

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2020
6:00 PM**

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

Council Members

Walter Crowder – Present
Jennifer Reffitt – 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.

MINTUES Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve an overview of the September 22, 2020 meeting minutes as presented, Jennifer Reffitt seconded the motion, Walt Crowder, Jennifer Reffitt, Jennifer Romano and Dan Weigold voted aye, Tad Varga abstained.

ALLEY VACATE – ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS – ORDINANCE 2020-11 2ND READING

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2020-11 by title only, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2020-11 vacation of public way.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve Ordinance 2020-11 on second and final reading, Jennifer Reffitt seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2020-27: 2021 EMPLOYEE SALARY ORDINANCE – 2ND READING

Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to read Ordinance 2020-27 by title only, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2020-27 an ordinance to be known as the 2021 salary range/benefit ordinance.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve Ordinance 2020-27 on second and final reading, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

2021 BUDGET APPROVAL – ORDINANCE 2020-25 2ND READING Motion was made by

Dan Weigold to read Ordinance 2020-25 by title only, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2020-25 an ordinance for appropriations and tax rates.

Mayor Daniel noted there was not much change from the year before.

Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to approve Ordinance 2020-25 on second and final reading, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

EXCESS LEVY APPEAL Mayor Daniel noted this was something we have not done, a process called excess levy appeal. He explained it basically gives communities like ours, which are continually growing above the rate in which we are allowed to grow our budget, some ability to gain additional dollars towards the budget. He shared there was an excess levy appeal petition in front of Council for approval. He advised we were looking to get an additional \$70,000 into our general fund.

Mayor Daniel explained the way in which the State gives the ability to grow the budget is they give a growth factor and by that factor we are allowed to raise our budget within that factor. He advised the challenge was if our assessed valuation grows by 10%, which it has pretty consistently over the past couple of years, and our budget is only able to grow by 4% then there is a 6% difference and we cannot capture that. He shared the excess levy appeal gives us the ability to capture a portion of that and put towards our budget. He stated to keep in mind that because our tax rate continues to go down this really is more of a leveling off than an actual increase per say. He shared it has been at least 3 years where our growth has outpaced our actual budget growth ability.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve the excess levy appeal as presented, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

POLICY CHANGES: BEREAVEMENT – SHORT TERM DISABILITY FMLA Beth Igney, Human Resource Director, was present to discuss proposed changes to the bereavement and short term disability policies. She shared the purpose for the changes were because of requests by employees to review the policies. She advised she polled other city and counties to see how ours compared.

Beth Igney stated quite a bit had been added to the bereavement leave and reviewed those changes. She noted they were proposing to increase the days given for a spouse and child to 7 days from 5 days. She added if more time was needed past the 7 days it would fall onto the short term disability policy. She explained FMLA was referenced because 3 days could be taken before FMLA would start so potentially an employee could take a total of 10 days off. She shared that was kind of what the employees were discussing; they were comparing it to our paid parental policy in that the City gives 10 days for the birth of a child.

Jennifer Romano questioned if it made any sense to make it non-consecutive; the policy states consecutive days of leave and wondered about maybe needing 3 days one week and 4 days some other time. Rosie Coyle explained they changed it to consecutive specifically because of the fire department because they work 24 hrs. then are off 48 hrs. so they potentially could have a month off. She felt if there was a big issue they could work through it. Jennifer Romano clarified there could be flexibility. Beth Igney advised there could and was why the 3 days short term disability was added; they could even get FMLA if they needed time beyond that.

Mayor Daniel mentioned one of the concepts when this policy was created was to give the ability for the individual to grieve but also time for the funeral and gathering with family. He suggested this policy was probably not completely all-inclusive, as everyone grieves differently, but they

were trying to make it better than it was. He noted another thing was, with the changes in society, we are seeing more grandparents, aunts & uncles raising their non-biological children and tried to put a piece in the policy that recognizes this shift.

Walt Crowder questioned with all of the homework and comparisons if the question about consecutive days was asked. Beth Igney advised it was not; mostly just how many days were given for each family member. Walt Crowder suggested Council could approve the changes but could always amend the policy if more information was gained from other locations regarding consecutive vs. nonconsecutive, unless it was not worth the effort. Beth Igney was not sure it would be worth the effort but would be happy to do that if it was something Council wanted her to do. She stressed they have to be careful, because the fire department is different with hours and work schedule, to keep everything as equal as possible. Rosie Coyle advised she and Attorney McNagny worked together to come up with this because of that issue.

Jennifer Romano questioned if it was tied to the date of death. Beth Igney advised it usually starts from the date of death but there was a provision in the policy that allows for flexibility if the funeral is delayed.

Dan Weigold noted there might be legal things that would have to be taken care of at a later date and questioned if that could be used as bereavement. He just wondered about the consecutive days. Jennifer Romano shared that was what she was having a hard time with, the term consecutive, because a lot of times there were things that have to be dealt with weeks later. Dan Weigold noted he has also seen where it has been taken advantage of too.

Jennifer Reffitt questioned if, for those employees who work 24 hr. shifts, could have a different stipulation. Beth Igney shared they could look at that idea.

Rosie Coyle felt what was being presented was very good. She understood time might need to be taken later but this policy was for taking care of the funeral and to cover the bereavement of when someone passes. She shared if an employee needs time off a month or so later then that is when they need to use personal time.

Walt Crowder advised he liked the non-consecutive timeline because there were a lot of factors that broaden the situation for each individual and would like to see that. Jennifer Romano agreed with that. Rosie Coyle questioned if someone took 2 days off for a funeral and then take time off 3 months down the road, that should be included. Walt Crowder suggested it was something that should be talked about. Jennifer Romano suggested maybe it would involve showing proof for taking the time off. Rosie Coyle felt it needed to be consecutive because of issues we have had; employees have other time they can take. She advised they put “consecutive” in because of the issues. Mike Shoda felt 2 or 3 months would be out of line; maybe within the first two weeks. Jennifer Romano suggested going out a month. Mayor Daniel questioned if there was any value in separating into non-public safety and public safety. He felt the tight rope we are going to have to walk was to make sure it was fair to everyone but at the same time we have 3 different work schedules in our organization.

Walt Crowder questioned if it would help to identify if someone was an Executor then they would qualify for non-consecutive because at that stage it is a slow process.

Rosie Coyle noted another issue was with keeping track through payroll. She shared her opinion was this policy was for bereavement and taking care of funeral arrangements. She felt if someone was an Executor and needed to take time off down the road they need to take personal time. Beth Igney shared she reviews the time sheets and has noticed employees who have taken funeral time off but there was no attachment to the timesheet as to who it was for. She noted there-in comes the issue Rosie is talking about in that we will have to track down people if there is no documentation with the time sheet. She shared if time is split up the employee would then need to provide proof for the reason they took off.

Dan Weigold pointed out son-in-law and daughter-in-law was not specifically listed. After some discussion it was decided to have those listed under #1.

Dan Weigold understood where everyone was coming from. He questioned Tom LaRue and Scott Leatherman if this would be beneficially to their departments or add more confusion. Tom LaRue shared in watching what some of his co-workers have gone through; it was a real kick in the hind-end when 2 weeks was given for the celebration of a child and very little time upon the death of one. He felt that is what spurred this conversation. He felt it was a real discussion that needed to be had, whether it benefits his department or not, the individuals who go through such a traumatic experience need to be dealt with accordingly. Scott Leatherman noted it leads to the mental health of the employee. He felt, clearly, it was tough and noted some places do not give anything for it.

Beth Igney questioned if it would help, with the non-consecutive, if she put in language regarding being an Executor. Rosie Coyle did not feel we should. Walt Crowder questioned if it was possible, once time has concluded but more time is needed and is not written as such in the policy, would that fall back onto the Mayor, Human Resources or Rosie to make an exception. Jennifer Reffitt noted it would just go to short term disability. Beth Igney advised at that point she would sit down with the employee to discuss options.

Tom LaRue felt this was another one of those scenarios that needs to be stressed to our new employees the importance of saving up their sick time. He suggested not getting caught up on the consecutive time because it's the 2 weeks, 3 weeks, 3 months later that they are going to need days to get away. He felt the way this policy is drafted is very well because it helps the department heads manage the initial time off but it also gives the employee the ability to use the short term disability if they need.

Walt Crowder confirmed what he was hearing was it needs to say consecutive but if it needs to be adjusted there were other options. He suggested if they find something that needs to be addressed after the fact they can always amend the policy. Mayor Daniel suggested, if it would please the Council, they could put a provision in the policy that upon approval by the H.R. Director and Mayor days could be spread out on certain circumstances. He advised it would not be standard practice but it would give some flexibility in regards to that. Jennifer Romano questioned Rosie Coyle if they could do that. Rosie Coyle felt in certain circumstances they

could work with the employee. Jennifer Romano felt if there was some assurance there could be some flexibility she would like to see that. Walt Crowder liked the suggestion of giving the Mayor executive authorization along with H.R.

Mayor Daniel advised if Council would like, he could have Beth Igney add some language to bring up at the next meeting for approval. Council was in agreement.

Mayor Daniel questioned Council if they would like to move forward with approving the changes under the Short Term Disability Leave.

Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to approve Section 5.1 Short Term Disability Leave, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2020-28 TRAFFIC AMENDMENT – 1ST READING Mayor Daniel requested to table this ordinance. He advised he sent a letter out to the residents informing them that this would be discussed the first meeting of November.

ORDINANCE 2020-29 AMENDMENT TO FIRE PREVENTION CODE – 1ST READING Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2020-29 by title only, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2020-29 an ordinance amending Chapter 94, Fire Prevention Code, of Title IX of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Tom LaRue explained the ordinance currently states that a building only required one Knox Box but when it comes to strip malls, they are one long building, so they needed to change the ordinance to state that each business needs a Knox Box. He explained a Knox Box was a keyed entry system so the fire department can access the business.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2020-29 on first reading, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

RESOLUTION 2020-30 REIMBURSEMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY PAYROLL – CARES ACT Mayor Daniel requested to table this until the first meeting in November.

AIR PACKS – FIRE DEPARTMENT Tom LaRue explained the current air packs were 20 years or older. He shared they have taken parts from one pack to use on another just to be able to get them to pass inspection. He advised there were still features that were not functional on at least ¼ to ½ of them. He shared the new packs would have a lot of upgrades. He explained the costs and where the funds would be coming from. He advised his preference would be to go ahead and order the whole amount so they do not end up with two different types of air packs. He explained there was about a 6 month lead time and payment would not be due until delivery. He questioned Council if he could use \$90,000 from the CARES Act to offset the \$278,430 and go ahead and order the entire amount knowing it would be 6 months before they get them.

Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to approve \$89,545.75 from CARES Act for air packs, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Scott Leatherman** – update on Sierra Wireless units and judicial sharing, picked up new vehicle, moving forward with police interviews. **Mike Shoda** – changing out meters. **Shawn Lickey** – routine maintenance, downsized service to the Post & Mail, approval for digger derrick truck. **Tom LaRue** – trucks in need of repairs, consider lift for mechanic that can handle the larger trucks.

MAYOR REPORT Health Fair coming up, Penguin Point grand opening scheduled for October 21st, first Youth Council meeting will be held virtually, he will be out of town the last week of October.

LAST MEETING OF 2020 Rosie Coyle questioned Council if they would be willing to move the last meeting of the year from December 22 to December 29. Council was in agreement.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle