

December 17, 2024

The Town Council met in a regular session at the Town Hall at 5:30 p.m.

President Smotherman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present in person were: SMOTHERMAN, ARNEBERG, CLARK, WEINZAPFEL and WILLIAMS along with Clerk-Treasurer, Ann Huelsmann and Attorney, Nathan Maudlin.

A list of visitors is attached.

Councilperson Weinzapfel made, and Williams seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the 11/18/2024 Memorandum of Executive Session. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Weinzapfel made, and Arneberg seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the 11/19/2024 Regular Meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Williams made, and Weinzapfel seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the 12/05/2024 Special Meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smotherman announced some department head changes effective 01/01/2025. Councilperson Weinzapfel was moved to Public Safety and Clark moved to Economic Development. Smotherman thanked the fire department, first responders and Marshall for their good work and that the Marshall is now certified. He also thanked the town employees. Smotherman said they are a great bunch, we learned a lot this year, have done a lot, and have a lot to do. He also stated he enjoyed working with the board members.

Councilperson Weinzapfel talked about Streetscapes and the Comprehensive Plan. She said that the zoning code was going to be published online and that she, Clark and Nathan Maudlin are looking at recommendations now. This endeavor will be completed in three to four months. Accomplishments this year included researching a Comprehensive Plan firm that was hired. Weinzapfel said that they will be identifying the top big projects going forward for next year such as being shown the way to obtain more grants. A plan was developed for residents to report failing trees and the town has replaced a lot of street trees and banners downtown. Going forward Weinzapfel said she will be focused on fixing public lighting. When the ordinances are online, residents will be able to make comments online. Weinzapfel will be analyzing the buildings that the town owns and creating a plan to make these structures more useful.

Councilperson Clark reported that significant repairs to the sewer plant were made this year. He previously mentioned there was an issue with the sewer gear box and when replaced it was found there were broken bearings. Emergency repairs were made. MelKay did all the repairs and we will be receiving a bill for the additional work. He is waiting on the bill from MelKay. Clark reminded us that a lot of the equipment was 20-25+ years old. Clark also discussed the town's unsafe and dilapidated buildings. He is going to meet with Nathan Maudlin. Clark has reached out to Mt. Vernon regarding their processes and ordinances in dealing with such properties. Sherry Willis, who is responsible for Mt. Vernon's initiative, has invited Clark to a hearing on 01/09/2025 that he will attend. Clark also said that he's reached out to OCRA regarding a grant to assist in the funding of a plan to look at the town's infrastructure.

Councilperson Arneberg stated that she will be working with the school buyer on their plans. While considering the purchase of the school many state funds came to light dependent upon what the buyer wants to do. She announced that the town received a county grant for our Wi-Fi downtown which will happen next year. Two blocks have been identified that will be the target zone. She will be working with One New Harmony to look at funding so that the town and One New Harmony can do marketing and business development together. Arneberg said that One New Harmony will be hosting a Main Street one on one event at the WMI in May. One New Harmony members will be attending to discuss housing goals. Councilperson Clark mentioned that registration is open to all.

Councilperson Williams said that he walked the trails to see how the heavy rain impacted the gravel. There are a few areas with puddles that will be addressed, weather permitting. He mentioned that the riprap is dying off. Williams said the Park Board met last week to talk about their five-year plan and future funding. The Park Board President, Jeanne Maudlin, got New Harmony the Tree City status.

Councilperson Clark announced that we had some utility billing issues this month. New bills were sent out yesterday and today. The Clerk-Treasurer Huelsmann mentioned the issue was announced through our emergency alert process and reminded people to get signed up for that service.

President Smotherman thanked the town attorney, Nathan Maudlin, for his service.



Councilperson Clark reported that we are looking at Baker Tilley, an advising group for municipalities, for a proposal which he and Clerk-Treasurer Huelsmann reviewed. Baker Tilley will gather historical financial information to assist us in 1. capital improvement plans (\$2,500) and 2. develop a five-year financial plan (\$25,000). They can help us take our budgets past the requirements. Regarding the town capital cumulative fund, they can help us set one up or reestablish that fund to ensure tax levies are going into that fund and how they should be spent. Clerk-Treasurer Huelsmann stated they are going to look at the money that we have to help us decide the best way to invest it and how much should stay liquid. Clark made a motion to engage Baker Tilley for those two services. Weinzapfel seconded it. Councilperson Williams asked how long the project would take. Arneberg responded that the initial draft report designated six weeks for the preliminary draft report. Clark said that the entire project could take three to four months. Weinzapfel asked about one-on-training. Clark reminded them that it's probably similar to AIM's training. Clark suggested that we get through this initial training and see if we need more. Huelsmann will be the primary contact with Baker Tilley. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Williams addressed the issue of keeping Murphy Park open during the winter months and the need for a port-a-potty. President Smotherman received a bid of \$85 per month for 01/01-04/01/2025 that will be serviced once a week. The port-a-potty will be situated near the garage door to the bathroom building. Clerk-Treasurer Huelsmann clarified that the shelter and bathrooms are closed, and the water is turned off. Clark asked about the Park Board budget and who has the authority to make such decisions. Smotherman said that we need to establish a budget for them. Williams made a motion to rent the port-a-potty. Weinzapfel seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Kenny Weinzapfel requested that his sewer fee be waived. Councilperson Clark made the motion. Williams seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Williams made the motion to approve the new salary ordinance. Clark seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smother discussed the need to approve three resolutions transferring funds between town accounts. Clerk-Treasurer Huelsmann stated this is money that is there, just moving between funds and a SBOA requirement. Council person Clark made a motion to approve resolution 2024-7. Weinzapfel seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried. Council person Williams made a motion to approve resolution 2024-8. Weinzapfel seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried. Council person Arneberg made a motion to approve resolution 2024-9. Clark seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smotherman gave an update on the town's CDs that are matured on 12/15/2024. CDs, in the amount of \$400,000, plus (rough math) interest was around \$18,000. Councilman Clark made a motion to cash out the current CDs and purchase new ones from United Fidelity Bank at 5% for six months. Weinzapfel seconded it. Clark mentioned again that the town council will be looking at other options to diversify our investments. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Arneberg made a motion that the sewer and weed liens on a property at 822 East St., recently purchased by Daniel Kiesel, be released. The liens were bad debt incurred by the former owner. The property was listed through a sheriff's sale and did not sell. Then it went to a commissioner's sale, when Kiesel purchased it. He is cleaning the property up by tearing down a building and removing a trailer. Clark stated that because it went to a commissioner's sale the liens were not communicated as being outstanding. He was in favor of releasing the weed liens but not the sewer liens. Because Clark represents the utilities, he did not want to forgive those. He is in good standing with his current utility payments since purchasing the property. It was stated that the liens will be removed when the trailer is removed. Williams seconded it. Smotherman, Arneberg, Weinzapfel and Williams were in favor. Clark opposed. Motion carried 4/1.

President Smotherman made a recommendation for Angie Westfall and Tony Treadway to be reinstated to the Planning Commission as a Council President appointment. Councilperson Clark made a motion to reinstate Zach Clark to the Park Board. Williams seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Williams made a motion to approve the claims. Weinzapfel seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Williams presented a gift to Nathan Maudlin for his hard work this past year.

There being no further business, Councilperson Clark made and Arneberg seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.



Jeffrey Smotherman, President of Town Council

Attest:

Ann Huelsmann, Clerk-Treasurer

