

**Town Of Merrillville
Town Council Meeting Minutes (Amended)
August 11, 2020
6:30 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: President Bella called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

INVOCATION: Invocation was given by Impact Pastor.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Commissioner Gene Ward.

ROLL CALL – Roll Call taken by Madam Clerk-Treasurer White Gibson, Present were Councilman Spann, Councilman Hardaway, Councilman Minchuk, Councilwoman Uzelac, Councilman Pettit, Vice President White, and President Bella. All seven (7) Council Members were present.

**PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND
REMONSTRATIONS**

CONSENT AGENDA

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval for August 11, 2020- Motion to approve by Councilman Pettit, seconded by Councilman Minchuk. Voice vote 7-0. Motion carries.

Vice President White addresses a few concerns he had regarding Vendor 1821, Robinson Engineering/ Casino Gaming & EVP in the amounts of \$9,289.75 and \$8,022.00. Vice President White asks the Council if they could explain Vendor 1821.

Councilman Pettit explains to Vice President White that Vendor 1821 is for the signal interruption for the emergency vehicle program. This allows the ambulances to go through the signals without stopping.

Steve King states that the Town pays Robinson Engineering from the casino fund and it's 90% reimbursable.

Vice President White also addressed concerns regarding Vendor 1600, Payroll Fund/ General/ TC President in the amount of \$58,678.86.

Madam Clerk-Treasurer advised Vice President White that she believes the amount is to cover payroll including the Town Council Members and that she will confirm with her staff and circle back before tonight's meeting ends.

President Bella asked that the Warrant 52109 be removed from tonight's meeting and address it at the next meeting.

Vice President White had additional concerns regarding the Merrillville Road TIF District amounting to nearly two (2) million dollars.

Madam Clerk-Treasurer advised that the funds are used to cover debt services for the bonds that have been issued. The Town pays for debt services twice a year and interest only once a year.

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of July 28, 2020.

President Bella made some corrections on July 28, 2020 Town Council Meeting Minutes.

-Second page, under Environmental Affairs regarding the Clorox 360 Machine. Please note that Councilman Pettit made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Uzelac seconded the motion.

-Third page, under Abandon Properties- Strike Atty. Richard Anderson as the owner of the shopping plaza on 61st & Broadway. He is actually the attorney that represents the owner of the plaza.

-Bella and Minchuk are spelled incorrectly. Please correct the spelling of both last names.

All corrections were made by Madam Clerk-Treasurer.

Motion to approve July 28, 2020 Town Council Meeting Minutes (Corrections) by Councilman Pettit, seconded by and Councilman Minchuk. Voice vote 7-0. Motion carries.

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET & FINANCE- WHITE - Vice President White stated that budget meetings will be held this week beginning tomorrow August 12th at 11:00 a.m. Also, Thursday and Friday at 1:30 p.m.

Pat Reardon, Town Manager - In the packets provided there are copies of the budgets that the Town Administration office has worked on with input from the Clerk-Treasurer and various Department Heads. This was an initial meeting with the committee to be presented as the 2021 budget to the Town Council.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- UZELAC- No Report

PUBLIC WORKS- MINCHUK- Councilman Minchuk states updates will be provided in the fall. Councilman Hardaway and Councilman Minchuk thanked Public Works and the EMA for a job well done for the action taken after the damages caused by this week's storm.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & CENSUS 2020-PETTIT- Councilman Pettit stated that he and President Bella have received emails confirming that the Census workers/volunteers are going door to door. But unfortunately, the Town numbers aren't improving.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE- Vice President White stated that Town Manager Reardon had received some information regarding additional Covid-19 testing for the Town.

Mr. Reardon confirms the information that he received. He states that he will update the Council members with more information when it becomes available and that this effort will involve the State Department of Health, the County Department of Health, and the Town of Merrillville.

