

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

The Town Council met in regular session at the Town Hall at 8:30 a.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Blaylock.

Present were: BLAYLOCK, ALSOP, WADE, WATSON, and WILLIAMS along with Clerk-Treasurer Karla Atkins and Attorney Erin Bauer.

The following visitors were present: Jeff Koester, Chris Laughbaum, Rosie Benton, Jeff Smotherman, Dan Mason, Connie Weinzapfel, Trisha Lopez, Aaron Straub, and Bobby Grider.

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

President Blaylock reported a 3" water line on Harmony Township Road will have to be replaced, as it has been damaged by erosion. Blankenberger Bros. submitted a bid of \$18,300. Councilman Wade made and Watson seconded a motion the bid from Blankenberger Bros. be accepted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Blaylock opened the public hearing for the 2021 budget. Councilman Watson made and Wade seconded a motion the 2021 budget stand as advertised. All were in favor. Motion carried. The budget is scheduled for adoption at the next meeting.

Councilman Wade made and Alsop seconded a motion the street closure request from St. Stephen's Church be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Blaylock read Resolution 2020-3 in full. This Resolution designates September 17-23 as Constitution Week. Councilman Wade made and Watson seconded a motion the Resolution be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

There was discussion regarding the opening of Town Hall to the public. It was noted that when this happens, employees will need to wear a face covering whenever someone enters the building. It was also stated that anyone without a face covering can be forbidden from entering, but that masks should be provided for those who don't have one. Clerk-Treasurer Atkins pointed out there are not any extra masks available. Councilman Watson made and Alsop seconded a motion the Town Hall remain closed to the public at this time. All were in favor except Councilman Williams. Motion carried.

President Blaylock announced there are currently 38 applicants for the COVID-19 Response Grant, with applications being accepted until 4 p.m. on September 15.

Rosie Benton presented photos of a house on Steammill St. that is in poor condition. She also noted there are other properties that have abandoned vehicles, weeds, etc. President Blaylock noted the abandoned vehicles can be turned over to the Town Marshal. Councilman Wade stated he owns the property on Steammill St., and he is going to have it torn down. He continued the other two properties he owns are currently being used. President Blaylock explained the policy on weeds, etc., is that if a complaint is received, it is brought to Council to determine if it is a nuisance or not. If so, the Town ordinance is then followed.

Dan Mason announced tourism is up. He also spoke of the recent interest in murals, in part due to the one recently completed in Mt. Vernon.

Connie Weinzapfel spoke to Council about an elm tree in the 700 block of Church St. She has made repeated requests to have something done about it, beginning in 2016. She is concerned the tree may fall and cause serious damage. President Blaylock stated he has been working on this for quite some time. He does not have an exact date the work will be done, but it will be soon. A contractor has been hired and the Town is currently on a waiting list.

Jeff Smotherman, on behalf of the New Harmony Business Associates, thanked the Town for all the work done regarding the COVID-19 Response Grant.

President Blaylock noted Council has received a request to remove several stop signs in Town. Several Council members spoke in favor of keeping the stop signs. Councilman Williams stated he agrees that the signs on Third St. where it intersects with Tavern St. are not needed. Town Marshal Straub reported he has observed the intersection on numerous occasions and he does not feel there is much of a problem, as far as motorists disregarding the stop signs. Councilman Alsop made and Wade seconded a motion all stop signs remain in place at this time. All were in favor. Motion carried. Jeff Koester pointed out he owns the property from Church St. to the south, including the street. He asked that this be clarified between the Town and himself.

There was discussion about enforcing golf cart rules. Attorney Bauer stated the golf cart rental companies can be asked to add certain language to their contracts, but the Town cannot require them to. Councilman Wade pointed out he would like to make it simpler for the renters to understand the Town's guidelines. Attorney Bauer stated any language that is sent to the rental companies needs to track the Town ordinance. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

President Blaylock reported Attorney Bauer has done some research on the Town's options regarding Mill Ditch. He also noted a letter was received from Joe Morris on this issue. There has been communication with INDOT on helping with this also. Discussions are ongoing.

Councilman Watson made and Wade seconded a motion the Council officially support the Pageant Proposal as submitted by Tonya Palmer from IU. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Blaylock feels Council needs to look into adopting an ordinance to address the issue of grass being blown into the streets.

There was discussion regarding the regulation of food trucks in Town. Attorney Bauer had provided to Council a copy of Evansville's ordinance. Council members noted this ordinance is well written. Christine Laughbaum pointed out she thought this fell under the Town's festival ordinance, and an application should be filled out as required by that ordinance, which includes a \$50 fee. Jeff Smotherman asked if the proposed ordinance would affect food trucks that come during festivals. Attorney Bauer stated this can be covered in the ordinance.

Councilman Alsop reported she has gotten one bid for work at Murphy Park, and she also has a volunteer to do some of the work. This might possibly be done during the off-season.

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

President Blaylock announced that Community Crossings Matching Grant 2020-2 opens September 25.

Councilman Alsop stated she has received reports of vehicles driving from the Atheneum to the River. She suggested that a larger sign be purchased. It was noted one needs to be placed at the Third St. entrance as well. Councilman Alsop will get prices for the signs.

Dan Mason announced the labyrinth will soon be trimmed. This is done every 20 years.

There being no further business, Councilman Wade made and Watson seconded a motion the meeting be adjourned. All were in favor. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Alvin Blaylock, President of Town Council

Attest:

Karla L. Atkins, Clerk-Treasurer