

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2021
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 January 26, 2021 meeting minutes as presented, Jennifer Reffitt seconded the motion, all voted aye.

JASON MEYER – PASSAGES MERGER WITH EASTERSEALS ARC AND WHITLEY CROSSINGS MERGER WITH BRIGHTPOINT

Jason Meyer shared Passages was merging with Easterseals ARC effective March 1 and will become Easterseals Passages. He advised it would give them a lot of opportunities for the individuals they serve at Passages as well as new programs and services. He stated although Easterseals is located in Fort Wayne they would still have their office at the Creative Learning Center on Oak Street. He advised they were very excited for the opportunity it will give their Direct Support Staff. He explained they have traditionally been challenged with pay but with this merge they have already been able to raise wages by \$1 per hour and then will be doing more increases on March 1st when the merger officially happens. He shared he would remain as the Executive Director for Easterseals Passages and all money raised in Whitley County will stay in Whitley County.

Jason Meyer advised they would also be merging Whitley Crossings, which was their housing corporation, with Brightpoint. He shared both of their employees would be transitioning as Brightpoint employees but will remain here in Whitley County.

Mayor Daniel questioned if both mergers would be effective March 1st. Jason Meyer advised Passages would be for sure but Whitley Crossings may take a little longer due to the complexity of the projects.

ORDINANCE 2021-1: VACATE ALLEY 605 E. ELLSWORTH; RYAN AND JULIE

BRIGGS – 1ST READING Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to read Ordinance 2021-1 by title only, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2021-1 an ordinance Vacation of Public Way.

Mayor Daniel reported the public hearing was scheduled for the next meeting.

Motion was made by Walt Crowder to approve Ordinance 2021-1 on first reading, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2021-2: ELECTRIC RATE INCREASE – 1ST READING Motion was made by Tad Varga to read Ordinance 2021-2 by title only, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2021-2 City of Columbia City, Indiana an ordinance amending the rates charges for the City of Columbia City Municipal Electric Utility.

Attorney McNagny advised she ran this by Buzz Krohn to make sure everything was in order. She noted we were going with 2 phases and the ordinance discusses the starting point for each phase.

Shawn Lickey, Electric Superintendent, shared that no one likes to raise rates but felt it was our responsibility, especially since we have left the IURC, that we put our rates in a reasonable range. He noted it was irresponsible to wait 12 more years to do an increase and have discussed looking at this a little more frequently than once every 12 years to try and make a more regular adjustment to our rates for the customer.

Mayor Daniel noted the public hearing would be held at the next meeting and asked Council members to be present in person if possible. He shared the council chambers would be open to the public as there would be multiple public hearings that evening.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2021-2 on first reading, Jennifer Reffitt seconded the motion, all voted aye.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2021-2 Mayor Daniel reminded Council he asked for an extension of the Executive Order back in January and asked for retroactive approval of the order until February 26.

Motion was made by Walt Crowder to retroactively approve the executive order as requested, Jennifer Reffitt seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2021-3 AMENDING TEXT OF CHAPTER 6 OF ZONING ORDINANCE Nathan Bilger, Planning Director, explained the proposal was to remove the current 3,000 square foot maximum building size for Local Business District zoning. He shared this came up with the Community Foundation rezone and advised no one was sure why it was there or how it would apply. He explained in looking at the existing properties that were zoned LB it appeared that half or more were non-conforming. He felt it was easiest and most appropriate to just strike out the 3,000 square foot building size or enclosed space size. He advised the Plan Commission passed with favorable recommendation.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2021-3 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2021-3 an ordinance amending the text of Chapter 6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve Ordinance 2021-3 on first reading, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS – AQUATICS CENTER Mayor Daniel noted much of this was just updating the job descriptions with one new position for a swim coach position.

Motion was made by Jennifer Reffitt to approve the Assistant Aquatics Center Manager position description as presented, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve the Aquatic Center Head Swim Coach position description as presented, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to approve the Aquatics Center Lifeguard position description as presented, Jennifer Reffitt seconded the motion, all voted aye.

OLD HIGH SCHOOL PROPERTY – SWAIL Chip Hill shared they had a quote from D and R Demolition and Wigent Excavating to do the swale work at the old high school property. He noted D and R quoted a not to exceed amount of \$147,000.00 and Wigent Excavating quoted a base price of \$17,895.00 with the unit price for all material quite a bit cheaper.

Mayor Daniel questioned if the quote from Wigent's was before the school moves the topography, after or did not matter. Chip Hill advised Wigent's quote was for what the scope of work should be. He expressed a concern with what D and R's scope of work would be and how much the school would be involved. He felt this was a backburner project for the school and their goal was the new school.

Jennifer Reffitt felt they needed to talk to the current contractor to see exactly how they were going to leave the property. She advised she was leaning towards going local because they were significantly cheaper plus it would be helping out our local community.

Jennifer Romano felt very strongly about supporting our local contractor. She advised there would obviously be a lot of work in this project and felt a local contractor would have a little bit of themselves in the project and would want to do their very best.

Chip Hill agreed. He reported he had a meeting on site with the demolition company and got the feeling that they felt they already had the job. He shared in his experience when there is an "up to" amount it is kind of like an open paycheck.

Mayor Daniel felt the goal was really to see if it was something we needed to move quickly on or let D and R finish at the site and then come in and do what we want to have done. He reminded Council that this was something we had not necessarily budgeted for and felt this puts us in a good position to take a step back and not rush into a decision.

Dan Weigold shared he did not mind taking a step back but also did not feel like it should sit for too long. He noted at least the public would see we were not just going to leave a hole in the ground. Mayor Daniel advised the school has said D and R would taper and seed the area but the

question would be if we wanted them to go to that effort if we would come in shortly after and move dirt.

Walt Crowder questioned Chip Hill if he had a good feel for D and R's scope of work. Chip Hill advised he was confident in their work but they were a demolition company, not a site restoration company, which has been made very clear to him on several occasions. He said everything, for him, was pointing to Wigent's.

Tad Varga felt Wigent's made perfect sense, they came back with a quote that was much more affordable and were local. He advised he was in favor of using Wigent's.

Mayor Daniel felt everyone was on the same page. He advised he would follow up with Mark Green and shared he would get with the school corporation on timeline for seeding.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Shawn Lickey** – contesting ruling with IURC, working with Attorney McNagny on the AEP agreement for 69 kv conversion project, Angie Hildebrand and he were working with IDEM on fuel pump certification, installed electric service to the new underground retention basin on west Ellsworth Street. **Chip Hill** – Board of Works approval with A & Z on Westgate project, approved contract with ERI for trail to new high school.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported Tree Board met and were reviewing ordinances and processes, Burkes Outlet ribbon cutting, good phone conversation with Mediacom on coverage areas, lunch with the Mayor was scheduled for February 19 and will be broadcasting from The Van Buren Flats, State of the City is scheduled for March 5.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle