

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2017
6:00 P.M.**

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle – Present
Attorney Marcia McNagny – Present

Council Members

Walter Crowder – Present
Nicole Penrod – Present
Jennifer Romano – Present
Tad Varga – Absent
Daniel Weigold – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members except Tad Varga present, Mayor Daniel presiding.

MINUTES Jennifer Romano noted a spelling error.

Motion was made by Nicole Penrod to approve an overview of the December 27, 2016 meeting minutes as amended, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

SWEARING IN OF NEW POLICE OFFICERS AND FIREFIGHTER Rosie Coyle performed the swearing in ceremonies for Officers Brette Ayres and Brenden Barber to the Columbia City Police Department and Derek Jenkins to the Columbia City Fire Department.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTING AWARDS Jennifer Romano announced and presented Christmas lighting awards to the Southwest District winners John & Wendy Hubbard; Northwest District winners Roger & Rose Tucker; Northeast District winners Jack & Rebecca Rohrer; Southeast District winners Billy & Jenny Reffitt and Overall winners Warren & Marcia Cole.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT Dan Weigold nominated Walt Crowder to continue as Common Council President for 2017, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

APPOINTMENT OF REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEMBER Jennifer Romano nominated Tad Varga to the Columbia City Redevelopment Commission, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye.

WHITLEY COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT Lana Beregszazi and Thomas Nitza were present to talk about the Whitley County Regional Sewer District. Mr. Nitza shared the County Commissioners have asked them to put together the Whitley County Regional Water and Sewer District. He advised the Sewer District would address the areas outside of the incorporated areas throughout Whitley County. He explained they would not focus on those areas that are already served by a sewer provider whether public or private; their focus is to address the areas that are not served throughout Whitley County.

Mr. Nitza explained the Whitley County Regional Sewer District would be a standalone organization with a Board of Trustees and would operate similar to a municipality. He advised the District would not seek to build its own treatment facilities but look to partner with other treatment providers throughout Whitley County.

Mr. Nitza explained this would be a petition based project; if the area is not seeking service, does not want service or cannot find a suitable provider then the project would not move forward.

Mr. Nitza advised 2017 was the start of their efforts to put the Sewer District together on behalf of the County Commissioners. He advised there were a little over 100 of these sewer districts throughout the State of Indiana.

Dan Weigold questioned by having these organized areas if it would help with securing grants and funding for the projects. Mr. Nitza explained one of the advantages of a sewer district structure is they bring in their own funding so they can seek out the grants and assistance, but more importantly they can organize the customers within the petition service area through rates and fees to become self-sufficient.

Walt Crowder questioned if there would be situations where they could get into a competitive bid environment where there might be multiple utilities that could serve the area to be partnered with. Ms. Beregszazi advised the objective was always going to be the lowest cost and the best rate for the project itself. She advised they do not see it very often but it could happen and it is always going to be cost based. Mayor Daniel questioned if there was a gray zone that was not being served, but new development happens, would that be the same environment where it would come down to cost dependent on a bidding process. Ms. Beregszazi explained part of the process involved doing an engineering cost study to see which would be the most cost effective. Mayor Daniel questioned if that would be voted on by the homes being served or by the Sewer District. Ms. Beregszazi explained the vote by the homes being served was just that they would like to have the sewer project done; the connection and contractors were all voted on by the Board.

Walt Crowder questioned if this was strictly for sewer and no other type of utility. Mr. Nitza advised sewer was the priority, water was possible and both were granted under the petition process they were seeking with IDEM. He advised water projects were rarer.

Mayor Daniel questioned if there was a rule change or something that precipitated the immediate need for this. Mr. Nitza shared they have worked with the Commissioners for almost 2 years but their other motivation was the MS4.

Walt Crowder noted the sewer facility itself has a life expectancy so they would need to plan for the growth and replacements. Ms. Beregszazi advised that was correct and would need to make sure that was accounted for in the treatment rate. Mayor Daniel questioned Mr. Nitza and Ms. Beregszazi if they would represent the City, County and Towns to figure out what that rate would need to be or would they represent the sewer district. Mr. Nitza advised the City would need to get their own counsel to figure that rate.

Walt Crowder questioned what other counties were engaged in this program. Ms. Beregszazi advised they had over 100 sewer districts in Indiana. Mr. Nitza shared there were 3 regional sewer districts within Allen County.

Walt Crowder questioned if they had an idea of anticipated cost to the customer. Mr. Nitza shared in Allen County the monthly cost was anywhere from \$110 - \$130 per month for projects built today. Jennifer Romano questioned what the initial tap fee would be. Mr. Nitza shared the initial connection cost would be very minimal but on the flipside a larger monthly payment moving forward. He shared the amount could certainly be paid down by a higher connection fee and was something they work through in the petition areas. He stated they could have a choice to either pay off the

debt in the beginning and have a lower monthly payment or have it all as a monthly payment with a lower connection fee.

Mayor Daniel questioned what the next steps were that Council needed to know about. Mr. Nitza shared he was working on the petition process to IDEM which included who the Board of Trustees would be made up of. He stated if there was significant interest from the City to be a part of that he suggested to request from the Commissioners to have a seat on the Board. Mayor Daniel questioned if there would be a conflict if the Mayor or representative of the City would be a part of the Board, who is also deciding who is serving certain part of that regional sewer district. Ms. Beregszazi advised it would be a majority vote Board. Mayor Daniel questioned what the criteria were for Board members. Mr. Nitza explained one of the aspects was to have representation from the treatment providers and the other criteria were pretty wide open to folks who are within the County who are appointed or elected. Ms. Beregszazi shared that she was working on the prioritization of the initial project areas.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Tony Hively** – Spillman training, K9 selected. **Mike Cook** – treating egg wash water from Midwest Poultry since it cannot be land applied right now, year- end reporting for IDEM, sludge mixer repair. **Mike Shoda** – new home connections, replacing meters. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – limb and leaf pickup. **Shawn Lickey** - Christmas decorations down, inventory, new mapping software installed on server to assist employees out in the field.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST Rosie Coyle advised she had a conflict of interest form for Mayor Daniel that needed to be approved.

Motion was made by Nicole Penrod to accept the conflict of interest disclosure for Mayor Daniel, Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel had discussions with Fort Wayne INDOT regarding US 30 update. He advised he has been doing some work on potential dump site. He reported the City Hall Security Committee met; he shared there were significant costs in what they want to do but would be moving forward with a quote to bring additional protection to the windows in the Clerk Treasurer’s Office. He advised the Trash Committee would be meeting with Advanced Disposal to discuss how things are going. He reported the City was selected as the Chamber of Commerce Business of the Month.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle