

CITY OF WHITING – JULY 7, 2020

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITING, INDIANA**

The Common Council of the City of Whiting met in regular session on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Stahura presiding.

Mayor Stahura read the Notice of Publication sent to the Times on June 29, 2020 regarding the scheduled meeting of the Common Council on July 7, 2020.

This is to notify you that the July 7, 2020, 6:30 PM meeting of the Common Council will be held at Whiting City Hall, 1443-119th Street, Whiting, Indiana, via teleconference. No entry into City Hall will be permitted.

Dial in access number: 866-866-2244

Participant Code: 1641958#

I. ROLL CALL

Mayor Stahura, Councilmembers Michko, Michniewicz, Sarvanidis, and Turpin were present, constituting a quorum. Also, present, were Attorney Sejna and Clerk-Treasurer Haynes.

Councilmembers Zubeck was absent.

Mayor Stahura asked if there was any media or public on the phone call. There being none, the meeting proceeded with the regular order of business.

Attorney Sejna stated that this meeting is pursuant to suspension of the meeting statutes of the executive order issued by Governor Holcomb as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The allowance of virtual meetings has been approved through August 4, 2020. Part of the rules for an electronic meeting is that there will need to be a roll call on every vote.

II. MINUTES

Mayor Stahura asked for consideration of the minutes from the June 3, 2020 Regular Common Council. Councilmember Michniewicz made a motion to accept the minutes from June 3, 2020 as submitted. Councilmember Michko seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

III. COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, MEMORIALS OR REMONSTRANCES

None.

IV. REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Stahura reported the following:

- The final stimulus checks will be issued tomorrow. All the businesses have been notified that these will be the final checks.
- 119th Street Project concrete is scheduled for completion this Thursday.

- The grinding and paving for 119th Street will start on July 13, 2020 and will last roughly 3-6 days.
- After the grinding and paving, the only items that remain for the 119th Street Project are benches, tree planting, painting ornamental light poles, and decorative pieces.
- The Illiana building is complete and people have started to move in.
- The Lakefront park repairs are continuing.

Councilmember Turpin asked if there was any news on the commercial space on the main floor of the Illiana building. Mayor Stahura advised that they may be in the final stages of accepting the terms of a lease agreement.

Councilmember Turpin questioned if there was anymore information regarding speed bumps being installed around town. Mayor Stahura said that they will be mobilizing next week to install speed bumps in Whiting Park, the alley behind Ace, the alley between 120th and Euclid, Ohio Avenue near the playground on Atchison Avenue, and on Ohio Avenue to slow traffic down by the school and library.

Mayor Stahura advised that they are contemplating putting speed bumps near 117th Street, that they will be doing repairs on the Oliver/Sheridan Alley, and that striping will be done around the city.

V. STANDING COMMITTEES

Councilmember Sarvanidis advised the Council that tonight he will be presenting a resolution on transfer of funds, a resolution on interlocal agreements, a resolution on 1500 John Street, and an ordinance regarding a workforce reduction program.

VI. REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER

Clerk-Treasurer Haynes presented June 16, 2020 Civil City Check #412-415E, 417E, 11894 & 11896-11950 total amount of \$173,782.54. Councilmember Michko moved to ratify the Accounts Payable Voucher Checks as submitted. Councilmember Turpin seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer Haynes presented July 7, 2020 Civil City Check #18, 418E, 420E-423E, 11951-11952, 11954-11955, 11960-12020, & June Payroll total amount of \$1,114,948.45. Councilmember Michniewicz moved to approve the Accounts Payable Voucher Checks as submitted. Councilmember Turpin seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. REPORT OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

None.

VIII. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

None.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Councilmember Sarvanidis introduced Resolution No. CC-2020-07, a resolution transferring funds within various funds of the city of Whiting. This transfer within the CAGIT fund deals with a decrease of \$5,000.00 from the Police Insurance Fund, a decrease of \$15,000.00 from the Police Pension Fund, and a \$20,000.00 increase in the Police Equipment Fund. These funds will be used to purchase body armor, bullet proof vests, etc. for our police department.

Councilmember Sarvanidis read Resolution No. CC-2020-07 in title only;

A RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING FUNDS WITHIN VARIOUS FUNDS OF THE CITY OF WHITING, INDIANA

Councilmember Sarvanidis made a motion to adopt Resolution No. CC-2020-07. Councilmember Turpin seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Sarvanidis introduced Resolution No. CC-2020-08, a resolution approving the intralocal agreement between the Board of Public Works and Safety and the Redevelopment Commission for emergency repairs to the Whiting Lakefront and demolitions.

The Council had the intralocal agreement in their possession and incorporated herein as Exhibit "A" for emergency lakefront repairs and Exhibit "B" for demolitions are adopted and approved as presented. The agreement will be in effect for 7 years or until the projects are completed. The parties are partnering for the construction of a new lakefront park revetment, pier, and boardwalk.

Councilmember Sarvanidis read Resolution No. CC-2020-08 in title only;

A RESOLUTION APPROVING INTRALOCAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN VARIOUS CITY ENTITIES REGARDING EMERGENCY REPAIRS TO THE WHITING LAKEFRONT AND DEMOLITIONS

Councilmember Sarvanidis made a motion to adopt Resolution No. CC-2020-08. Councilmember Michko seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Sarvanidis introduced Resolution No. CC-2020-09, a resolution approving form SB-1, statement of benefits, for 1500 John Street and establishing this as a residentially distressed lot that tax abatement may be requested.

The Council had reviewed Form SB-1 for 1500 John Street and determined that a five (5) year tax abatement should be allowed. The council further finds that the percentage of the deduction granted shall be as follows: Year 1: 100%, Year 2: 80%, Year 3: 60%, Year 4: 40%, Year 5: 20%.

Councilmember Sarvanidis read Resolution No. CC-2020-09 in title only;

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING FORM SB-1, STATEMENT OF BENEFITS, FOR
1500 JOHN STREET AND ESTABLISHING THIS AS A RESIDENTIALLY
DISTRESSED LOT FOR WHICH TAX ABATEMENT MAY BE REQUESTED**

Councilmember Sarvanidis made a motion to adopt Resolution No. CC-2020-09.

Councilmember Michniewicz seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers vote aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Sarvanidis introduced Ordinance No. CC-2020-2027, an ordinance authorizing the establishment of a voluntary workforce reduction program. The program offers a severance package to City employees who meet certain qualifications. Also, an extraordinary emergency exists so this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect after passage by the Common Council in accordance with state law.

The ordinance is part of the Council's efforts to reduce the cost of government, improve the efficiency of operations, and still provide quality services to our residents and businesses. The City desires to reduce its current workforce through voluntary attrition rather than lay-offs to decrease the costs of unemployment expenses to the City. This incentive would be based on years of service to encourage those employees with the highest level of benefits to take advantage of the offer.

Councilmember Sarvanidis goes on to highlight key parts of the voluntary workforce reduction program plan.

With this ordinance, the decision to retire and the selected termination date will be deemed irrevocable upon acceptance of the employee into the program by the City. Eligibility for health insurance coverage shall be governed by federal COBRA laws and the retired employee shall have the obligation to notify the City upon eligibility for Medicare, re-employment with insurance eligibility, or any other event which may render the employee eligible for a different health insurance.

There will be an enrollment window. To allow the City Administration time to accurately develop future budgets that reflect modifications to its workforce, a specific enrollment window has been defined. All interested employees will be required to submit a completed enrollment form to the Clerk-Treasurer's office no later than the close of business on August 3, 2020.

In terms of a separation date, an employee who elects to enroll in this program will have the option to schedule his/her separation date (final paid day) as a condition of their acceptance into this program. between July 8, 2020 and August 31, 2020. Separated employees may be required to assist in the training of their replacements where necessary.

In terms of eligibility, all qualified full-time employees of any department of the City of Whiting except sworn police and fire personnel are eligible to voluntarily participate in the program. To qualify, an employee must be at least 62 years of age by August 3, 2020.

In terms of a service-based severance stipend, each employee who elects to enroll in this program will receive a "Severance Stipend" equal to \$1,000.00 for every year of full-time service with the City of Whiting.

In terms of hospitalization insurance premium contribution stipend, the City will make a lump sum contribution calculated at date of separation as follows: \$750.00 per month for each full month until the employee reaches the age of 65 for any employee who is not Medicare eligible at date of separation.

All unused vacation time will be scheduled immediately before the employee's final separation date or otherwise compensated. Employees who are covered under a bargaining agreement are subject to the language of the agreement in place at the time of separation.

In terms of limitations and conditions, the City reserves the right to limit the number of employees accepted into this program. If the City must limit the number of participants in this program, both seniority and application dates will be considered during the selection process. The City also reserves the right to cancel the program if enough participants do not enroll in the program.

Due to the instability of the recent property tax reassessment and associated cash flow problems, the Clerk-Treasurer is authorized to pay the benefits earned under this program in 2020 or 2021, whichever is more economically feasible and in the best financial interests of the City.

Councilmember Sarvanidis read Ordinance No. CC-2020-2027 in title only;

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A VOLUNTARY
WORKFORCE REDUCTION PROGRAM WHICH OFFERS A SEVERANCE
PACKAGE TO QUALIFIED CITY EMPLOYEES AND DECLARING AN
EXTRAORDINARY EMERGENCY**

Councilmember Sarvanidis made a motion to take Ordinance No. CC-2020-2027 to a 2nd reading. Councilmember Michko seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Sarvanidis read Ordinance No. CC-2020-2027 in title only;

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A VOLUNTARY
WORKFORCE REDUCTION PROGRAM WHICH OFFERS A SEVERANCE
PACKAGE TO QUALIFIED CITY EMPLOYEES AND DECLARING AN
EXTRAORDINARY EMERGENCY**

Councilmember Sarvanidis made a motion to suspend the rules to take Ordinance No. CC-2020-2027 to a 3rd and final reading. Councilmember Michniewicz seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Sarvanidis made a motion to take Ordinance No. CC-2020-2027 to a 3rd and final reading. Councilmember Michniewicz seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Sarvanidis read Ordinance No. CC-2020-2027 in title only;

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A VOLUNTARY WORKFORCE REDUCTION PROGRAM WHICH OFFERS A SEVERANCE PACKAGE TO QUALIFIED CITY EMPLOYEES AND DECLARING AN EXTRAORDINARY EMERGENCY

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Sarvanidis introduced a Compliance with Statement of Benefits Real Estate Improvements (CF-1). This is a required annual filing as part of the Tax Abatement Program. This CF-1 was for the property located at 1856-1860 Indianapolis Blvd. Councilmember Sarvanidis made a motion to accept the CF-1 as in compliance with the tax abatement program. Councilmember Michniewicz seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

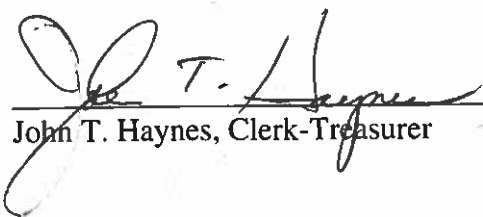
Councilmember Sarvanidis presented a Declaration of Fiscal Body from the Whiting Public Library. This declaration by the Whiting Library board acknowledges the Whiting City Council as its fiscal body responsible for the binding review and approval of the library's budget under I.C. 6-1.1-17-20.3. The declaration is signed by Stephanie Strabavy, the Library Board President, dated June 9, 2020. Councilmember Sarvanidis made a motion to adopt the declaration of fiscal body. Councilmember Michko seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

XII. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

None.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further matters to come before the Common Council, Councilmember Michniewicz moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m. Councilmember Turpin seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.



John T. Haynes, Clerk-Treasurer