

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024
6:00 PM**

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

Council Members

Jennifer Middleton – Absent
Leslee Robinson - Present
Jennifer Romano – Absent
Tad Varga – Present
Daniel Weigold – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members except Jennifer Middleton and Jennifer Romano present. Mayor Daniel called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. All stood to say the Pledge of Allegiance led by Sam, Henry and Julia Barclay.

MINUTES Mayor Daniel pointed out that the State of the City address was actually scheduled for March 15 rather than March 8 as mentioned at the last meeting.

Dan Weigold made a motion to approve the February 13, 2024, meeting minutes as presented, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

WHITLEY COUNTY PRIDE – SAVANNA FETTIG Savanna Fettig, President and Founder of Whitley County Pride, along with others were present to give a powerpoint and explain what their organization was about. She advised they originated and launched publicly on October 11, 2023, which was National Coming Out day.

Savanna shared that she moved to Columbia City in May of last year and realized the need for LGBTQ resources and services here in Whitley County. She advised their mission was to create inclusive, accepting, and strong community connections for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer community through education, support programs, and community events. She shared they aim to raise awareness and promote understanding for the many challenges faced by the LGBTQ community. She went on to explain they were going to be starting LGBTQ education that would include hosting workshops and partnering with other organizations. She added they would also be doing support groups as a lot of their community members were having to travel to Fort Wayne or larger cities. She shared the challenges of the LGBTQ community in a bigger city versus a small town are two different things, so their goal is to have these support groups available here.

Katie Doehrmann introduced herself as a Board Member and also helps with Marketing and some of the Membership part.

Leanne Facer introduced herself as an ally. She advised she has been an ally for a long time, which in a small community means the concept of Christian agape love; accepting people for who they are, getting to know them, understanding, and protecting them. She stressed that we do not want to be a place known for a situation where someone of this community is not protected. She shared she was just trying to make sure that this works, and that this becomes commonplace. She commented that they hear it all the time, people in schools that are being attacked because of who they are, and we do not want that. She encouraged everyone to be an ally and be known that we care for those that we do not understand.

Katie Doehrmann discussed the events and community engagement opportunities they have planned for the year so far. Savanna Fettig advised they were planning to be involved in Whitley County as much as possible, including community events,

volunteering and showcasing the LGBTQ community, because they really do have a lot to offer. She shared that they want to be involved and try to provide positive community connections for everyone.

ORDINANCE 2024-2: USER FEES FOR TRASH COLLECTION – 2ND

READING Tad Varga made a motion to read Ordinance 2024-2 by title only. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2024-2, an Ordinance amending Chapter 53 regarding the user fees to pay the costs of trash collection for residential customers within the City of Columbia City.

Mayor Daniel reminded the Council that there was an increase in the cost of trash to us from our contractor. He explained this is basically money in and money out, meaning residents pay the trash fee and we then pay the trash company. He advised we also pay for the junk pickup through the same fee. He noted there was a \$2.00 increase in the monthly trash fee.

Dan Weigold questioned how many years the contract was for. Mayor Daniel advised it was for a three-year extension, so would go through 2027.

Leslee Robinson made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-2 on 2nd and final reading. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2024-3: DYE ANNEXTION – 1ST READING Tad Varga made a motion to read Ordinance 2024-3 by title only. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2024-3, an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Columbia City, Indiana, annexing 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 advised this was the first reading of the 2nd phase of the annexation of the Connie Dye property. He reminded Council that they heard the petition last time and at the next meeting will have the public hearing and second reading of the Ordinance. Attorney McNagny reminded Mayor Daniel and Council that this requires a third reading.

Dan Weigold questioned how this would coincide with the previous annexation if the County does not recognize this as an annexed area. Mayor Daniel shared that he was contacted by the County Assessor, County Auditor as well as the County Attorney about the previous annexation and the concerns that the second annexation had not happened. He advised his response to them was the annexed property is agriculture. He noted that in State Statute, when agricultural property is brought into the city limits, it does not change the tax structure so it would not matter for the 2023 tax year, payable 2024, to just keep it as County. He advised the County Attorney seemed to be perfectly fine with that and has heard nothing more from the County. Dan Weigold expressed concern for the County not recognizing the first annexation. Mayor Daniel felt because it does not change the value, and there is nothing happening on the property, he did not see it as a huge deal. He advised they went through the formal process on the first phase and are going through the formal process of the second phase, there are no dollars changing hands until there is development and construction on that site. He felt unless told otherwise by the County Attorney and City Attorney, we would stick with the plan but appreciated that being brought up.

Leslee Robinson made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-3 on first reading. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Chip Hill** - awarded Eagle Park bids, holding meeting with Westgate residents to discuss that construction, working to acquire last easements for the Blue River Trail and then will go out for bid, update on 100 S. sewer project. **Terry Wherry** - still waiting on Baseline to install fiber to get the Booster Station on the network, SURF Internet installed 2 new lines for our network, received updated

quotes on projects that were planned for last year. **Kelly Cearbaugh** - working on paving list for next year, televising sewer mains, sending 4 guys down to Indianapolis for equipment training, maintenance on streets, alleys and signs, have had the sweeper out and making repairs to some of their salt boxes. **Mike Shoda** – continue work on Chauncey Street, water line on SR 205 has passed testing and is being used to supply water to the Quail Ridge area. **Mike Cook** - Board of Works approved Phase 3 of the SCADA project, continue to work on Secondary repairs, continue with sludge hauling, installing new MOS units for the Headworks pumps, doing PM work on all our pumps and pulled one for repairs. **Tom LaRue** - attended EMS Symposium to maintain certifications, attended ceremony for Dave Herron’s 50 years in the fire service, update on hiring process, finished with gear inspections, fire truck bid came in at \$1,058,298.00 with a build time of 650 days.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel gave department reports for Electric Superintendent Shawn Lickey, Police Chief Gary Parrett, and Park Director Matt Heiden. He reported he would be at the State House for the Mayors and Commissioners Caucus day, he will be meeting with the Youth Council and State of the City is scheduled for March 15th at the Library.

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

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle