

**Town of Millersburg
201 W. Washington Street
Millersburg, IN 46543**

Meeting Minutes for January 11th, 2023

Attendance: Jim Winkler, Dean Smith, Austin Turner, MacKenzie Taylor, Ben Eldridge, Matt King, Jessica Frye, Raymundo Rodriguez, Robert Roa, John Nelson, Colton & Haley Hurst, Johnny & Rhonda Adams, Harold, Larry Randolph, Rick Nystrand Marion Bontrager and two other guests. (MacKenzie did not get their names).

MacKenzie Taylor opened the meeting at 5:00pm. MacKenzie asked if there were any nominations for the 2023 Council President? Austin Turner nominated Dean Smith. Jim Winkler seconded the nomination for Dean Smith. Upon voice vote was unanimously approved. MacKenzie asked for nominations for the Annual Board of Finance President for 2023? Austin Turner nominated Jim Winkler. Dean Smith seconded the nomination. Upon voice vote was unanimously approved. MacKenzie closed the announcements for nominations.

Dean Smith called the January 11th Council meeting to order. The meeting minutes were reviewed from December 7th, 2022, December 21st, 2022, and the Executive session on January 5th, 2023. Dean made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from all three meetings. Austin seconded the motion. Upon voice vote was unanimously approved.

Dean Smith went over the following positions for the 2023 calendar year.

Marshal- Raymundo Rodriguez

Utility Superintendent- Ben Eldridge

Maintenance Director- Matt King

Economic Development Coordinator- Ben Eldridge

Liability Insurance- Synergy

Medical Insurance- IPEP/Anthem for Medical, Hartford for Life and Short-Term Disability

Attorney- Craig Buche with Yoder, Ainlay, Ulmer, and Buckingham

Engineers- Triad

Annual Board of Finance President- Jim Winkler

Publishing Agency- The Goshen News and Elkhart Truth

Park Board President- None

Financial Advisors- Craig Buche, Suzy Bass, and Janet Alexander

Financial Institute Bank- Interra Credit Union

All Council members approved the positions for the 2023 calendar year.

New Business: Rick Nystrand is here to hand out information on our liability insurance coverage. Rick explained, the renewal will be on the 22nd of January. He said, he's been looking at different options between IPEP and Selective Insurance. He thinks these options will bring down the Town's cost 4,000-5,000 dollars. He then said, he wanted to bring this information to the Council to see if there's anything they like and or dislike. The Council agreed they'd like to look over this information on their own and have Rick come back to answer any follow up questions. Rick agreed to come back and gave his contact information for the Council to get ahold of him if they had any questions in the meantime.

Rhonda and Johnny Adams are here to express their concern on their utility bill. Rhonda started by explaining she doesn't have Town water; she is on a well. For whatever reason, her utility bill for sewer and trash is 91.00 and it's barely come down any. Rhonda said her husband works at a trailer factory and she works at Dollar General. No one is really home during the day, Rhonda said. She said, I don't understand how our sewer is so much when we're on a well. Ben said, even though you are on a well, your water usage is still being tracked. With tracking water consumption, that is how the sewer portion is calculated because it takes more money to treat sewer. Rhonda said she doesn't understand all of the water usage because they have done a thorough job checking for leaks and they can't find anything. Rhonda had brought some of her previous water bills, Ben asked if he could see them. Ben looked them over. Dean asked Ben if he noticed anything. Ben said, I'm seeing that your consumption has been rising. Ben said, if it's on the rise like this, it's an indication there's possibly a leak somewhere. Both her and her husband stated there are no leaks. Ben said, I can come and take a look at your meter. Johnny said, I could care less about your meter. Ben said, you need to care. You have a well and your sewer is based off your water consumption. This is how it is for every resident in the Town, this is how we read your utility bills. Johnny mentioned how his hook up was crushed over the summer and they didn't know that it was being crushed. He continued telling Ben and the Council that this instance ended up flooding his garden. He had to have roto-rooter come out and try to clear the lines. Todd Truex came over one of the times to help Johnny solve the problem. Ben said, if we don't know about the problem then we can't help you. Rhonda said they did come down to the Town Hall a couple of times. The girls explained the sewer is tracked by the water consumption. Of course, they couldn't give an explanation on why their consumption was so much. Johnny said, something aint right with our bill. We shouldn't be paying this much for just sewer and trash. Our neighbors have water and they don't even pay this much. Ben said, can I set up a time with you and I will come check things out. Rhonda was pleased with that. Johnny brought up about pool fills. Johnny doesn't think he needs to call anyone to tell him he's filled his pool. Ben stressed the importance of calling the office to give the girls a heads up that a pool is being filled. This way, before bills are printed the girls can check to make sure you received proper credit for filling your pool because we don't want to overcharge someone. Johnny said, as far as paying anyone we're paying nipsco. Ben looked at the Council and said, it's just going in circles here. Johnny said, so what you're telling me is it's

just a guessing game on the consumption. Ben said no. Sewage takes more to treat. Ben will be in contact with the Adam's about setting up a time to come out to their home.

Water: Ben said, he has a couple of things to present. The first one is, Ben has been having an issue with getting meters changed out because of a lack of response from the homeowner/renter. Ben had a copy of a request for services from another municipality. He'd like to use this document instead of the one we currently have. He read it aloud. In the document it explains that the homeowner/renter is in agreement to pay their full utility bill. There's just more verbiage and a clear outline of what the Town is expecting from the homeowner and renter when they're signing up for services. It's also important the homeowner/renter understands that the meter belongs to the Town. The Town is to have access to that meter at all times. This new document would apply to new and existing residents.

So, the second part, Ben explained, I want to make sure I have your blessing on this. I looked in to see what other utility companies do that are having issues with getting homeowners/renters to comply with a change out. Ben showed which one he liked and then said he softened the language in it so it doesn't sound as harsh. Ben told the Council how he had a home here in Millersburg that he was not able to get in touch with. He'd leave a hanger on the door if they didn't answer. Then he ended up sending a letter telling them he needs to make arrangements to change out their meter. If they don't make contact with us by a certain date, we will discontinue your services. If they don't respond to this letter, then I will have it sent by certified mail. This is the new protocol Ben would like to implement. Ben told the Council, this strategy worked. The Council looked over everything and were in agreement that Ben could implement this strategy.

Last thing, Ben said, I want to get your thoughts on financial hardships. The RV industry has not recovered and it doesn't sound like it will be recovering anytime soon. A lot of people aren't going to be able to pay their water bills. Ben said, he's just trying to be proactive and think ahead. Ben said, he shut some people off before Christmas. He talked to another municipality about how they handle shut offs around the holiday season. After speaking with the other municipality, he decided to turn these residents back on. Ben stressed to them that they need to make contact with the Clerk's Office and come up with a payment arrangement so they can keep their water on. No one made contact with the Clerk's Office, MacKenzie said. Ben asked, is this something ARPA could help out with? Do we have any other services to help people out? MacKenzie said yes, there is the Indiana Housing Authority, Real Services of Elkhart County, and Toni Miller, the Township Trustee is able to help out residents. Ben asked the Council; do I continue as normal with the shut offs? Jim said, I think we need to be a little lenient with these folks. It's important if anyone receives a disconnect notice to come to the Clerk's Office and at

least pay your current bill with an additional 20.00. That way, they won't get as far behind if they can chip away at it little by little.

Wastewater: Ben said, Mason Engineering will start the repair on the clarifier and it should only take 1-2 days to fix.

Maintenance Director: Matt said, the dump truck got fixed. Matt told the Council this was a difficult project since they don't make parts or that kind of truck anymore. Austin happened to find the exact fan model that was needed for the dump truck on Ebay. Since receiving the fan, it's been working fine.

Community Development: So, I've been thinking about this for a while, Ben said. I talked with MacKenzie and Matt about this. The Town possibly has an opportunity to buy some land near the railroad tracks as you exit out of Town. My thought is, we can use this location to dump tree limbs and brush. The area can be fenced in like an environmental zone. Whenever the street department gets time, they can chip the wood and residents can come and get mulch. This would address the issue that people have been up in arms about. I think it'd be beneficial to us to purchase the land closest to the railroad because there's an entrance off of 13. Then, in the future if more land from that area sells, we'd still have access to ours. I talked to the RDC about using the TIF money towards this but MacKenzie reminded me of our closed out TIF and to use those funds. MacKenzie said there's a little over 11,000 in there. Dean asked, what is the acre property going for? Ben said, I don't know. The owner told me to just throw out a number. I figured we would start low, but what is the maximum we should go? The Council all agreed to cap that number at 11,000. Ben said he would e-mail the gentleman tomorrow.

Jim excused himself early. He had a funeral to attend.

Marshal: Dean asked Ray if there has been anything going on. Ray said no. Dean said, good and he's glad it's been quiet. It's too cold for kids to be out running out.

Park: The ice rink is up, Ben said. It's holding two truck loads of water. We just need the temperature to start cooperating now. Ben said, the warning signs are up. He also moved the fiber glass benches so people could either sit or put their items on it.

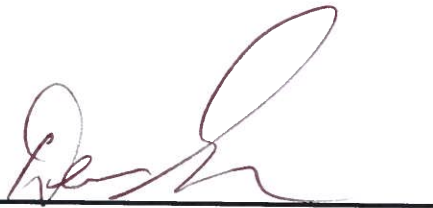
Clerk Treasurer: MacKenzie presented the Council with the November and December bank reconciliation. All is balanced. Suzy Bass looked over MacKenzie's reconciliation and signed off on it.

MacKenzie gave the Council members their annual certification of elected officials and that they are in compliance with the municipal nepotism policy. All Council members signed the document.

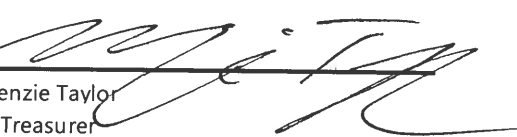
Lastly, Phyllis Hart spoke with MacKenzie on Monday and would like the Council's blessing to start a "Senior Rec Club" in the community room. Phyllis told MacKenzie, she'd like to meet back there once a week, socialize, play games, and exchange books. MacKenzie thought this was a fantastic idea and what a great way to get some use out of our community room. MacKenzie asked permission for the Council to waive the fee of room rentals. Austin and Dean said absolutely and they're eager to hear about how this goes.

Dean made a motion to pay bills. The motion was seconded by Austin. Upon voice vote was unanimously approved.

Dean made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Austin. Upon voice vote was unanimously approved.

X 

Dean Smith
Council President

X 

MacKenzie Taylor
Clerk Treasurer

