

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 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 – Present
Tad Varga – Present
Daniel Weigold – Absent

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

MINUTES It was noted that a word was missing under Tom LaRue’s report. Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve the March 26, 2024, meeting minutes as corrected. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

TAX ABATEMENTS: JV INVESTMENTS IN LLC – DOLLAR TREE Dale Buuck with the Economic Development Corporation was present to go over the annual compliance forms for abatements approved in the past. He advised a couple of these were going to be the last time we see them. He noted that the last few tax abatements brought forward to Council were more on a three- or five-year schedule at the most and not 10 years like some of these.

Dale Buuck explained for JV investments, the Council was really generous to transfer the abatement over to the new investors when that property was sold. He shared with DOT America; he was so pleased with this Company. He advised they continue to grow and believed they were going to do another expansion. He pointed out that they were beating their employment goals and probably would even be above that if it were not for the challenge of hiring people. He felt we were lucky to have them as part of our orthopedics ecosystem. He reported the abatements were pretty straightforward and very much in compliance as he reviewed them.

Jennifer Romano felt they all looked fairly good except for The Dollar Tree in the fact that they do not seem to be close to what they indicated as far as salaries and employees. Dale Buuck advised he has seen this with some of the other Dollar Tree’s and felt it was because the idea behind it was everything in there was a \$1 but that is not the case anymore. Mayor Daniel mentioned one of the things that stuck out in a positive way for them was the fact that the Assessed Valuation, the overall cost on that bottom side, almost compensates for it. He felt with the retail environment being what it is, they probably overpromised and under delivered in that regard. He felt the other side of that was they did build a brand-new building that is now paying taxes and will pay taxes forever. Dale Buuck noted that abatement was done in 2015 and was getting pretty close to being done.

Mayor Daniel reported Rosie has been working with the Auditor and the Assessor on this to make sure we were all on the same calendar. Rosie Coyle advised she sat down with them and made note of when the abatements expire and noted that she has the Treasurer working on it as well. She advised there were quite a few that will expire this year and then next year we have two or three more that will expire.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve JV investments Dollar Tree; JV Investments Dunham’s, Label Shopper and Wings; DOT America 2014-15 Personal Property; DOT America 2014–15 Real Property; DOT America 2017-23 Real Property; DOT America 2017-24 Personal Property; DOT America 2021-20 Personal

Property; DOT America 2022-6 Real Property and BR Real Estate 2018-3 Real Property and find them in compliance and grant an additional year of abatement. Leslee Robinson seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2024-4: AMENDMENT REGARDING PARKS BLUE RIVER TRAIL – 2ND READING Jennifer Romano made a motion to read Ordinance 2024-4 by title only. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2024-4, an ordinance amending Chapter 96 regarding Parks for the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel advised this was the second reading regarding utilizing the trail for golf carts as a safe passage, as well as for motorized wheelchairs and things to that effect.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-4 on 2nd and final reading. Leslee Robinson seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2024-3: ANNEXATION OF DYE PROPERTY – 4TH READING Mayor Daniel explained he and Attorney McNagny have been working on this and making sure everything that has been talked about regarding the right of way, the road, and things of that nature were all part of the ordinance. He advised this does not change anything we have done to this point; it is just making sure we are super clear and there is no question about what we are doing.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to read Ordinance 2024-3 by title only. Leslee Robinson seconded the motion, all voted unanimously. 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.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-3 on 4th and final reading. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS Chip Hill – Westgate is scheduled to start this week, Eagle Park groundbreaking is April 16th at 1:00 pm, Blue River Trail had to be adjusted and are waiting on INDOT's approval. **Terry Wherry** - equipment is in to extend public Wi-Fi to Any Kids Dreamland, waiting on quotes to extend public Wi-Fi to Ohki Alley and Thomas Marshall Park, continue to replace Windows 10 machines with Windows 11. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – completed limb pickup last week, 50/50 sidewalk to put in, starting on Chauncey Street for the stormwater project hopefully in the next couple weeks, cleaning sanitary lines that have some roots in them, have a demo scheduled to check out different nozzles, finished trimming trees and bushes at the cemetery to get ready for mowing season. **Matt Heiden** - started mowing yesterday, bathrooms are all up and running, concession stand was set up and will be ready for their first tournament on April 19th, pool equipment ordered, the roof of the police training facility has finally started. **Tom LaRue** – will be taking their candidate to Indianapolis this week for his testing, IROL going very well, Rescue Task Force training is underway, Truck 102 to mechanic for air leak repairs, chainsaw repaired, live burns at training facility. **Gary Parrett** - written and physical agility testing will be Saturday the 13th for their hiring process, intern Emily Davies started with the department and will be here for the next couple of weeks, getting quotes for new cars, Shane Caudill and the shift leads are completing their leadership training this week. **Mike Cook** – everything went well with the start up of the 100 South lift station, had to reschedule the start date for the bathroom remodel, started mowing for the season, ordered a new pump for the Short Street lift station. **Shawn Lickey** – Mayor Daniel reported for Shawn in his absence in that they have 6 poles left to change on Bair Road, pole testing for a portion of the City is scheduled for this fall, he is working on some of the material and bid sheets for Eagle Park lighting, they had 4 new services last week, attended first meeting as a member of the IMPA Executive Committee.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported there would be a Whitley County US 30 Planning Committee meeting at City Hall to go over the Level 2 PEL Study, which includes each of the different individualized intersections at the major points in Whitley County. He invited everyone to visit www.propelus30.com to look at the Level 2 assessment. He continued to report that he would be attending Mayor Henry's funeral on Friday in Fort Wayne and then will have Lunch with the Mayor with Matt Heiden as his special guest. He advised they continue working with the retail coach and have had some really positive things happening. He reported the Youth Council will be meeting next week as well as junk pickup on the West side is next week and the East side is the following week.

PLANNING COMMISSION Jennifer Romano reported the Planning Commission met last week and one of the items discussed was the installation of sidewalks on a property that could potentially connect onto our Trail. She advised the issue was put on hold until they could get some questions answered.

ARTS COMMISSION Jennifer Romano reported the Arts Commission also met last week and advised they will be doing Taste of the Arts on June 8th in front of City Hall and then the Whitley County Studio Art Tour is going to be the 7th of September.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Tad Varga reported the Redevelopment Commission approved funding for some landscaping along State Road 9 South of town to help make that area look nicer.

Having no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Daniel called the meeting adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle