

**COMMON COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2019  
6:00 PM**

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

**Council Members**

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

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

**MINUTES** Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve an overview of the February 26, 2019 meeting minutes as presented, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**SAFE HAVEN BABY BOXES** Monica Kelsey with Safe Haven Baby Boxes was present to discuss their proposal to put a box in Columbia City. She shared their hotline was responsible for saving 49 children through this program. She explained the box was electronically monitored with a 3 trip fail safe system on it; she continued to explain how the process worked. She stated the first baby placed in one of their boxes was pulled in 4 minutes, second baby was 90 seconds and has been pretty consistent at right about 2 minutes from the time mom places a child in the box. She stressed this was a complete last resort option.

Monica Kelsey advised they have been cleared by the FDA and do not have to register with the CSPC. She shared a lot of times people will ask if the dads have rights; they do and have 30 days to come back in the State of Indiana.

Mayor Daniel asked Mrs. Kelsey to talk about the Safe Haven Law. Mrs. Kelsey explained the Safe Haven Law states that any woman in crisis who does not want or cannot care for her newborn child, that is less than 30 days old, can surrender at any fire station, hospital or police station in the State of Indiana. She advised they have the baby boxes where a woman can have 100% amenity, place her child in one of these electronically monitored boxes and walk away; no questions asked, with no fear of prosecution. She shared in Indiana so far they were at 86 babies saved. She advised the Safe Haven Law has been around for 18 years but no one is talking about it. She felt these boxes were giving the Safe Haven Law a face. She shared that she has gets asked a lot if she recommends the boxes and her response is “No, I don’t” and compared it to an AED in a mall; we don’t want to have to use it but we are thankful it is there if someone goes into cardiac arrest. She felt the same with these boxes; of course they do not want a woman to use them, they want them to first choose a parenting plan, an adoption plan or walk into a facility and hand her baby over but stressed if she won’t do that, we have to have a last resort option available or we will continue to find babies in dumpsters.

Mayor Daniel questioned the cost of the boxes. Joan Western, President of the Whitley County Republican Women's Club, came forward to discuss the issue. She explained they take on a fundraiser each year and for 2019 the first thing that came up was a Baby Box. She went on to share their fundraising journey for the Baby Box. She advised their goal was to raise \$15,000; \$10,000 for the Baby Box and \$5,000 for billboard maintenance. She shared they would have to pay for the installation of the box if they could not find a contractor to gift their services. She added there was a yearly inspection of the box so would like to have extra funds held aside to take care of those expenses. She advised they were looking to raise \$3,900. She shared they have a committee ready to do the fundraiser but were waiting on Council's decision. She advised any contributions would be tax deductible through Right to Life; all funds go to Right to Life as they would be managing the funds. She noted there has been a lot of interest from the community. She gave recognition to Parkview Whitley Medical Group Family Physicians, Dr. Hatcher, Columbia City Knights of Columbus and Right to Life as these individuals and groups have already stepped up with donations.

Jennifer Romano advised there has been discussion in the last few weeks about this and it has all been positive, which is sometimes a rare thing. She felt the small amount of money that is left, with just the number of people who have said something to her about it, we would get close to filling that gap. She hoped they could agree as a group that this was a fantastic thing to do; anything to prevent a baby being put in a dumpster or some other location.

Mayor Daniel questioned if this would be a contractual relationship between the City and Safe Haven Baby Boxes. Mrs. Kelsey advised it would be; they've already raised the \$10,000 for the box and then it would be \$200 per year. She advised the City would not own the box, it would be leased and Safe Haven takes care of it. She explained if it goes down they would take care of fixing it; the reason is because the boxes are custom made and they do not want someone else messing with the box and putting a baby's life on the line.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to move forward with getting a Baby Box in Columbia City, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Dave Koontz, Director of Right to Life for North Central Indiana, was present to share that they promised and were working with Warsaw Right to Life to commit to covering the \$200 per year maintenance costs. He advised there may be some expenses that they would like to be a part of if necessary or appropriate.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS** **Kelly Cearbaugh** – assisting electric department with tree removal. **Jeff Walker** – update on Wooddale sign, Van Buren Flatts project and SDI project. **Mike Cook** – Board of Works approved to replace automated valves and to get quotes to replace the rooftop unit on the headworks building. Would like to move forward with moving their policy of not tapping into a force main to ordinance form. Council agreed to move forward. **Shawn Lickey** – Board of Works approved moving forward with the hiring process as Zac Bireley turned in his letter of resignation. He shared this was the 4<sup>th</sup> employee he has lost to another utility in the last 5 years simply based on pay scale. He advised he completed a wage study and submitted to the Mayor. He advised he would like to work with the Mayor and Council to change the salary ordinance to try and retain his employees. He stressed he could not

continue to lose talent; he advised he was not looking to lead the state in salaries but wanted to be competitive. **Steve Sturgeon** – Truck 101 repaired and back in service.

**MAYOR REPORT** Mayor Daniel reported he and Scott Leatherman had discussions with the Old Settlers Committee regarding a marathon and an elementary 1 miler. He advised the Redevelopment Commission was still negotiating on the Miller building. He reported a check was received from IPEP for defibrillators for City departments; he shared it was through a grant Beth Igney had worked on. He advised the State of the City address was scheduled for Friday, March 15, 2019 at 11:45 am. He reported next Wednesday he would be in Indianapolis for the AIM legislative dinner, Thursday was Youth Council and Friday was police interviews in the afternoon and would be looking at Park proposals in the morning.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

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Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

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Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle