

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Smotherman.

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 Clark made and Weinzapfel seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the 8/12/2024 Special Meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Weinzapfel made, and Clark seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the 8/20/2024 Regular Meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Arneberg made, and Williams seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the 8/30/2024 Executive Session. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Clark made and Weinzapfel seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the 9/05/2024 Special Meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Weinzapfel updated on REA's work and introduced REA representative, Dan Liggett. Liggett reported that in 2 weeks, September 30, the comprehensive planning week will begin. Meetings will take place at Thrall's Opera House from 6:30-8:00 p.m. They are also conducting focus groups that week. On October 3, Liggett will report back a draft of information gathered. It will also be posted on the project website, newharmonyplan.com. REA will also be meeting with visitors to New Harmony. REA will be working on a five-year Parks Plan which will enable the request for funding future projects. It was asked by the community to please fill out the questionnaire online. Paper surveys are available to those with no internet access. They encourage you to use the website - newharmonyplan.com.

Councilperson Weinzapfel reported the first round of street tree removal and pruning is nearly complete. They will be moving to the second round in the next few weeks. Weinzapfel is working with the Clerk's Office to create a way for the public to see the reports on all the trees that need attention. A form is available at Town Hall to make a request to have a town tree (within right-of-way and/or park) to be evaluated. We are developing a list of approved trees to be planted in the right-of-way. New Harmony may benefit from a grant that Mt. Vernon received to help map trees in their rights-of-way.

Councilperson Weinzapfel reported on asphalt repaving. Because there is a minimum asphalt quantity order, the town must wait until there are multiple repairs, resulting in cost containment.

Councilperson Clark announced that an Executive Director Solid Waste District position is open that oversees all the recycling centers in the county. Please talk to him if you are interested. We passed the sewer plant inspection report from Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Johnathon Webber, Utility Laborer for the town, is completing water courses to become certified. There will be a Special Meeting on September 23, WMI, 5:30 to inform the town and gather information regarding the purchase of the old school. Councilperson Clark attended a County Commissionaires meeting to discuss grant agreements.

President Smotherman reported there is a safety recall on the Town's police cruiser. October 25 will be the Town wide big trash day. Smotherman reminded citizens that this is not for contractors and building waste. The burn ban is still in effect until October 1.

Councilperson Arneberg introduced Christy Powell, the Community Development Director with Evansville Regional Economic Development Partnership. They work with smaller communities like ours regarding our goals. We are Community Development Block Grant-eligible again which has to do with income levels. Arneberg and Weinzapfel talked to Powell about applying to do a master infrastructure study on our utilities. County housing study is still on-going.

When voted in, Councilperson Arneberg wanted to advocate for economic development. A section in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan regarding Economic Development has not been acted on. Arneberg showed those objectives from the 2008 plan and highlighted important sections such as supporting local business, annual events, and coordinating marketing those events. Also noted was the importance of the level of cooperation between organizations in the community. You can find the report online for more information. One New Harmony is currently fulfilling the objectives the current Comprehensive Plan outlines for economic development. What Arneberg suggests is that the town needs to work with One New Harmony. Economic Development Tax comes from an income tax, not property

tax. We get \$40K a year, which has only been used to pave roads, but we have accumulated a lot of reserves in this account. Arneberg will continue to look for opportunities to use this in the new Comprehensive Plan.

Councilperson Williams reported that the cemetery is gorgeous. The riprap rock along riverbanks was sprayed September 15. After this big spray, our maintenance crew will be able to keep up with future sprayings. He noted that we need a licensed herbicide specialist. The Park Board is doing a great job. Some trees were removed, and we will be planting new ones. The Town has six new picnic tables, cost shared with One New Harmony, and the graveling of the riverfront trail has started.

President Smotherman opened the Open Forum by reminding attendees that the Council may not be able to immediately answer all questions but promises the Council will get back to them.

Jan and Larry Kahle said that they had a water leak that the town maintenance crew worked on from 9:30 pm to 1:30 a.m. and the crew did a wonderful job.

Docey Lewis said that she bypassed the closed notices and walked on the riverfront trail. She asked if the chemicals were dangerous to health. Councilperson Williams stated that it is not good to breathe while being sprayed. It is safe for the water.

Shawn Worman stated that they had their ATV before the ordinance banning them was put in place. He asked why the mosquito spraying had stopped and was glad to hear the town is having a special meeting regarding buying the school. That needs to be thoroughly thought out.

David Campbell asked the Town to send a letter to the Indiana Regulatory Commission to fight CenterPoint raising our bills.

Jean Kares asked if the DNR was going to change the flood zones. She asked what the special meetings were regarding that were approved? President Smotherman responded that the executive session was to review resumes for our Town Marshal. The first Special Meeting was to talk about the retention of our current Clerk-Treasurer. Smotherman said that he did not have the specifics in front of him of all the meetings, but they are all recorded and posted on YouTube – New Harmony Town Council. Kares also mentioned that many of New Harmony's websites are not up to date. Smotherman also mentioned that we post meeting agendas in the Post Office and Town Hall.

Tom Guggenheim stated that the flood zone will be reevaluated through the In Dept of Natural Resources. He also mentioned that he has his license on spraying herbicides and can train our maintenance crew. He stated that West Nile was detected in southwest Indiana. Guggenheim also informed us that he had a green hay bale fire at his tree farm location. Firefighters were called.

Judy Davis asked if there was an ordinance regarding residents of the town cutting their grass.

Diana Sanders thanked the town for their support with the USI student visit to New Harmony.

President Smotherman read the amended Ordinance regarding the operating of off-road vehicles. It states that the ordinance will terminate in one year and then will need to be reinstated to continue or not. Councilperson Weinzapfel made, and Clark seconded a motion to approve the new ordinance. Further discussion included Councilperson Williams concerned about more ownerships and did not think we should let this include Main Street for this. Councilperson Arneberg stated that this was a reasonable accommodation for a small group of people that live here in town. It is a small town, and it is not working out, we will know it. Councilperson Clark stated that the availability does not include the gas station and that he too felt this was a reasonable compromise. Ayes – Arneberg, Clark, Smotherman, and Weinzapfel. Nays – Williams. Motion carried. The town permits will be ready in a couple of weeks.

Councilperson Weinzapfel, Smotherman and Brian Strader, Gas Superintendent, met with Doug Ginder, Southern Medical Entomologist for the Indiana Department of Health on September 5, 2024. They drove around town and down by the river. Ginder informed them that there are two types of mosquitoes: 1. Nuisance and 2. Those that carry West Nile and other diseases. Ginder explained the difference between larvicide and adulticide in battling mosquitoes. The spraying we have done will only kill adult flying mosquitoes. A new batch of mosquitoes will hatch out in 1-7 days after a fog. It is a different hand applied treatment that would kill the larva. Ginder talked about the science of the product used in the fogger. If sprayed after sunset it has minimal effect on pollinators like bees. Ginder suggested that we fog if West Nile is found in New Harmony. He also committed to testing mosquitoes monthly, starting next year. When he was here, he set up traps by the sewage plant. Test specimens were collected, and results should be back next week. Ginder will be back before the next mosquito season to give a talk. Weinzapfel stated that because of the detection of West Nile in surrounding counties, the Town will fog again. The plan is to fog when West Nile is found in surrounding areas, in spring when they hatch out, and before major holidays, when people are outside. The town will fog, at

most, once per week on a discretionary basis. Citizens were reminded that they are their own best defense against mosquitoes.

Councilperson Arneberg clarified why stopping the spraying of mosquitoes was not brought to an open forum. If we are spending money or changing an ordinance the Council votes on it. This was something that happened within Weinzapfel's department. Councilperson Weinzapfel made the motion to continue to fog when West Nile/disease is found, in spring when they hatch out, and before major holidays when people are outside, if needed. Arneberg seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smotherman asked if there were any questions regarding the Town's submitted 2025 budget. Smotherman confirmed that it is published on our website and in Town Hall. Councilperson Clark informed attendees about viewing all town information on Gateway. He mentioned that we budget 11 funds and that other funds help to cover park needs. Next year the parks board will submit a budget. Former Clerk-Treasurer, Atkins, said the money/budget submitted to the state is our proposal. Those amounts will be reduced by statutory regulations.

Councilperson Clark reported on the sewer plant improvements/repairs. There was an emergency expenditure for a new gear box that had broken a shear pin. Lakeside replaced it for \$11,000. The plant needs new UV light panels that are 20 years old at the price of \$29,000 from Trojan. Following the IDEM inspection it was recommended we go to an automatic sample system. Clark suggests our operator decides between the two bids of \$9,000 or \$10,000.

Councilperson Clark then made a motion that we add to the agenda the discussion for using ARPA funds to pay for these repairs. Weinzapfel seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Clark then proposed that we use the ARPA funds to pay for these repairs, maintenance, and upkeep of our sewer plant. Williams seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Clark proposed that we upgrade the UV lights for \$29,000 and purchase the automatic sampler, not to exceed \$11,000. Weinzapfel seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smotherman announced the hiring of Jonathan Heslet as our Town Marshal at \$55,000 annually. He will be provided with training to carry out the job of Town Marshal. Because of the investment in training and equipment we have a payback agreement. Should Heslet leave our employment within 18 months (about 1 and a half years), he will be required to pay back the full investment made on training and equipment. From 18 months (about 1 and a half years) to three years of employment, he will be required to pay back 50% of the investment. There will be no payback requirement after three years of continuous employment. Councilperson Clark made the motion to hire. Williams seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried. Smotherman thanked Deputy Straub for his assistance in on boarding the new Marshal.

President Smotherman brought up the repair needs to the Town Hall bathroom. The subfloor needs to be replaced. Weinzapfel suggested that since we are doing repairs that we consider making it ADA compliant. There will be continued conversations regarding ADA compliance requirements. There was no motion. This topic will be discussed in the next meeting.

Andy Batt presented a proposal for an on-line reservation/credit card pay system for Murphy Park. The Park Board has approved but the Town Council needs to approve because of the fee structure. The Clerk-Treasurer needs to determine how to receive that money in our bank account. He is working with a company called Firefly and there are fees to process the reservations and payments. Batt asked for approval of the fee structure now, for implementation in the spring. Councilperson Weinzapfel asked that the system they are proposing be compliant with any system that the Clerk-Treasurer proposes for future utilities credit card payments. Councilperson Williams made a motion to accept the plan to be implemented at the Clerk-Treasurer's agreement. Arneberg seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Jeanne Maudlin made a presentation for the Town to celebrate Arbor Day on October 19. President Smotherman read information pertaining to the origin of Arbor Day. There will be a tree dedication in Murphy Park at 10:00 a.m. Councilperson Weinzapfel made the motion to designate October 19, 2024, as Arbor Day in New Harmony, IN. Williams seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed. President Smotherman stated: "I, Jeff Smotherman, President of the Town Council of New Harmony, Indiana, do hereby proclaim October 19, 2024, as Arbor Day in the Town of New Harmony. I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands." On October 24, at the WMI, in coordination with the Kiwanis children's book reading, children will draw pictures of trees and display in Town Hall. Maudlin asked for money from the Tolliver Fund to purchase trees, not to exceed \$3,500. Councilperson Clark made the motion to use Tolliver Funds for the purchase of trees. Williams seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Rick Johnson presented the Ribeyre Gym Restoration Group (RGRG) 5K walk/run on October 19, to raise funds for the Ribeyre Gym. It is the 100-year anniversary of the gym. Johnson reviewed the course route. Councilperson Clark made a motion to approve the RGRG walk/run application and waive the event fee. Weinzapfel seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed.

President Smotherman read the festival application for Meet in the Street October 6, 2024, at 4:00 – 9:00 pm. Location is a two-block section of Main St. outside of Capers Emporium. Councilperson Weinzapfel made the motion to approve the permit and waive the event fee. Williams seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed.

President Smotherman made a motion to add to the agenda the quote for the gravel scraper blade. Clark seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried. Councilperson Williams made the proposal to purchase the gravel scraper blade for \$1,744. Clark seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Councilperson Arneberg made a motion to approve the claims. Weinzapfel seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed

There being no further business, Councilperson Weinzapfel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Smotherman seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Jeffrey Smotherman, President of Town Council

Attest:

Karla L. Atkins, Clerk-Treasurer