

JULY 19, 2016

The Town Council met in regular session at the Town Hall at 8:00 a.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Blaylock.

Present were: BLAYLOCK, FLANDERS, WADE, and WATSON along with Clerk-Treasurer Karla Atkins and Attorney Thomas Clowers.

The following visitors were present: Dan Barton, Patricia Gosh, Tom Stahl, Dan Busler, Connie Buller, Linda Warrum, Jerry and Nannette Stump, Garry Holstein, Loretta Gerard, Lora Arneberg, Martha Raske, Lois Gray, Connie Weinzapfel, Jeff Smotherman, Paula Schmitt, Laura Nicholson, Jeanne Maudlin, Rick Huffman, Mary Ann Michna, Caleb McDaniel, and Bobby Grider.

Councilman Flanders made and Wade seconded a motion the minutes of the previous regular meeting be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilman Watson made and Wade seconded a motion the minutes of the July 5, 2016, Special Meeting be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilman Flanders reported on the July Park Board meeting. The Park Board will be applying for grants from the Blaffer Foundation and the Posey Co. Community Foundation.

Councilman Flanders reported two trees have come down at Maple Hill Cemetery. He has contacted Jim Brown and asked him to take care of removing them.

Gas/street superintendent Bobby Grider reported the parts for the regulator station have been ordered. This was necessitated by the fact that it was estimated to take up to two months for them to be delivered. USDI has submitted a new bid for the labor only. Supt. Grider contacted Deig Bros and Blankenberger about bidding on the work, but neither are qualified.

President Blaylock reported it was discovered during a recent house fire on Frederick St. that a nearby hydrant was not working. This was determined to be caused by a valve being closed. The hydrant is now operational.

Gas/street superintendent Grider reported the State Park water tower is going to be rehabbed. He stated some customers outside the Town limits could have low water pressure.

Councilman Flanders stated several residents have asked about the marshal's schedule. He asked if Councilman Watson could share it. He has also had inquiries about the marshal's insignia on the police car. Councilman Flanders asked if other hydrants have valves closed.

President Blaylock stated he is working with Supt. Grider and Clerk-Treasurer Atkins on setting up a hydrant flushing schedule. Supt. Grider added that he believes a number of hydrants need to be replaced.

Councilman Watson commented he does not believe the Marshal's schedule needs to be posted. He stated he is not opposed to emblems on the car. However, the police car has been in the repair shop for two or three weeks which explains why citizens have not seen it.

Councilman Flanders pointed out the insignia creates visibility and is a deterrent.

Councilman Watson stated that part-time deputies fill in on the Town Marshal's days off. President Blaylock pointed out the Town does not have police on duty 24-hours a day, and they never have. If this was implemented, the police budget would increase 400%.

The festival application for Kunstfest was approved. Councilman Flanders stated a new certificate of insurance covering the date of the festival will be submitted to the Town.

Councilman Wade made and Watson seconded a motion that a quote from Rick Gooden to build a new Town Hall sign for \$150. be accepted. The sign will have to be painted once it is received. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Blaylock reported the roof at the old fire station should be replaced soon.

President Blaylock reported he would like the Town to apply for a community crossings grant for street paving. The grant requires a 50% match. The grant application is due July 29. Councilman Wade made and Watson seconded a motion that the Town commit \$50,000. as match money. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilman Watson stated an entity is going to have to take responsibility for the Harmony Way Bridge in order to secure funds. President Blaylock stated Posey Co. and the State of Indiana have shown no interest in taking on the Bridge, and he feels it would be a huge undertaking for the Town to do so. Councilman Flanders stated the report just given is nothing different from what was known three years ago. He stated he is disappointed that more progress hasn't been made identifying entities that might be eligible to take the Bridge over, what the consequences for each might be, and what types of funding would be available. Councilman Flanders continued that the three-person bridge committee that the Council established earlier this year has provided no information other than what was already known prior to establishment of the committee. He stated the Business Associates members have strong views regarding the Bridge and he does not believe they are being heard. Councilman Flanders feels one problem is the lack of resources to investigate alternatives for the Bridge. He thinks the Council should consider putting up some money to hire a consultant to drive some recommendations for Council to consider. The options could be reopening the Bridge to vehicular traffic or some other use. Councilman Flanders pointed out that if the State of Illinois cannot be persuaded to reopen the two closed bridges on Highway 14, that eliminates the option of reopening the Bridge to vehicular traffic as an option. He believes the Town is in a similar situation as with the floodplain—just do nothing and the Bridge falls in the river and the problem is solved. Councilman Flanders feels if no action is taken soon, the State of Indiana will remove the Bridge. President Blaylock asked if Councilman Flanders would like to volunteer to drive something further with Council approval. Councilman Flanders stated he would agree to do so, and stated he already has a resolution drafted. President Blaylock asked if Councilman Flanders is serious about wanting to put the Town in jeopardy of possible bankruptcy to take over the Bridge. Councilman Flanders responded he is not suggesting the answer is taking over the Bridge, and the possible revenue stream has not been identified. He pointed out that the decision in the end might be that the Bridge is not worth restoring.

Dan Barton stated he has been in conversations with officials in Washington, D.C. regarding the Innovative Readiness Training Program, which offers assistance in rebuilding bridges. He asked President Blaylock if he had contacted officials about the program, and he said he had not. President Blaylock commented that when meeting in person with officials to discuss the program, he understood them to say it was a ten-year program. Mr. Barton disagreed with this statement and encouraged President Blaylock to contact them. He also requested that President Blaylock contact Jim Barker, the engineer who did the last study on the bridge. Mr. Barton stated the Harmony Way Bridge is salvageable, and every report he reads states that opinion. He continued that he has spoken to the IL Dept. of Transportation and they said if the Town is going to take over the Harmony Way Bridge, they will reopen the two bridges they closed on Highway 14.

Laura Nicholson commended Mr. Barton for continuing to work on the Bridge issue. She stated it is disappointing to hear Council say they haven't contacted people, read reports, etc. She continued many people in town want something to happen with the Bridge, and they would appreciate an investigation into their options. She asked that Council do some research. She pointed out there was Regional Cities money set aside for the Bridge.

Lora Arneberg stated she feels the Regional Cities funds will pay for some updated engineering studies and she hopes that can be completed pretty quickly. She suggested that this be completed and see where things stand. She also suggested that those interested keep investigating what liability there would be to the Town and what options can be taken to prevent something catastrophic.

Rick Huffman feels the Town is more at risk by not doing anything. He noted many businesses have come and gone in the seven years he has been a resident. He noted the Town is considering spending over a million dollars to remove the gas pipeline from the Bridge, when that money could be spent on saving and reopening the Bridge. He feels inaction will bankrupt the Town.

Pat Gosh commented that she would like Councilman Flanders to be given approval to take the Bridge issue further, stating he has the support of all the Business Associates members and property owners and friends who believe he has the enthusiasm and will to see what can happen by going further with the Bridge.

President Blaylock stated Mrs. Gosh has said that all property owners support the Bridge and that is incorrect. He continued that several property owners in Town have told him they are not in favor of the Town taking the Bridge.

Linda Warrum pointed out that the money possibly being used for relocation of the Town's gas line cannot be used for the Bridge. Town funds can only be used for certain things.

Tom Stahl questioned President Blaylock as to why he had not contacted either of the people that Mr. Barton had suggested he contact about the Bridge. President Blaylock responded he did not have a reason why he did not contact them previously, and he did not agree to contact them in the future. Ms. Nicholson stated she feels President Blaylock should contact them.

Connie Buller expressed concern over the recent house fire and asked if the Town has any plans to enhance its fire protection until the fire hydrants can be repaired. President Blaylock reported mutual aid is always called for a house fire, which is the plan that has been in place for many years.

Ms. Buller reported seeing a lot of kids driving golf carts. President Blaylock stated Marshal McDaniel handles these as he is made aware of them.

Ms. Buller asked if residents are permitted to let their dogs run loose at the former school property? President Blaylock commented this is not permitted and is in violation of the Town ordinance.

Ms. Arneberg asked about the alley being closed off South St. near the trail. President Blaylock stated it was blocked off to prevent cars from going through since it is private property.

President Blaylock announced the HVAC system at the old school building is not running yet. The delay is due to an air compressor needing to be replaced.

Mrs. Gosh announced some planned activities for the Bicentennial Torch Relay. Councilman Flanders made and Wade seconded a motion that approval be given to display a 20' X 2' banner at the intersection of Main St. and Tavern St. The banner will hang no longer than 30 days. All were in favor. Motion carried. President Blaylock was asked by Mrs. Gosh to welcome the dignitaries to New Harmony.

President Blaylock reported on a meeting held on July 15 with the Department of Natural Resources regarding the Town's flood elevations. He continued that DNR thinks they have made a mistake on the flood elevations in New Harmony, and there is a good possibility the elevations will change in the Town's favor. Any changes must be made by FEMA, and could take up to a year.

President Blaylock reported there has been a change in the transfer resolution between the Town and the WMI, at the request of the WMI. To allow all five Council members time to review the resolution and vote, he will be calling a special meeting for the morning of July 22 to consider the resolution.

Councilman Wade made and Watson seconded a motion the claims be allowed and the Clerk pay the same. All were in favor. Motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:59 a.m.

Alvin Blaylock, President of Town Council

Attest:

Karla L. Atkins, Clerk-Treasurer