

**COMMON COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2019  
6:00 PM**

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 – Present  
Daniel Weigold – Present

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

**MINUTES** Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve an overview of the November 12, 2019 meeting minutes as presented, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**PASSAGES REPORT – JASON MEYER** Jason Meyer, President and CEO, was present to review their annual report for Passages, discuss fundraisers and events.

Mr. Meyer reported they submitted a grant to Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis for their Whitley Crossings projects and reported they were awarded \$500,000.00 to rehabilitate the Clugston and to build some homes on Oak Street.

**WAIVER OF COMPLIANCE: TAX ABATEMENT - HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS** Jon Myers, President of the Whitley County EDC, along with Cheryl Bills, one of the Managers of Vidhi 2 was present to discuss the tax abatement. Jon Myers explained they have had some problems with Holiday Express and some of their vendors.

Cheryl Bills shared she has worked with Rajesh Patel for about 12 years and have opened many hotels together. She shared for some reason this hotel was difficult; he abided by all of their choices but they were never quite happy enough, so he agreed to redo the whole interior at his cost. She shared it was going quite well now. Jon Myers went on to explain some of the issues they faced with the vendors during the construction period. Ms. Bills advised everything had to be done twice.

Jon Myers shared in the middle of all of this, Raj did not realize he needed to file the CF1-forms so is why they were present to talk about the possibility of meeting compliance for the 2018 & 2019 CF1-forms. He advised they have done this, since he has been at the EDC, maybe twice with the County so it was not completely unprecedented. He shared under the process, Council would have to hold a public hearing.

Mayor Daniel questioned when the Assessor first put value on the project. Jon Myers thought there had been about \$1.5 million invested as of January 1, 2018 which would have been the first assessment.

Tad Varga questioned how long the paperwork was not filled out. Jon Myers advised it was Spring of 2018 and Spring of 2019. He advised in all fairness, this one was a little off the radar because they did not know when it was going to be completed.

Walt Crowder questioned for 2018 if it was a full or half year that taxes were to be paid. Jon Myers advised no taxes have been paid for 2018 payable 2019; he thought the assumption with Raj was that he would have 100% tax abatement the first year and did not have to worry about it.

Jon Myers advised if tax abatement was waived back to 2018, in the long run, the City would end up getting more money because the assessment would be on the lower amounts for the first two partial years.

Dan Weigold questioned if it would start with the \$2.4. Mayor Daniel thought what Vidhi 2 was requesting was that Council grant a waiver of non-compliance so that we would do 100% on the \$1.5 million and then 90% at the \$2.1 and continue on after that. He shared we would effectively do what we were planning to do, they just did not file the forms.

Discussion followed on options for the number of years awarded for their tax abatement.

Mayor Daniel advised a public hearing would be scheduled for the next Council meeting.

It was requested that Mr. Patel be present at the next meeting.

**ORDINANCE 2019-21: ANNEXATION FO CITY PROPERTY – 2<sup>ND</sup> READING** Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2019-21 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2019-21 an ordinance of the City Council of the City of Columbia City, Indiana, annexing certain territory to the City of Columbia City, Indiana, placing the same within the corporate boundaries thereof and making the same a part of the City of Columbia City.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve Ordinance 2019-21 as first reading, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion.

Jennifer Romano questioned with this annexation if we were closer to connecting the trail. Mayor Daniel advised we were awaiting a grant for the trail.

Upon the motion, all voted aye.

**ORDINANCE 2019-20: ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARY ORDINANCE – 1<sup>ST</sup> READING** Motion was made by Tad Varga to read Ordinance 2019-20 by title only, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2019-20 an

ordinance fixing the annual salaries of all elected officials for the City of Columbia City, Indiana effective December 21, 2019 for the year 2020.

Mayor Daniel noted the ordinance did not have any increases for elected officials for 2020.

Dan Weigold advised since he came on 12 years ago they have not had any increases and had no problem keeping it the same for Council Members.

Nicole Penrod questioned if there was an increase for the Mayor and Clerk Treasurer. Mayor Daniel advised there was not. Nicole Penrod questioned if they were trying to keep those positions in line with the department heads. Mayor Daniel advised the answer was no. Dan Weigold noted it took 3 years to catch those positions up but were falling behind again. Nicole Penrod felt the Mayor and Clerk Treasurer should be increased equal to the department heads. Walt Crowder advised it took a lot of years to get those positions balanced; sometimes just need to look at the position and what the position consists of. Mayor Daniel was appreciative of the suggestion but did have a little worry because it was not budgeted for and also had concerns that every time he proposes a raise for the employees, then it turns around and looks like he is trying to give himself a raise. He shared the reason why a decent raise was given to our employees was because for many, many years basically a cost of living raise was given that the majority was eaten up by health care costs. Rosie Coyle advised she and the Mayor talked about this in length and both concluded that they felt they did not want to take an increase this year so that the employees could have the majority. She suggested they could maybe catch up next year. Jennifer Romano felt for the sake of fiscal responsibility Council needed to keep in line with the budget that has been agreed upon. She advised it did not discredit the work of the Mayor and Clerk Treasurer but felt they needed to keep to the budget. Dan Weigold suggested they could look at it next year. Nicole Penrod stressed that she did not want the Mayor to feel like by giving the employees a raise people would think he was giving himself a raise. She did note that the budget was an issue.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve Ordinance 2019-20 as first reading, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**RESOLUTION 2019-23: 2019 DELETION OF APPROPRIATIONS** Motion was made by Nicole Penrod to read Resolution 2019-23 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Resolution 2019-23 an emergency resolution providing for the deletion of appropriations for several departments of the City of Columbia City, Indiana for the Year 2019 for the action and passage pursuant to IC 6-1.1-18-6.

Mayor Daniel shared the really great news was our tax rate was going down 7¢ next year and our assessed valuation went up \$30 million. He shared the bad news was, whether your community was growing or dying, you are basically capped at 2% growth in your budget, which is challenging so with that comes these deletions of appropriations in order to effectively save money for next year's budget.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve Resolution 2019-23 on first and final reading, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**RESOLUTION 2019-24: 2019 TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS** Motion was made by Tad Varga to read Resolution 2019-24 by title only, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Resolution 2019-24 an emergency resolution providing for the transfer of appropriations for several departments of the City of Columbia City, Indiana for the year 2019 for the action and passage pursuant to IC 6-1.1-18-6.

Motion was made by Walt Crowder to approve Resolution 2019-24 on first and final reading, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS** **Scott Leatherman** – update on police department hiring process, upcoming Patrolling for Presents. **Chip Hill** – update on fundraising for Ohki Alley. **Mike Shoda** – winterizing wellhouses, Well 8 back in service. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – leaf pickup. **Mike Cook** – update on 600 E project, met with United Consulting on the phosphorus reduction project, update on the CSO project, winterizing and completing small projects.

**YOUTH COUNCIL** Brianna Laux was present to give an update on the Youth Council.

**BOY SCOUTS TROOP 82** Matthew Boyd questioned what the Council had planned for the old Hardees building and property.

Mayor Daniel explained Hardees did go out of business and the building was for sale. He heard the building was not in great shape, which was a challenge in selling it. He advised City Government could help bridge the gap with infrastructure or utility needs but because it was privately owned we did not have a lot of control over it.

Steven Boyd questioned the future plans for the old hospital property. Mayor Daniel explained Passages and Whitley Crossings owns the property and shared they have a housing project planned for that property.

**DISPATCH CENTER FUNDS** Rosie Coyle stated Council authorized \$275,000.00 out of the LOIT and if more was needed it would need to be requested. She advised they were over by \$31,000 and requested an increase in appropriations by that amount.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve appropriations for the Dispatch Center, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**COLUMBIA SHORES – BEVER DAM** Dan Weigold reported there was a beaver problem on the southeast side of Columbia Shores. He advised there was a property that is being flooded and in their investigation found about a 4 ft. dam being built. He shared it was on school property; school employees went back to try and tear it out but the beaver's built it back up. He advised they now believe there are 4 beaver's back there. He noted he talked with the Mayor about it and as soon as conversations can happen with the school they can hopefully go in and trap the beaver's to relocate them then tear out the dams.

**GOLF CARTS** Dan Weigold noted awhile back a gentleman approached the Council about making some changes to the golf cart ordinance and felt a formal conversation was needed to get him an answer.

Jennifer Romano advised the discussion never ends about golf carts. She noted a decision was made a couple years ago on what the bottom end age would be but it could certainly be revisited. Dan Weigold felt when something was brought to the table a discussion still needed to be held.

Walt Crowder confirmed with Jennifer Romano awhile back an individual met with the Ordinance Committee to do some brainstorming on what they were wanting. Jennifer Romano advised they did. Walt Crowder suggested that happen again so they can hear both sides.

Dan Weigold requested to be on the Ordinance Committee since Walt Crowder stepped down.

Mayor Daniel confirmed the direction was that the individual would be invited to an Ordinance Committee meeting to brainstorm about their requests. Jennifer Romano advised that was correct.

**CHRISTMAS LIGHTING** Jennifer Romano advised the judging for the residential Christmas lighting contest would be the first week of December with winner's being announced at the first Council meeting in December.

Rosie Coyle questioned if Council would have a problem doing away with giving out plaques to the winners. She advised it was sometimes hard to get done. Jennifer Romano suggested printing out certificates, which would be easier. She noted it was sometimes hard getting the plaques delivered. Rosie Coyle advised they still get the checks and the overall winner gets their name on the big plaque in City Hall.

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