

**January 4, 2023**

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in special session in the Council Chambers on Wednesday, January 4, 2023, at 9:00 A.M.

**Present:** Jessica Romine, Mayor Dermody

**Absent:** Mark Kosior

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Brian Schultz led the Pledge of Allegiance

**Approval of Minutes**

Each member received an advance copy of the minutes. Mayor Dermody asked if there were any additions or corrections.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Romine moved to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

**Public Comment**

Brian Schultz addressed The Board with his concerns over a parking ticket he does not feel he should have to pay due to limited parking and the snow removal that was taken place during this time. Mayor Dermody informed Mr. Schultz that an appeal for should be filled out and submitted to Annette in his office. Mr. Schultz stated he had already filled out an appeal form with all of the information. Mayor Dermody clarified with Mr. Schultz that the ticket appeal does need to be included on the agenda and asked Mr. Schultz to confirm with Annette that the form had been received and assured him it would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

**Claims Approval**

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Payroll from December 23, 2022 in the amount of \$459,557.92.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of December 23, 2022 Payroll**

Ms. Romine moved to approve the December 23, 2022 Payroll as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of \$1,381,521.13, which includes several semi-annual bond payments and most lease payments for leased vehicles for the year.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Civil City Claims**

Ms. Romine moved to approve the Civil City Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Water Claims in the amount of \$95,297.45.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Water Claims**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Water Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Sewage Claims in the amount of \$107,673.82.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Sewage Claims**

Ms. Romine moved to approve the Sewage Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

**New Business:**

**Loniewski Annexation Agreement**

Mayor Dermody stated the Loniewski Annexation Agreement is tabled until the next meeting due to Member Romine needing to abstain from the vote.

**Approval of Emergency Vehicle Preemption Final Tracing Plan Set**

City Engineer Nick Minich presented the final Tracing Plan Set for the Emergency Vehicle Preemption project. Mr. Minich stated this is the project that is adding the Opticom system to 26 signals to allow emergency vehicles to pass through safely.

**Motion/Vote – Approve Emergency Vehicle Preemption Final Tracing Plan Set**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Emergency Vehicle Preemption Final Tracing Plan Set as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

**Approval of INDOT-LPA Contract for Des. No 2201435 CCMG Paving Project**

City Engineer Nick Minich presented the INDOT-LPA Contract for Des. No 2201435. Mr. Minich stated this is our Community Crossings Paving which is paired with the Numbers and Letters Street Sewer Separation Project. This includes A street from 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and a small section of Miller and Kingsport as well. Mr. Minich stated this is full reconstruction so it is nice to be able to pair the two projects. Mr. Minich clarified the area for this project is I Street from 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> to Andrew, however, the benefits will reach beyond this area with sewer backups. Mayor Dermody questioned if this project will eliminate sewer backups. Mr. Minich responded by stated it should eliminate backups due to combined sewers, if a backup were to happen its cause would be due to a clogged line, not because the capacity is being met. City Attorney Nick Otis questioned how the recent large snow accumulation followed by warmer days effects the current system. Mr. Minich stated it isn't good and the heavy rainfall in the spring is worse and that is why it's important to continue with the sewer separations. Mr. Minich stated the areas that need to be focused on are where the basement backups are happening. Attorney Otis questioned if those backups are due to the weather. Mr. Minich stated in a combined sewer, it can. Water Superintendent Tim Werner stated during this project they will be running a new water main all the way down I Street. Mr. Werner stated

they have had numerous breaks on this line over the years. Attorney Otis questioned how old the line is. Mr. Werner stated he believes it is from the 40s and over the past three years they have had approximately seven or eight breaks from 16<sup>th</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street. This project will include all new service lines from the main to the curb stop in this area as well. Mr. Minich clarified that this is for an electronic signature, that only the Mayor has to sign, that was approved at a prior Board of Works Meeting. Mayor Dermody questioned when this process will start. Mr. Minich stated they look to bid this within the next month to month and a half as it needs to be under contract within the next three months.

**Motion/Vote – Approve INDOT-LPA Contract for Des. No 2201435 CCMG Paving Project**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve INDOT-LPA Contract for Des. No 2201435 CCMG Paving Project as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

**Department Head Reports**

**Engineering:** City Engineer Nick Minich reported the trash service is out for bid with a number of companies that are interested in providing their services. Mr. Minich stated we have provided a bid package that hopefully allows for companies to highlight what they're going to be able to do well for the City and also gives the City enough flexibility to make sure we are finding the right service for the residents at the right price. Mayor Dermody stated he believes one of the most important factors is customer services; someone must be responsible for the City of La Porte residents so that they can call and get a response for their concerns. Mayor Dermody asked Mr. Minich to speak about Weller Avenue. Mr. Minich stated Weller Avenue is one of the projects that has been identified for Federal funding, but we have not been able to submit a NOFA to get the work done so it will be a number of years out. Mr. Minich stated when Weller is reconstructed, it needs utility work amongst a lot of other things so it will be a full reconstruction and a very large project. Mr. Minich stated the last NOFA was not submitted for Weller because there were other capital projects that needed to be prioritized first but it will be included in the next NOFA. Mayor Dermody stated Weller is not easy to just reconstruct. Mr. Minich confirmed the Mayor's statement and added there are utility issues both above the guardian and below ground, in addition to geometry issues, and right of ways that are not very wide. Mr. Minich stated it will be a large project and a challenge to figure out exactly what needs to go into reconstructing and keeping it the key corridor that is currently is.

**Water:** Water Superintendent Tim Werner recognized and thanked the water maintenance crew that has worked on five different main breaks around town from December 21 to New Year's Eve, including working on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, due to the cold weather. Mr. Werner stated there have been several home and business owners around town that have had froze lines through the harsh weather of the Christmas weekend. Mr. Werner reminded the public that they do send a mailer out with the October and November bills to remind residents to watch out for cold weather and if they have had frozen pipes in past to remember to apply heat tape and to ensure all the openings are closed in their basement. Mr. Werner stated a pencil lead stream of water through the faucets will keep the lines from freezing. Mr. Werner reminded the public there is staff on call 24 hours a day and if they can

assist anyone by shutting them off outside, due to a broken line, just call and someone will respond immediately. Mayor Dermody thanked those that were out there from Water and Wastewater working, even on Christmas Day. Mayor Dermody stated these departments even assisted the County during their flood and if there are things that we can do to assist the County, we will because we want to be a team to all local units of government.

**Human Resource:** Human Resource Director Andrea Smith reported HR worked over the Holiday weekend in conjunction with the Clerk-Treasurer's office to ensure that payroll and all the changes that needed to be made were completed at accurate and ready to go for the first payroll of year. Ms. Smith stated on Friday January 13, 2023 she will be on a 2-3 hour zoom meeting reviewing all the policy changes. This meeting will be recorded, so Attorney Otis can watch it as well and ensure things are proper.

**TransPorte:** TransPorte Director Beth West reported TransPorte ended on a positive note, despite being closed for a few days due to the blizzard. Ms. West stated there were three 200 rider days in December, which is phenomenal. During the month of December there were over 3,500 riders, beating December 2019. Ms. West stated the goal is to always beat 2019 numbers: pre COVID. Ms. West reported there were over 10,300 riders for the fourth quarter of 2022 and the buses travelled over 30,000 miles. Ms. West stated they are still running numbers as they have several reports that are now due for the year and should have more numbers to report at the next meeting.

**Planning:** City Planner Craig Phillips reported the department is gearing up for 2023 in anticipation of a busy year. Mr. Phillips stated a presentation will be given later this month to several of the Boards and Commissions that were involved in the parking study project that is now wrapped up. This will be presented publicly so that people can see all the items that are included in that. Mr. Phillips thanked the members of the City staff, department heads, and others that have been involved in putting this together. Mr. Phillips reported they are currently working on several development agreements related to recent public offerings. Mr. Phillips reported work continues on the pattern book for the downtown streetscaping and a committee has been set up to work on this. In addition, Mr. Phillips reported they have been working on several annexations, including ones that were passed by the Council at last night's meeting. Mr. Phillips stated the upcoming 39 North annexation will be the forefront involving several departments, with a lot of work going into that. Work also continues with the Trails, Greenways, and Pathways Masterplan. Mayor Dermody stated they have reached the point now where they are addressing 39 North and the public will continue to have an opportunity to speak based on statute and the process. Mr. Phillips stated we will be going into a statutory six month public input and information gathering process beginning in February. Notices will be sent out to all the property owners and the Public Notices accordingly. Mayor Dermody stated this is an exchange for addressing their water issues moving forward.

**Park:** Park Director Mark Schreiber reported they will be hosting the NIBC La Porte Invitational this weekend, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, at the Civic Auditorium. There will be 10 teams from the NIBC participating, six of them are nationally ranked in the top 25. Mr. Schreiber

stated there will be a bonus game on Friday that will feature Indianapolis Cathedral and Chicago Simeon. Simeon is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the nation, number one in Illinois and Cathedral was last year's state champion and were ranked number one for the preseason. There are over 30 top ranked players in this invitational. Mr. Schreiber stated teams will be coming from all over the country and with that it will be nationally televised on ESPN platforms: the first two games on Thursday on ESPNU and the Cathedral Simeon games on ESPN2, reaching 80 million households across the nation. Mr. Schreiber encouraged everyone to get their tickets before the event sells out. Mr. Schreiber requested the Board of Works to approve no parking on Tecumseh Street on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. in order to ensure adequate parking and accessibility for the buses for the teams. Mayor Dermody asked Chief Brettin if he was comfortable with no parking on this street. Chief Brettin stated yes. Mr. Schreiber reminded the public that there will be two free passes for any Veteran or active duty military for Thursday's games. These tickets can be picked up at either the American Legion or the VFW posts in town. Mr. Schreiber stated GIS will be sponsoring a basketball shot contest with the opportunity to win up to \$10,000. The big half time performance will be on Friday at the 4 P.M. and 6 P.M. games. The Jesse White Tumblers out of Chicago will be performing. In addition, there will be scrimmages during half times from the La Porte middle school and a performance from the La Porte High School cheerleaders to add a splash of our community into the mix.

Communications: Communications Director Jess Bruder reported she is working away on NIBC preparations. Ms. Bruder thanked everyone that participated in the free headshots that greatnews.life took. Those headshots will be updated on the website for department heads.

Fire: Chief Snyder stated the Fire Merit Commission will meet tonight and make the promotions for the three firefighters that will retire at the end of this week. Chief Snyder stated he will let the Board know of those promotions at the next meeting.

Police: Chief Brettin stated the blizzard went well on the police end. There were a couple cars that were hit that weren't officer's fault. Chief Brettin accredited the officers safe arrivals to and from work on the all-wheel drive vehicles that are now being driven by the officers. There are no two-wheel vehicles that are used. Chief Brettin stated they are having the agility test. Five people will be tested tomorrow at 5 P.M. at PNW for future openings. There are a couple applications of certified officers.

Street/Code: Mayor Dermody thanked the Street Department for all of their hard work in keeping the streets cleaned up during the blizzard. Jeff Batchelor also recognized the Street Department for a job well done and for being well prepared for the storm. This week they will be out doing Christmas trees and picking those up and weather permitting they will begin filling pot holes.

Mayor Dermody stated they have received a lot of messages about the Rumley Hotel. Code Enforcement and the Fire Department have been on this for weeks, they understand that the elevator not being in working condition is a problem but they are waiting on a part to get it

fixed. Mayor Dermody stated the Fire Department is willing to help those on higher level floors move up and down. Chief Snyder confirmed this is correct. Chief Snyder stated they had to do this last year at Oakwood Manor for a similar situation, while they waited on a part to fix their elevator. If any resident is in need of this assistance, they can reach out to the main station line at 219-362-3456.

**Motion/Vote – Approve No Parking on Tecumseh January 5-7, 2023 from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M.**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve No Parking on Tecumseh January 5 through January 7, 2023 from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

**Unfinished Business**

**Other Business:**

Mayor Dermody thanked Member Romine and Member Kosior for all their great work in 2022 and expressed his excitement for 2023. Next meeting will be on Wednesday, January, 18, 2023.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, Ms. Romine moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

**Approve:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor**

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer**

**Approved: January 18, 2023**