

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2023
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 virtually
Tad Varga – Present
Daniel Weigold – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members present with Jennifer Romano present virtually. Mayor Daniel called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. All stood to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES Dan Weigold made a motion to approve the December 12, 2023, meeting minutes as presented, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, on the voice vote all voted aye.

REZONE: FARM CREDIT MID-AMERICA CORNER OF CONNEXION WAY AND LINCOLNWAY Mayor Daniel reminded Council this was brought up at the last meeting and that Nathan Bilger was not able to attend but is present this evening.

Mayor Daniel noted there was a little conversation at the last meeting about a second drive and some concerns with that. He mentioned the amount of traffic in that location but also questioned the reason as to why they were making the move from North Street to Lincolnway. Nathan Bilger, Planning and Building Director, shared he had no idea. He advised their Contractor expressed the same thought, especially since they just remodeled their current building. He explained in terms of the driveways, during the development plan review, the original proposal was to have a driveway off of Lincolnway and off of Connexion Way, but the Code really only calls for one or the other. He further explained that in order to give them some latitude, as they really want the Lincolnway driveway, the Planning Commission conditioned that they have to have a traffic study completed. He advised they were proceeding forward with a traffic study so will see what those recommendations are.

Dan Weigold questioned who would pay for the study. Nathan Bilger advised it would be 100% on Farm Credit.

ORDINANCE 2023-22 REZONE: CONNEXION WAY AT LINCOLNWAY – 2ND READING Tad Varga made a motion to read Ordinance 2023-22. Jennifer Middleton seconded the motion, on the voice vote all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-22 an Ordinance amending the zoning classification of certain property from the “A-1” Agricultural District to the “GB” General Business District.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-22 on second and final reading. Jennifer Middleton seconded the motion, on the voice vote all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2023-23 ADD LIFE SAFETY AND FIRE PROTECTION REPORTS – 2ND READING Jennifer Middleton made a motion to read Ordinance 2023-23 by title only. Tad Varga seconded the motion, on the voice vote all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-23 City of Columbia City, Indiana an Ordinance amending Chapter 94 to add Life, Safety and Fire Protection reports for the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Walt Crowder made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-23 on second and final reading. Tad Varga seconded the motion, on the voice vote all voted aye.

EMPLOYEE POLICY: UPDATE Beth Igney explained the changes were a result of House Bill 1033 from 2021. She noted she did not pursue making changes right away to make sure it was going to pass. She advised Attorney McNagny reviewed the policy. Mayor Daniel noted this basically changes some of the residency requirements for Police and Fire.

Dan Weigold made a motion to approve the change in Policy 3.1. Tad Varga seconded the motion, on the voice vote all voted aye.

RESOLUTION 2023-24: TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS Jennifer Middleton made a motion to read Resolution 2023-24 by title only. Tad Varga seconded the motion, on the voice vote all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Resolution 2023-24 an emergency Resolution providing for the transfer of appropriations for several departments of the City of Columbia City, Indiana for the year 2023 for the action and passage pursuant to IC 6-1.1-18-6.

Rosie Coyle explained this was the transferring of money to accounts that were in the hole or had money left over. She advised the reductions and additions equal out and were within the department's budget.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-24 as presented. Tad Varga seconded the motion, on the voice vote all voted aye.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Chip Hill** - meeting with Westgate residents, update on 100 S. sewer project including change order involving trees and a pump, bid opening for Eagle Park scheduled for January 22nd Park Board meeting then will bring to Board of Works for their acceptance, Board of Works approved a contract with USI Consultants to bore under SR 205 to extend the water main to the Connie Dye property. **Terry Wherry** - fiber terminated and installed for the Eagle Park office sign, cameras installed in the conference room at Eagle Park and were waiting on software to set them up, Water Departments fiber terminated to their 2 wells and hope to have that project complete in another week or so, waiting on Baseline to install fiber for the Booster Station so we can get that up on the SCADA network, break in fiber ring at Morsches Park above the pond. **Mike Shoda** - update on South Chuancey stormwater separation project. **Gary Parrett** - Chris Anderson selected as Deputy Chief, Ryan Bogner and Casey Hershberger doing well in the FTO process, in Dispatch Sarah McGehee was selected as shift lead for 3rd shift. **Kelly Cearbaugh** - last round of leaf pickup, helping the electric department with tree removal, patch to fix for the water department on Ellsworth Street. **Matt Heiden** - painting the pavilion floor and bathrooms, ice rink has been busy, Father/Daughter dance tickets go on sale on January 3rd. **Beth Igney** - Employee Clinic going well, Wellness Committee finalizing the schedule for 2024, new Employee Assistance Program starting January 1 with Crosswinds, Safety Committee is working with a local physical therapist to help with job descriptions to work on the physical aspects of all the different jobs, Awards Banquet coming up in January.

WALT CROWDER APPRECIATION Dan Weigold expressed his thanks and appreciation for everything Walt has done for him, as well as the City.

Jennifer Romano expressed her appreciation to Walt for being such a good friend to the City and a good friend to her personally while on City Council. She shared he always had a wise perspective and good judgment on things and really set a fine example for a Councilperson. She advised it was going to be really hard not having him at the Council desk anymore and will definitely be missed.

Tad Varga expressed his appreciation in getting to know Walt and working with him. He advised Walt has set such a great example for all of them and expressed his thanks.

Jennifer Middleton expressed her appreciation for everything Walt has done for them. She shared that he always answered any questions they had. She wished him the best and hoped he enjoyed retired life.

Mayor Daniel expressed his appreciation, for the last four years specifically, with this group of people; it has been really great and have accomplished a lot together. He shared Walt and he have worked together for 12 years and was really thankful to have had good, steady leadership both in Board of Works and Council from Walt, and from Nicole Penrod too. He shared he was looking forward to working with Dan and Lisa as they come in but very much appreciated just everything Walt has done for our Community, our Fire service, and their friendship. He advised he was looking forward to working with Leslee, who has been constant in coming to our meetings and has done a really great job of trying to immerse herself in this position so she is ready to take on Council on day one. He shared it was evident that the City means a lot to Walt; when he talks about the City, it is in a way in which you would talk about it like you do a child, which says a lot about how much he cares about the community.

Walt Crowder shared this was tough, 20 years as a Councilman and where did the time go. He advised what was really neat about the whole thing is that everybody works together. He shared we never want our employees to not have the upper hand in whatever situation may be going on, all they have to do is ask for help. He noted there have been times where he has had the opportunity to fill in for the Mayor but felt the majority of the time he has the right people in the right place, and this place will run with those Superintendents and our employees. He advised it was a comfort to Council knowing we have people in the right places and when the Mayor is out of town, he is only a phone call away, in most cases. He thanked everyone for everything they had done.

Mayor Daniel again thanked Walt for all he had done. He advised they did a little digging and found out that Walt was officially the longest serving Council member in Columbia City history and congratulated him on his long tenure. He noted Walt has seen a lot, not just as a Council member, but also going back all the way to his fire service.

Hearing no other comments or questions, Mayor Daniel called the meeting adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle