

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 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 Reffitt to approve an overview of the November 11, 2020 meeting minutes as presented, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2020-28 TRAFFIC ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – 2ND READING Motion was made by Tad Varga to read Ordinance 2020-28 by title only, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye. Deputy Clerk Treasurer Sally Wherry read Ordinance 2020-28 an Ordinance amending Chapter 75, Traffic Schedules, of Title VII of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel noted this was regarding the 4-way stop at Chauncey and Spencer Streets.

Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to approve Ordinance 2020-28 on second and final reading, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2020-35 HAZARD PAY FOR PUBLIC SAFETY – SALARY ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – 2ND READING Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2020-35 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Deputy Clerk Treasurer Sally Wherry read Ordinance 2020-35 an Ordinance amending the City of Columbia City Salary Ordinance for 2020.

Mayor Daniel reminded Council this was the change to include hazard pay which was a one-time bonus for public safety employees due to Covid.

Tad Varga noted he questioned this at the last meeting and talked with some people in his office and within the community about it. He shared he had two concerns; once the money comes out of the \$297,000.00 it's gone and was concerned that maybe later down the line we may need those funds for emergency purposes. He advised he did not want to state this to sound like they did not work hard or do their job because they obviously did, it was trying times. He was just concerned because once we spend that \$40,000 then that money is gone and could not be utilized

for other things that may come up. He also questioned if there was another way to utilize that money to benefit those employees in the form of some type of preventative kits with vitamins, etc. so that they would not be at risk as much. He felt those funds could be spent in other areas but was unsure what those areas were at this point.

Jennifer Reffitt understood where Tad was coming from being a business minded person herself. She advised we have never had to deal with something like this and felt they did deserve some type of Covid pay since they had to work while other's got to stay at home; they put their lives on the line and exposure to their families.

Walt Crowder noted this would be a one-time event and wanted to make sure they were not setting precedence. He felt it had value and did not disagree with what Tad was saying but felt we had an opportunity to reward the ones that were at high risk.

Jennifer Romano agreed and felt our public safety walk into dangerous situations daily. She felt any opportunity to show our employees of the City that we value them was important.

Dan Weigold advised he was absolutely on board with this.

Mayor Daniel advised he did not disagree with what Tad was saying and appreciated the effort in talking to with people to get other opinions. Tad Varga stressed he understood the risks there, it was their job and was not saying they did not deserve it, he just felt that large amount of money could possibly be used in a more significant way to impact our entire community. He suggested maybe they could look at doing something for the community with the funds that would be left. Mayor Daniel advised he would be interested in looking at what Tad was suggesting.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2020-35 on second and final reading, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2020-33: PRETREATMENT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – 2ND

READING Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to read ordinance 2020-33 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Deputy Clerk Treasurer Sally Wherry read Ordinance 2020-33 an Ordinance amending Chapter 55, Pretreatment of Pollutants, of Title V of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel noted this ordinance would change a few of the pretreatment pieces that incorporate the phosphorous.

Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to approve Ordinance 2020-33 on second and final reading, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2020-34: SEWER ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – 2ND READING

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to read Ordinance 2020-34 by title only, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye. Deputy Clerk Treasurer Sally Wherry read Ordinance 2020-34 an Ordinance amending Chapter 51, Sewage Service, of Title V of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel noted this was to change the phosphorous limits to represent what we have to do from IDEM.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to approve Ordinance 2020-34 on second and final reading, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2020-26: 2021 ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARY ORDINANCE – 2ND

READING Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to read Ordinance 2020-26 by title only, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye. Deputy Clerk Treasurer Sally Wherry read Ordinance 2020-26 an Ordinance fixing the annual salaries of all elected officials of the City of Columbia City, Indiana effective December 19, 2020 for the year 2021.

Mayor Daniel noted there were no raises but there would be 27 pays as opposed to 26 pays for 2021.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve Ordinance 2020-26 on second and final reading, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

EXECUTIVE’S DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY Mayor Daniel advised on November 19 he issued an executive order and declaration of local emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic. He shared this was the second time he has had to do this this year and noted our cases have risen significantly and were now considered a red county. He advised the declaration basically mirrors what was done in April; access to City Hall and other City buildings is restricted to appointment only, broadcasting meetings on Facebook Live, he has asked any meetings that were not City related be cancelled, deeming certain services as essential and giving the police department the ability to take lawful action to reduce the risks. He noted the parks would remain open; he had discussions with the Health Department who encouraged keeping the parks open so people could continue to do outdoor activities.

Mayor Daniel advised his emergency declaration could only last 7 days without the ratification of City Council. He asked for an extension through the end of the year and if it needs to be extended further he would bring it up at the last meeting in December.

Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to have City Council ratify the emergency order and extend it through January 1, 2021, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion.

Tad Varga questioned if they extend the order out another 6 weeks, if the climate changes could this be rescinded. Mayor Daniel advised it absolutely could.

Upon the motion, all voted aye.

DISCUSSION ON STORM WATER PERMITTING FEES Mayor Daniel reminded Council this was discussed at the City retreat. He shared the permitting fee currently is \$50. He explained the vast majority of projects since that fee was put in place have lost money because we pay the Whitley County Soil & Water Conservation District to be our monitors. He advised

John Gotz has done a fantastic job of going out and monitoring sites to make sure they are following MS4 protocol.

Mayor Daniel proposed a new fee schedule to be based on the development acreage; developments of 1 acre or less would be a \$500 fee, developments of 1.1 - 9.9 acres would be a \$1,000 fee and developments of 10 or more acres would be a \$1,500.00 fee. He explained that was based on what our costs have been for a lot of the major projects. He noted the cost comparison was in Council's drop box. He felt this would be one way in which we can basically pay for the different storm water permit issues and puts us in line with other communities our size.

Jennifer Reffitt questioned if this would only be for business developments. Mayor Daniel advised it would be for housing, business or any development that would take a storm water permit. Jennifer Reffitt was surprised we only charge \$50; she did not feel the proposed amounts were that much of a fee for a business.

Tad Varga remembered discussing this in length at the retreat and felt it made absolute perfect sense to go forward.

Mayor Daniel confirmed with Council that everyone was ok with having Attorney McNagny draft this proposed change. All were in agreement. Mayor Daniel asked Attorney McNagny to draft the amendment for the next Council meeting.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTING COMPETITION Jennifer Romano advised they sent out a press release and posted on social media regarding the Christmas lighting contest. She asked everything be up and ready for judging by December 1. She asked for nominations and recommendations be turned into her. She advised prizes would be awarded to each district and an overall winner.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle