

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 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 Romano and Jennifer Middleton present, Mayor Daniel called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. All stood to say the Pledge of Allegiance led by Isabella and Eduardo Covarrubias.

MINUTES Mayor Daniel noted a couple spelling errors and Leslee Robinson pointed out another correction under Ordinance 2024-7 discussion.

Leslee Robinson made a motion to approve the May 28, 2024, meeting minutes as corrected. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

BALL FURNITURE RECOGNITION Mayor Daniel recognized Pat and Michelle Ball of Ball Furniture upon their retirement with a proclamation designating June 11, 2024, as Ball Furniture Legacy Day. Mayor Daniel read the proclamation in its entirety noting special milestone dates in the history of their business here in Columbia City.

CF1 ABATEMENTS – KC JONES 2015-16 PP Mayor Daniel reminded the Council that this was tabled at the last meeting to allow for a representative of KC Jones an opportunity to be present and respond to the questions of not hitting their targets. Dale Buuck was present representing KC Jones.

Dale Buuck thanked the Council for tabling the issue. He explained he had a chance to tour the facility and talk a lot to Keith Nickolson. He advised Keith could not be present tonight but wanted to be. He noted that even though they were getting towards the end of this abatement, with maybe two years left, it was still important to them so he wanted to give an update on how things are going there and why they are so far below the employment from when the Council first granted the abatement. He reported they just recently landed a big contract with Tesla and were currently making 50,000 and soon to be 75,000 wheel hubs a month for Tesla. He explained they have a certain way of plating that really helps with the wheel hubs. He reported they were getting more and more into defense, more and more into aerospace and they were into agriculture. He shared in talking with Keith he said that COVID was a struggle for them and in 2015, as soon as the abatement was in and the investment was done, they had the fire and have always struggled to recover from that. He reported they currently have 16 open spots for employment and were using several staffing agencies such as LinkedIn, Indeed, and were even working with Community Corrections, so they were trying. He advised he questioned their starting wage and it is well over \$16.00 an hour for non-skilled help and from what he has experienced in the County, that is a pretty good starting wage. He advised they have attendance bonuses and other kinds of incentives to try to keep the folks there.

Dale Buuck noted they were way under what the original SB-1 was on the employment and even though they were down to the last bit of the savings on the taxes it was still a big deal to them.

Dan Weigold shared it was nice to hear that they were trying; they were just trying to find a workforce. Dale Buuck agreed. Dan Weigold advised we are in a time where it is tough to find good help at all in some cases.

Mayor Daniel noted for reference that if they had all 16 positions hired at \$16 an hour, minimum, that would be an additional \$532,000 in salary. He felt it was valuable information.

Leslee Robinson questioned, because she was not familiar, if they lost some contracts that maybe affected the employment. Dale Buuck explained the plating business was not for the weak of heart, there are all kinds of environmental issues and during COVID a lot of mom and pop plating shops closed. He reported KC went after a lot of that business but then could not find the staffing to make it work.

Dan Weigold made a motion to approve the request and grant another year of abatement. Leslee Robinson seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

Mayor Daniel asked Dale Buuck to make a note that when this comes up next year that Keith needs to be here and to plan for end of May or beginning of June.

ORDINANCE 2024 – 6: DOOR TO DOOR SOLICITATION AMENDMENT 2ND

READING Leslee Robinson made a motion to read Ordinance 2024-6 by title only. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2024-6 an ordinance amending Chapter 115 Door to Door Solicitation of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel noted this was really just a standardization of the fee schedule and some very minor other changes.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-6 on second and final reading. Leslee Robinson seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2024-7: AMENDMENT TO SPECIAL EVENTS – ANIMALS 2ND

READING Tad Varga made a motion to read Ordinance 2024-7 by title only. Leslee Robinson seconded the motion, all voted unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2024-7 an ordinance restating and amending Chapter 100 of Title IX of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel noted this was the Special Event Ordinance where animals in the event area would be determined by the body that is requesting the event or the event organizers. He advised the one area that was discussed last time, and was put into this for second reading, was that everything still has to follow any restrictions or prohibitions of Chapter 90 of the ordinance.

Dan Weigold made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-7 on 2nd and final reading. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2024-8: AMENDMENT TO TRAFFIC SCHEDULE – W.

LINCOLNWAY & 200 SOUTH Leslee Robinson made a motion to read Ordinance 2024-8 by title only. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2024-8 an ordinance amending Chapter 75 Traffic Schedules of Title VII of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbus City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel reminded the Council that this was incorporating 2 new areas into the speed limit section of our ordinance because of voluntary annexations that have happened.

Dan Weigold made a motion to approve ordinance 2024-8 on 2nd and final reading. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2024-9: AMENDMENT TO MOBILE NON-FOOD VENDORS

Mayor Daniel explained he and Attorney McNagny were talking a little bit before the meeting regarding this ordinance. He noted there were some changes that occurred to the Mobile Food Ordinance, which is a part of this, as well as another segment of the Non-Food Mobile Vendor that has to change as well. He advised he was going to table this if that was ok with the Council as he just put the revised ordinance in the Dropbox right before Board of Works and did not feel it was fair to ask the Council to vote on something that maybe has not been reviewed yet.

Attorney McNagny quickly reviewed the couple changes that were going to be made.

Mayor Daniel shared there had been a lot of conversation between him, Attorney McNagny and Rosie about wanting to make sure they were addressing the concern of food trucks setting up adjacent to a brick and mortar restaurant. Dan Weigold referenced the issue with the fish food truck and the bowling alley and did not feel that was really fair. He questioned if there was a distance that should be required. Mayor Daniel wanted to make sure the ordinance reflects the intent of the Council regarding that specifically. Tad Varga felt people are going to go to who they like better, whether they are a block away or a mile away. He advised no one is going to be happy but felt the ordinance is stated in a way that was reasonable. Leslee Robinson mentioned in looking at the situation with the fish, say the food truck runs out, then the brick and mortar business benefits because people end up going into the business because it was right there. Mayor Daniel just wanted to make sure that what he heard is adjacent and what Attorney McNagny was saying is adjacent was matching what Council wanted as adjacent.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Chip Hill** – update on Eagle Park and Westgate. **Shawn Lickey** – update on Eagle Park, working on SCADA update that will tie in with the 69 Kv upgrade, starting new project on Jefferson Street, Rolling Hills and Cul-de-sac Avenue where they are rebuilding some three phase overhead and then the single phase distribution will all be buried, getting prepared to start the lighting projects at Westgate. **Terry Wherry** - new fiber lines from SURF are up and running, equipment in to put Wi-Fi in Ohki Alley and Thomas Marshall Park, discovered two fiber breaks in our network that Shawn and his crews have been working to get repaired. **Mike Shoda** – moving service lines in Westgate, meeting with Peerless on the filters, replaced line in Westgate that Weeping Willow Tree roots were blocking and should help with drainage. **Mike Cook** – restroom project complete, passed 2024 biomonitoring, SDI force main cleaned for the second quarter, replaced lid at Columbia Shores lift station, contacted by Donohue and Associates, the ones working on the force main project for Jefferson and Main Street, informing him that they submitted an abstract to IWEA Conference Committee that talk about the struggles and challenges of that project we have had so far and was asked to come and speak on the challenges of that project down in Indianapolis, Board of Works approved the purchase of a new tractor, a pump base at 600 E. and upgrades to the kitchen area in our break room. **Tom LaRue** – Kyle Francis teaching an in-house driver operator class, update on new employee Colin Harding, Mechanic some made wire repairs to Truck 101.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported for Matt Heiden and Kelly Cearbaugh

Mayor Daniel reported budget meetings were coming up. He advised they had the Grand Opening for Dicky's Car Wash. He reported on the first Summer in the City event which was Taste of the Arts and was sort of in conjunction with the Farmers Market. He reminded everyone of the upcoming City Swap which is where people put out gently used items on the curb for anyone to take. He shared that on Friday, they will pass out mailboxes to the new high school graduates. He reminded everyone that City Hall would be closed on Wednesday in observance of Juneteenth and then next week is Old Settlers.

Mayor Daniel reported the CIP committee met last time after the Council meeting and approved an economic incentive for Whitley County Real Estate. He explained they are going to be opening a new restaurant in the former RC Hobby Shop.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Tad Varga reported they have to get a few more samples on the LML building site. He advised it has already been submitted for approval, so we can release it and be done, but they have to do a couple more tests on it.

He reported the corner of Jackson and Line Street there are plans to put in 6 condos.

He advised they were also moving forward with the landscaping at Radio Road and State Road 9.

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

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle