and Dean agreed it's gross. Vickie also mentioned a family has moved out of the gray house with pink shutters on Washington Street. Dana asked if there was an ordinance, do we fine people, give them a warning or start hammering these residents with unkept properties? Jim said, typically they get a warning/ordinance violation, if they don't follow through, they get a fine and pay them a visit. Jim recommended you give them one chance, because it tends to lead to more. Vickie said, it saddens me. I've lived here 25 years and things have gone downhill. How much time would residents be given to clean up? Avery said, technically that falls on the owner, they're always held responsible verses the renter. Dean said, let's get ahold of Matt's


nephew (Larry's son), contact him and tell him he has 30 days to clean it up. It was then discussed to create an ordinance to have trash totes taken back up to the home after trash has been picked up. John mentioned you could always put a lien on the home. They do it often in Middlebury. Another property in poor condition is on Oak Street.

Dana said, I think the water issue went unresolved with Myra. Is there an end game to this? Avery said he will go check out the meter and go from there. The council told MacKenzie to remove penalties from Myra Hernandez's account for the January bill. At the next meeting, the council will discuss a better resolve for the high-water bill.

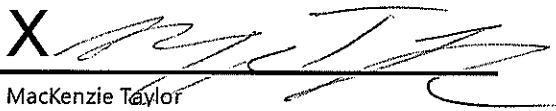
Jim explained to the council that he has received a complaint about the ISO rating and the town could be getting more complaints. The paperwork has been taken care of. Effective April 1, 2024 the ISO rating is at a 7. If there's other questions in regard to the rating get a hold of Toni and she'll be able to answer anything.

Dean made a motion to pay bills. Larry seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to pay bills.

Dean made a motion to adjourn. Dana seconded the motion to adjourn. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to adjourn.

X 

Dean Smith
Council President

X 

MacKenzie Taylor
Clerk Treasurer