Vice President White states that he would like to contact Matt Lake and Kevin Markle to schedule a visit to the compost facility to see how it's operating. He's thinking the Town could possibly sell some of the finished compost. However, a decision will be determined once he has visited the facility.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS- UZELAC- Councilwoman Uzelac states that on August 18th a meeting will be held involving the selection of 2 Police Commissioners. She and Councilman Minchuk have discussed this matter and emails have been sent out.

PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK- Councilman Minchuk states that everything has been provided to Councilwoman Uzelac concerning the Police Commissioners.

Police Chief Cuttino stated that four Police Officers will be sworn in at the August 25th Town Council Meeting. Physicals and background paperwork has been completed for all four recruits.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT- Councilman Pettit defers to Town Manager Reardon regarding pending tax abatements.

Mr. Reardon states that at the next Town Council Meeting or the second Town Council Meeting in September the Town will be introducing tax abatement applications. A meeting will be requested of the Economic Development Sub-Committee. The Town has been working on this for the last year or so. Mr. Reardon thanked the team for their assistance.

Councilman Pettit states that a Redevelopment Workshop will be held two weeks from tonight's meeting at 5:30 p.m. with financial advisor Bob Swintz. Mr. Swintz will give us an overview of the TIF districts based on the draws we've recently received with the staggered property taxes and the collections that Madam Clerk-Treasurer received. The overview will include Merrillville Road, Broadway, Ameriplex, and Mississippi.

PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC- Councilwoman Uzelac paid a visit to Crescent Lake Park. The Park work is near completion. The equipment is up and rocks are down.

UTILITY LIAISONS-SPANN - No Report

ABANDONED PROPERTIES-WHITE- Vice President White thanks Vickie Bunnell and Tiffany Thomas of Code Enforcement for a job well done. Properties at 58th & Taft Street and 60th Place are beginning to look much better.

Mrs. Bunnell states that the property at 58th & Taft Street has been rehabbed. The house at 30 W. 73rd is being rehabbed as well. She states that she is happy with the eliminating blight results.

Vice President White asks Mrs. Bunnell of Code Enforcement and Mrs. Shine of Building and Planning to take a look at 57th & Harrison Street (SE Corner). He believes a business is operating at this location. He also noticed that some of the vehicles parked at this location are not plated.

TOWN IDENTIFY & BEAUTIFICATION-UZELAC- Councilwoman Uzelac recently noticed graffiti on the Faith Temple of Christ Church. The Police were called out and in result the church has cleaned up the graffiti. Councilwoman Uzelac thanks the Police Chief Cuttino.

COMMUNITY & RECREATION CENTER-MINCHUK & PETTIT- Councilman Pettit states that Linda Rosas of Town Administration will send notices to the Council Members, Department Heads and the Clerk-Treasurer to tour the Community Center next Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. to see the updates. The tour isn't open to the general public nor media. A Community Center Committee Meeting will be held on August 25, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS

Lake County Solid Waste Management-White
No Report. Meetings are held bi-monthly.

Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission- Hardaway
No Report. Meetings are conducted via zoom.

Storm water Management Resources- Lake
Meadowdale Regional Storage Facility is up for bid. Mr. Lake thanked the Calumet River Basin Commission for their support.

Department Reports- Department Directors

Mrs. Bunnell, Code Enforcement stated that she has received a complaint regarding debris on U.S. 30 from Taney to Merrillville Road. Businesses were inspected and a citation was given for an overflowing dumpster. A letter was sent to the property owner as well. Code Enforcement also received a complaint regarding the poor conditions of the plaza on 61st and Broadway. The maintenance staff has been advised to clean up the properties. In addition, more businesses on 61st received warnings concerning the upkeep of their properties. Owners were advised citations will follow if they do not comply. Code Enforcement will conduct weekly property checks.

Steve King, Town Engineer updates the Council Members regarding the Carriage House demolition. Demolition is scheduled to begin Thursday, August 13, 2020.

Jan Orlich, Parks Department thanked the Clerk-Treasurer and office manager Joi Whiteside, for their assistance in making sure the payment was processed for the Clorox 360 Machine. The machine is due to arrive in September. Training will be available as well.

GENERAL ORDERS:

There were no General Orders

ORDINANCES:

There were no Ordinances

RESOLUTIONS: 20-11, (Discussion and Voice Vote)

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, transferring Monies of the 2020 Budget within the General Fund.

Vice President White asked the Council Members if Resolution 20-11 can be tied down by the August 25th Town Council Meeting? Council Members agreed.

Madam Clerk-Treasurer advises the Council Members that funds are definitely needed for training/education and that a couple of her employees will retire this year. Also, some of her employees have not received proper training. In addition, the office will begin cross training.

Motion to table Resolution 20-11 by Councilman Hardaway, seconded by Councilman Minchuk. Voice vote 7.0. Motion carries.

BZA ACTIONS

Petitioner: Mohamed Al-Nemer
Owner: GSM Group
Request: Special Exception Approval
Purpose: To allow for a used car dealership
Location: 6300 Broadway
Zoning: C-3, Highway Commercial Zoning District
Case#: Z13E4-0720

Motion by Councilman Pettit, seconded by Vice President White. Roll call vote 7.0. Motion carries.

Petitioner: Leonya Harris
Owner: Jaewan Ford
Request: Special Exception Approval
Purpose: To allow Dine-In Restaurant
Location: 281 West 80th Place
Zoning: Planned Unit Development
Case#: Z15E5-0720

Motion by Councilman Pettit, seconded by Councilman Hardaway. Roll call vote 7.0. Motion carries.

Petitioner: Anthony Gonzales
Owner: Liberty Square Holdings
Request: Special Exception Approval
Purpose: To allow a Tattoo Studio & Art Gallery
Location: 60 W. 79th Ave.
Zoning: C-2, Community Commercial Zoning District
Case#: Z16E-6E-0720

Motion by Councilman Pettit, seconded by Councilman Minchuk. Roll call vote. 7.0. Motion carries.

OLD BUSINESS: President Bella asked Mr. King and Mr. Markle if they could look into the demolition of the North Barn.

Mr. King states that he will contact Ryan Construction for an estimate for the North Barn demolition.

President Bella provided updates on the Safe Haven Baby Box and advised Madam Clerk-Treasurer to turn over all donations to the Fire Department.

NEW BUSINESS: Councilman Minchuk makes a motion to continue utilizing Attorney Svetanoff and Attorney Deppe to represent the Town. Attorney Svetanoff will continue to represent the following: Town Council, Planning Commission, BZA, and RDC. Attorney Deppe will continue to represent the following: Police Department, Police Commission, and Abandoned & Vacant Properties. Motion by Councilman Minchuk, seconded by Councilman Hardaway. Roll call vote 7.0. Motion carries.

Councilwoman Uzelac states that she heard gunshots recently while driving on Taft Street near the cemetery.

Gene Ward, Precinct Committeeman over 20 years, advises the Council Members that he too has heard and reported the gun shots to the Police Department. Mr. Ward also advises the Council that cars are being repaired in residential areas. The address is 6622 Taft St. and 6650 Taft St.

Police Chief Cuttino will address all concerns that involve the Merrillville Police Department.

Madam Clerk-Treasurer reflects back to the Consent Agenda and advises the Council Members that Vendor #1600, Payroll Fund/ General/ TC President is the end of the month payout to the Town Council Members, Storm Water, Planning, Pensioners, and BZA.

Councilman Pettit made a Motion to add the Warrant 52109 back on the Agenda for approval. Seconded by Councilman Minchuk. Voice vote 7.0. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment

ANNOUNCEMENTS

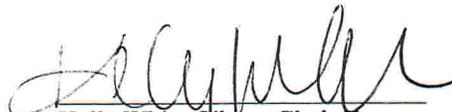
Next Town Council Meeting August 25, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT 7:46 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Councilman Pettit, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac. Motion carries.



Rick Bella
Rick Bella President



Kelly White Gibson
Kelly White Gibson Clerk-Treasurer