

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021
6:00 PM**

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

Council Members

Walter Crowder – Present
Jennifer Middleton – 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 Tad Varga to approve an overview of the August 24, 2021, meeting minutes as presented, Jenny Middleton seconded the motion, Walt Crowder, Jenny Middleton, Tad Varga and Dan Weigold voted aye, Jennifer Romano abstained.

AMY BIGGS – WC MULTI-HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN ADOPTION Amy Biggs with Whitley County Emergency Management was present to discuss the Whitley County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. She explained the plan was a FEMA requirement which was necessary to evaluate our County as a whole, specifically all of the cities and towns within. She explained it looks at the threats and hazards associated with our community, where the highest risks were and the resources we have to minimize or reduce that type of impact. She advised the plan was funded through a grant and cost \$0 to the County or any subsidiary of the County. She noted every County was required to adopt a plan if choosing to seek any kind of reimbursement from any type of natural disaster. She advised she was requesting adoption of a resolution on behalf of Columbia City so if there would be a natural disaster, FEMA reimbursement funds could be allocated back to the City.

Tad Varga questioned how often this would need to be renewed. Amy Biggs advised it would be every 5 years.

Mayor Daniel requested a sample resolution be sent over so we know what the language should be and then will be placed on the next meeting agenda. Amy Biggs advised she would do that.

PETITION FOR ANNEXATION: WHITLEY COUNTY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

Mayor Daniel explained this was for the second tract of the school property and should be the final tract to be annexed. Rosie Coyle advised the public hearing will be held on October 12.

ORDINANCE 2021-21 ANNEXATION 1ST READING Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2021-21 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2021-21 an ordinance of the City Council of the

City of Columbia City, Indiana annexing a 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.

Mayor Daniel noted this was 100% voluntary annexation.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve Ordinance 2021-21 on first reading, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

PETITION FOR ANNEXATION: SCHRADER REAL ESTATE Mayor Daniel reminded Council that the new portion of the Schrader Real Estate building was split inside/outside the City limits. He shared in working with R.D and Schrader Real Estate they were moving forward with the annexation of the property to keep it all within City limits.

ORDINANCE 2021-22: ANNEXATION 1ST READING Motion was made by Jenny Middleton to read Ordinance 2021-22 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2021-22 an ordinance of the City of Columbia City, Indiana annexing certain territory to the City of Columbia City, Indiana, placing the same within the corporate boundaries there of and making the same a part of the City of Columbia City.

Motion was made by Jenny Middleton to approve Ordinance 2021-22 on first reading, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

JOB DESCRIPTION AMENDMENT: MEDICAL TRAINER Fire Chief Tom LaRue explained this was not a new job description but it was currently set at the rank of Captain and needed to separate the two. He shared the fire engineer who will be taking over the position was not currently a Captain.

Mayor Daniel confirmed the position should report to the Chief. Chief LaRue advised that was correct.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve the position description for Medical Trainer as presented, Jenny Middleton seconded the motion, all voted aye.

REDISTRICTING UPDATE Mayor Daniel explained they put together a team in regard to redistricting of the City. He shared some districts have grown while others not as much. He advised a committee made up of Attorney McNagny, Rosie Coyle, Dan Weigold, Jessica Hockemeyer, and himself have started to look at the maps of the districts. He noted they were made aware of a law change that allows for communities under the population of 10,000 to go from 4 districts and 1 at-large to 3 districts and 2 at-large. He shared as they talked through that idea, they felt it was something to bring to Council to discuss. He advised we could not make the official change until 2022 per State law. He asked Council members to think about the idea of the 3-2 model rather than the 4-1 model. He shared it was a little challenging to do the districts in their current forms because of where the growth has taken place. He advised he was not advocating one way or another and was merely presenting information to talk about.

Dan Weigold advised they spent a considerable amount of time trying to balance out the districts. He advised it was very challenging. Mayor Daniel explained they could not split Census blocks and the challenge was they were playing with a puzzle where the pieces were not equal. He felt it would be easier to do 3 districts but also understood we have had 4 districts forever so would be a change in precedent.

Walt Crowder questioned if the Council at-large would still have 360-degree responsibility or would one be north and one south or east/west. Mayor Daniel advised at-large was elected by the full City populous so both individuals would be at-large full City elections.

Jennifer Romano questioned if we would move to that would we have to run a special election to fill those positions. Mayor Daniel we would not as that would take effect with the 2023 election, which is why we need to have it in place by 2022.

Tad Varga questioned the timeline for coming up with a decision. Mayor Daniel shared the County has to establish the precincts in October of this year in order to prepare for the election next year. He explained if we go to 3 districts we would not do the formal vote until next year as well as the Council maps.

Walt Crowder questioned if there were any locations that would be exempt from being counted such as churches, businesses, etc. Mayor Daniel advised they would not necessarily get a vote but every part of the County has to be included in a district. Walt Crowder shared when out talking with people the thing he heard the most from our businesspeople was they invest their time, efforts and money in our community but have no voting rights because they do not have a local address. He wondered if there was opportunity there. Jenny Middleton was not sure we could do that because she had a business and residence in Columbia City but could not vote twice. Mayor Daniel advised he understood and when talking with other communities it was all about where you live.

Mayor Daniel advised he would like to have a general idea of direction at the next meeting.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Mark Green** – working on 5-year plan, football games have started, soccer starts this weekend, reported on turkey buzzard issue at the park and have contacted the DNR for assistance, waiting on final quote for seeding at the old high school property. **Mike Cook** – LTCP meeting and final inspection, vault set at 700 E., contacted by Culligan to demo units to see if the water could be used and save money, rebuilding roof on shelter over the Dystor. **Mike Shoda** – repaired leak at Market and Main, Board approved repair and rebuild of Well #7. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – Niblock will be starting street repairs around October 10, helping Fire Dept. with new training facility, update on City Hall sidewalk project. **Gary Parrett** – training, intern riding with Officer Ayers, preparing for homecoming parade, continue to update policies and procedures. **Tom LaRue** – update on fire training facility, Doug Reed retired and were working on getting the lateral transfer process going, absences due to COVID. **Terry Wherry** – important update from Apple. **Shawn Lickey** – update on 69 kV conversion and by-pass switch, Main Street light improvement project. **Chip Hill** – training at Ball State, Plan Commission approved a standalone Starbucks, moving forward at Westgate.

YOUTH COUNCIL Amelia Story gave an update on what the Youth Council has been doing.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported on the ribbon cutting for Autumn Trace senior living community, will be attending the Mayors/Commissioners Caucus at Trine University, will be out of the office and to contact Walt Crowder in his absence.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Tad Varga reported they had about 2 years left on the soil testing for the old Cardinal Grain property. He advised they did a brainstorming session on how they could help improve certain sections of town, buildings, etc.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle