

**December 19, 2023**

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 9:00 A.M.

**Present:** Mayor Dermody, Mark Kosior, Jessica Romine

**Absent:**

Chief Brettin 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 made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Public Comment**

None

**Claims Approval**

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Payroll from December 8, 2023 in the amount of \$503,862.55.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of December 8, 2023 Payroll**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the December 8, 2023 Payroll as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of \$638,631.02.

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

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the Civil City Claims as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Sewage Claims in the amount of \$279,246.86.

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

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the Sewage Claims as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Water Claims in the amount of \$125,682.23.

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

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

**Approval of Necessary Claims: 2023 Budget**

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun requested approval to pay necessary claims from the 2023 budget through the end of the year and will be presented on the first docket of 2024.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Necessary Claims: 2023 Budget**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Necessary Claims: 2023 Budget as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Approval to Pay Farmed & Forged when UEA Funds Received**

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun requested permission to pay for Farmed & Forged when the UEA Funds are received. The funds have not been received but an invoice has been sent to the UEA. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated the request is for permission to make the payment to Farmed & Forged once the funds have been received from the UEA.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Approval to Pay Farmed & Forged When UEA Funds Received**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve, Approval to Pay Farmed & Forged When UEA Funds Received; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Fedlogic Invoice**

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Fedlogic Invoice. This is a topic previously discussed by Human Resources Director Andrea Smith and GIS. This is an independent resource to help navigate and maximize federal and state benefits. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated the invoice is in the amount of \$9,900 and will be paid for from employee benefits. It is a federal benefits advocacy.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Fedlogic Invoice**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Fedlogic Invoice as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Schneider Invoice**

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Schneider Invoice. Mr. Minich stated Schneider pay app #5 was missed and this invoice is from September. Mr. Minich presented Schneider pay app #5 in the amount of \$559,137.60 and Schneider Pay App #7 in the amount of \$133,252.59. Mr. Minich stated this will bring everything current and recommends approval. Mr. Romine questioned how close we were to being done. Mr. Minich stated the air conditioning and HVAC is the last big-ticket item and the project is approximately 70 percent complete.

### **Motion/Vote – Approval of Schneider Invoice**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Schneider Pay App #5 and Pay App #7 as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

### **Department Head Reports**

**City Planner:** City Planner Craig Phillips reported they are currently working on several grant opportunities, including the ready grant which is due in January. In addition, Mr. Phillips reported they are focused on housing needs for the city and ongoing work with the bid offerings and projects related to housing.

**Wastewater:** Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson reported the crew has begun rebuilding the digester hot water boiler. In addition, Mr. Jackson reported they had received a grant to measure drug residuals in wastewater. They will eventually have some quantitative measures to report that can be compared to other cities as well. Mayor Dermody questioned when we will see data. Mr. Jackson stated we will begin to see data in January. Mr. Jackson stated the data is not specific to anyone or any one general area, it is a general measure for the city as a whole.

**Streets/Code:** Director of Streets and Code Jeff Batchelor reported they are finishing with the leaf pickup this week and they will be working on leveling out a couple of areas of sidewalks to help some elderly folks have easier access into their driveway. In addition, Mr. Batchelor reported they no longer have the dumpsters and urged people to contact Waste Management or whoever they would like to use to get rid of their items, not just toss them outside in the front of their homes because they will receive a citation from Code Enforcement. Mr. Kosior questioned when the dumpster will return. Mr. Batchelor stated the return of the dumpster depends on the weather. Last year the dumpster returned in February because the weather was mild. Typically, the dumpster is available from the end of March until the end of October.

**Police:** Mayor Dermody stated Chief Brettin will be stepping down as he has announced his upcoming retirement, and he appreciates all the hard work and dedication Chief Brettin has put in over the past 30 years. In addition, Chief Brettin reported the department will be having their Christmas party on Thursday at 12:30 P.M. at Café Trilogy and invited any Department Heads or Board Members that would like to attend.

**Fire:** Chief Snyder announced Dr. James Edwards was elected to another four-year term on the Fire Merit Commission.

**Park:** Park and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber reported the Civic has the Christmas Wizards concert on Friday which is a tribute to the Trans-Siberian Orchestra and tickets are still on sale. In addition, Mr. Schreiber reported the La Porte Invitational will be happening after the new year for the third year. This event will be held January 4-6, 2024. Mr. Schreiber stated the ice rink will be open weekdays during the winter break and encouraged families to visit and skate. Mr. Schreiber stated Mayor Dermody was contacted with concerns regarding

the city's boat docks and boat dock fees. The city has two concessions in place; Huber on South Pine and Fay on Stone. All other boat docks are privately owned. The contracts with both Huber and Fay were done in 2021. Fay's contract was new, and Huber's was a restructuring of a previous contract. The contract with Fay is for 10 years and the city receives 10% of their docking fees and Mr. Schreiber stated he believes their docking fee for 2024 will be \$1700. The contract with Hubers has been in place for many years and the city receives 10% of the docking and launching fees. Mr. Schreiber stated he believes their docking fee for 2024 is \$1600 and the launching fee will be \$10 for in state and \$16 for out of state. Mr. Schreiber said the rates being charged are competitive within the market. Mr. Schreiber stated during the height of COVID there were a lot of first-time boat purchases causing an increased demand for docks, ultimately driving up the price. The Park Board has allowed to see the fair market price being charged for these docks. Mr. Schreiber stated Hubers has approximately 84 slips and Fay has 30. Fay is limited to 30 by the City and Hubers is limited by DNR. Hubers with their North and South annex have approximately 150-160 slips. Mr. Schreiber stated the reason Fay has a 10-year contract is because they put in all new docking and has therefore invested heavily.

**Communications:** Communications Director Jessica Bruder-Spoljaric reported there are still a few opportunities for holiday events including two chances to visit Santa at Plaza 618. Those opportunities are tomorrow from 4:30 P.M. - 6:30 P.M. and Saturday from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M.

**New Business:**

**Board of Works Appointment to Fire Merit Board**

Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Board of Works Appointment to Fire Merit Board. Ms. Loeffler stated the Board of Works has one appointment to this board and previously appointed Ian Eldridge to this position. Ms. Loeffler said she contacted Chief Snyder and Ian has been an active member, enjoyed his time on the Merit Commission, and is willing to continue serving. Ms. Loeffler stated Mr. Eldridge is a Republican and per the rules, this does allow him to continue to serve as it balances out the Republican and Democrat equal ratio. Mayor Dermody stated he believes that we are lucky to have two young people serving on this board.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Board of Works Appointment to Fire Merit Board**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Board of Works Appointment to Fire Merit Board as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Agreement for Surveillance Equipment**

Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Agreement for Surveillance Equipment with New Age Telecom in the amount of \$28,162. Ms. Loeffler stated City Hall currently has surveillance equipment in place that is approximately five years old and out of date. Ms. Loeffler stated even though it is not incredibly old, the equipment is unfortunately out of date. There have been three instances this year alone where the police needed to use the footage from City Hall surveillance, and it was not usable footage because it was not clear and lacks the ability to zoom in. Ms. Loeffler stated the request is for permission to sign the contract.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated the funds to pay for this have been encumbered and part of it will come from the mayor's budget and part of it will come from CCD funds.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Agreement for Surveillance Equipment**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Agreement for Surveillance Equipment as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**Lease Renewal**

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Lease Renewal. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated there are four leases that are up for renewal: Two in Code Enforcement and two in Engineering. La Porte Chrysler reached out and are willing to work within the 2024 budget and will revisit for 2025 budgets as costs of everything have increased. The leases are for four new Dodge Hornets for one year. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated these terms fit within each department's budget and the lease is for one year and will be looked at again in September 2024 for 2025 renewal.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Lease Renewal**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Lease Renewal as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Transfer of Parcel to the Redevelopment Commission**

City Attorney Nick Otis presented Transfer of Parcel to the Redevelopment Commission. This is the Don George property. The property has been bid three separate times. The first two bids were rejected, and the third and final bid was accepted, but the deal fell through. Attorney Otis stated the city has done this process previously as the Redevelopment Commission has a broader latitude to do direct negotiations. Mr. Phillips stated the potential developer has agreed to maintain the access the city has asked them to maintain, as far as lake access is concerned for the public. Mr. Kosior questioned how the transfer to the Redevelopment Commission will affect the city's ability to ensure the developer follows the wishes of the city. Attorney Otis stated the Redevelopment Commission is a board of the city and has been involved in more complex negotiations, in particular with Newporte Landing, and making sure that the developers do what they say they are going to do.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Transfer of Parcel to the Redevelopment Commission**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Transfer of Parcel to the Redevelopment Commission as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Accept Letter of Resignation: Julie Smith**

Chief Brettin presented Accept Letter of Resignation: Julie Smith. Chief Brettin stated Julie signed up for the drop three years ago and her end date will be January 24, 2024. Chief Brettin stated Julie has held almost every position within the department and the knowledge and guidance she has given to the officers has been amazing. Mayor Dermody recognized Julie

Smith for her 35 years served, and her commitment to the department and the community. Chief Brettin stated his request is to accept the resignation and for permission for the Merit Commission to look for a replacement. Mayor Dermody requested an amended motion. Attorney Otis said the amended motion should include replacing Julie Smith and the necessary promotions within the department.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Accept Letter of Resignation: Julie Smith**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Accept Letter of Resignation: Julie Smith as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**Motion/Vote - Amend Approval of Accept Letter of Resignation**

Ms. Romine made a motion to amend Approval of Accept Letter of Resignation to include hiring someone new and promotions within the department; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Professional Service Agreement**

Chief Brettin requested the Professional Service Agreement to be tabled as they are still working through negotiations.

**Motion/Vote – Table Professional Service Agreement**

Ms. Romine made a motion to table Professional Service Agreement; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Pay Request #7 Contract 2A Letters/Numbers**

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Pay Request #7 Contract 2A Letters/Numbers in the amount of \$221,422.87. This is for the piping, water main, and storm sewer for the Letters and Numbers Project. Mr. Jackson stated this brings the project to 70% and recommends payment.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Pay Request #7 Contract 2A Letters/Numbers**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Pay Request #7 Contract 2A Letters/Numbers as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Pay Request #7 Contract 2B Letters/Numbers**

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Pay Request #7 Contract 2B Letters/Numbers in the amount of \$263,643.05. This is for the street portion of the project and brings the project to 55%. Mr. Jackson stated there were some issues with the surface paving that went on and this payment does not include the surface. Mr. Jackson stated they are currently working on a letter to Reith-Riley to get the surface corrected in the spring. In addition, Mr. Jackson stated the manhole covers are low and temporary steel riser rings will be placed on them to get through the winter. Attorney Otis questioned what the issues were with paving that it was not done well. City Engineer Nick Minich stated he believes that it was just not a great day for Reith-Riley for paving and they ended up doing a lot of hand work. Mr.

Minich stated the work done is not typical of what Reith-Riley has produced in the past and they are working with them to get it corrected.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Pay Request #7 Contract 2B Letters/Numbers**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Pay Request #7 Contract 2B Letters/Numbers as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Request for Quote Approval**

Chief Snyder presented Request for Quote Approval. This is a quote dealing with the breathing air systems within the department. This is the machine that fills SCBAs, which is the air the firefighters wear into fires and other dangerous situations. Chief Snyder stated the current system is 24 years and they have maintained it well and it does currently pass inspections, however, they are no longer able to get parts for it for even routine maintenance. Chief Snyder stated only one quote was submitted because the manufacturer of the new system is the same as the current system and some parts of the current system are still usable in addition to the system serving the department well for so many years. Chief Snyder stated the price for a completely new system would be much more significant. Chief Snyder said the quote is in the amount of \$48,000 and requests permission to move forward with it. Mr. Kosior questioned where the unit would be located. Chief Snyder said the current system is at station one and supplies to the other stations. The two front line engines also have the system on them which allows them the capability of filling tanks on scene. Mr. Kosior questioned where this would be paid from. This will be paid from the Public Safety LIT.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Request for Quote Approval**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Request for Quote Approval as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**Request Permission for Signage and Rumble Strips on Weller**

Director of Streets and Code Jeff Batchelor presented Request Permission for Signage and Rumble Strips on Weller. Mr. Batchelor stated the crossing guard at Riley Elementary school reached out due to children almost being hit on several occasions because people are not paying attention. The request is to add yield signs on both sides where the children cross and put rumble strips down. Mr. Batchelor said this will be a short-term solution but will be brought before the traffic commission at their next meeting for a long-term solution. The school will be putting up a yellow flashing light, however, that will not be until the spring. Mr. Kosior questioned what a long-term solution may potentially be. Mr. Batchelor stated he hopes what they are doing is a long-term solution with the increase of officer presence and with tickets being issued to those violators. Ms. Romine questioned how soon the signage and rumble strips will be installed. Mr. Batchelor stated the yield signs have already been ordered and it should be in place before the children return to school from break.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Request Permission for Signage and Rumble Strips on Weller**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request Permission for Signage and Rumble Strips on Weller as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

### **Approval of Consultant/LPA Agreement with Rundell Ernstberger Associates**

City Planner Craig Phillips presented Approval of Consultant/LPA Agreement with Rundell Ernstberger Associates. Mr. Phillips stated they have been working on the consultant process per the requirements of INDOT and several were submitted, and they were able to narrow those down ultimately to the highest scoring consultant: Rundell Ernstberger Associates. This consultant/LPA Agreement is for the comprehensive and transportation plan for the city. Mr. Phillips stated the city has not had its own comprehensive plan since the mid 90s. The county adopted the countywide development plan and the city fell within a region of that document. Mr. Phillips stated there are two separate steps involved in this process. One is the contract between the city as the local public agency, or LPA. Second a contract will be seen later between the city and INDOT which will lay out the responsibilities of both parties as we go through this process. Mr. Phillips stated he would like to bring attention to the scope of the document and the issues this will cover include future land use, development needs of the city, and transportation. In addition, Mr. Phillips stated it will have an economic development element, housing element, quality of life element, infrastructure and utilities element, and annexation and growth management. Mr. Phillips stated one of the major benefits of having a comprehensive plan and transportation plan is the document will provide some of the support necessary for us in terms of documentation for grants and things like that. Mr. Phillips stated a significant portion of the funding for this project have been secured through the federal government in the form of surface transportation dollars that are doled out through INDOT and through the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission. The total contract cost is in the amount of \$350,000 and will be paid over the course of two fiscal years. Mr. Phillips stated \$150,000 has been secured through transportation funds and the remaining balance of the contract will be paid from two fiscal years of funds received from the Redevelopment Commission in addition to the balance of the funds the city has available in its strategic planning fund. Mr. Phillips introduced Cynthia Bowen and Cheryl Sharp. Cynthia Bowen is the principal in charge of the project with Rundell Ernsberger Associates, the lead consultant, and Cheryl Sharp is with Lochmueller, the main sub consultant. Ms. Bowen and Sharp expressed their excitement to be working with the City of La Porte, helping the city set its vision for the future. Mayor Dermody questioned what this report will provide. Mr. Phillips stated this report will synthesize the previous work that has already been done; it does not necessarily try to replace that work but it enhances it. This will also be an opportunity to update the information we already have as it may have been years since the previous work was done. In addition, Mr. Phillips stated this will allow us to dive deeper into specific issues, such as truck traffic, and put together scenarios and more specific information. Mayor Dermody asked what the anticipated period for completion is. Mr. Phillips stated it will take approximately 18 months to complete. Mr. Kosior questioned why this will be different than studies that have been done previously and if this will result in actual change. Mr. Phillips stated this will help provide the documentation required to potentially get grant money to complete projects, such as the north south corridor, as the current documentation is not significant enough for the city to receive those funds. This project will connect all the other projects and give great detail on how to implement the changes and projects necessary to get to where we want to be as a city.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Consultant/LPA Agreement with Rundell Ernstberger Assc.**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Consultant/LPA Agreement with Rundell Ernstberger Assc. as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Quotes for Cameras**

Director of IT Services Roscoe Hoffman presented three quotes for cameras. Mr. Hoffman recommends the first quote as the least expensive and best fit for our needs. Mr. Hoffman stated per state statute the City of La Porte is required to live stream all public meetings by the year 2025. This will implement four stationary cameras within the chambers and the wires will be hidden rather than cameras being brought in each time and then removed once finished, ultimately saving the City money as this will no longer be done by a third party. Mr. Hoffman said these cameras can be operated remotely. Mr. Hoffman stated the City of Michigan City and the County already utilize these types of cameras.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Quotes for Cameras**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Quotes for Cameras as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Pay Request #4-Truesdell Ave/Clear Lake Loop**

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Pay Request #4-Truesdell Ave/Clear Lake Loop in the amount of \$1,608,996.20. Mr. Minich stated this will take us through the beginning of December and does include a significant amount of work that has been done. This brings the project to approximately 70% completion.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Pay Request #4-Truesdell Ave/Clear Lake Loop**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Pay Request #4-Truesdell Ave/Clear Lake Loop as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Unfinished Business**

**Tabled: Equipment Quotes**

**Motion/Vote – Un-table Equipment Quotes**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to un-table Equipment Quotes; motion seconded by Ms. Romone and unanimously carried.

**Equipment Quotes**

Property and Evidence Technician Tony McClintock presented equipment quotes. Mr. McClintock presented a quote from Horiba Scientific and Spex Forensics for a mini crime scope forensic light source. This device is necessary technology that can be used in house at the station and is also portable to be taken to a crime scene if needed. This device helps aid in finding a variety of things, such as blood stains, bodily fluids, fingerprints, among other

things that can be analyzed for evidence. This light source works in conjunction with a camera with a compatible-colored lens, which they do already have.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Equipment Quotes**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Equipment Quotes as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Other Business:**

Next regularly scheduled meeting: Wednesday January 3, 2024 at 9 A.M. Mayor Dermody reminded the public, as stated by IT Director Roscoe Hoffman, we do work with our neighboring communities. Mayor Dermody reminded everyone that we are participating in a friendly competition and will be out ringing the bells for charity and encouraged everyone to give what they can. Mayor Dermody wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, Mr. Kosior made a motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

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

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

**Approved: January 3, 2024**