

JANUARY 27, 2020

The Common Council of the City of LaPorte met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Monday, January 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge

Councilwoman Feikes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Feikes, West, Galloway, Cutler, Franke, Vincent and Brown

Absent: None

Minutes

Mayor Dermody stated each Council member received an advance copy of the minutes from the January 7, 2020 meeting and asked if there were any corrections or additions. Councilwoman Feikes moved to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Councilman Franke and unanimously carried.

Petitions & Comments

Mayor Dermody stated the City is doing things a little different for Petitions and Comments. There are forms available prior to the meeting for citizens to fill out. If you want to address the Council regarding a specific item on the agenda, you will be given an opportunity to speak after the agenda item has been introduced or read into the record and the Council has had an opportunity to discuss. All other comments will be heard during the Petitions and Comments portion of the meeting. Mayor Dermody stated comments will be limited to three minutes and we are asking that individuals not make repetitive comments.

Mayor Dermody called Brian Kajer to the podium. Brian Kajer, 406 Niesen Street, advised the Council about three years ago he took on the blight and slum lords in the City of LaPorte. He stated this is a fight he will continue to do as he wants to see this City move forward. Mr. Kajer stated he looks forward to working with this administration to get this accomplished. He stated there was a truck on the sidewalk on the new bridge fixing a light bulb and questioned whether the City is taking any precautions on preventing normal vehicles from entering the sidewalk.

Mayor Dermody noted Petitions and Comments is for public comment not for questions and answers unless the Council decides to engage.

Larry Pinkerton, 1612 L Street, advised he spoke with Mark Schreiber, Park Director, and Beth Shrader, City Planner about the proposed improvements for Lakeshore Drive. He stated he is pleased with the potential of having eight different fishing platforms/overlooks and asked if the City will be adding additional parking, possibly on Craven Drive. Mr. Pinkerton stated he is still against the City closing Pulaski and Detroit Streets and inquired who he could talk to for more information.

Mayor Dermody advised Mr. Pinkerton to speak with Nick Minich, City Engineer, for information on Pulaski and Detroit Streets.

Mayor Dermody invited Gene Cruise, Surf-Air Wireless President, to speak to the Council and the general public about a contract coming before The Board of Public Works and Safety the following day. Mr. Cruise discussed the opportunity to bring fiberoptic broadband to La Porte and make La Porte the first gig city in Northern Indiana. He stated that this project would be a \$1.8 million-dollar investment from Surf-Air Wireless along with the partnership to use City-owned conduit to connect various locations along the initial limited route with fiberoptic cable. Mr. Cruise answered several questions from the Council. This is of minimal cost to the city and opens our entire community to many future opportunities in business, school, economic development and beyond.

Orbital Technical Solutions Presentation

Mayor Dermody invited Denise Conlon, Public Affairs Manager for NIPSCO to introduce Joe Grelewicz, Regional Manager from Orbital Technical Solutions to discuss their use of advanced drone technology to help NIPSCO identify deficiencies that need to be repaired and maintained throughout its energy infrastructure. Inspection routes will be identified in advance and limited to airspace near NIPSCO power lines - typically flown between 50 feet to 100 feet above ground level. Current FAA regulations will be followed, and flight plans will be approved and coordinated with local municipalities, authorities and airports prior to the execution of each flight inspection. Questions from the Council were answered by Mr. Grelewicz.

Standing Committee Reports

Airport Authority – Councilwoman Brown reported that The La Porte Municipal Airport Authority met on January 8, 2020. Elections were held and the same slate of officers are continuing their duties. Items of discussion were capital improvement projects including the necessity of runway reconstruction, lowering jet fuel to competitive prices around La Porte and a \$33K grant from Arconic awarded for an aircraft simulator to be used for STEM education. They are working on creating a new logo and brochures to celebrate their 75th Anniversary and the history of the La Porte Municipal Airport. In addition, they are discussing having a float in the 4th of July parade float. Councilwoman Brown advised that the February meeting needed to be rescheduled to February 13, 2020 due to an AAI legislative meeting in Indianapolis.

Traffic Commission - Councilwoman Feikes reported that Traffic Commission met on January 7, 2020. New appointees to the Commission are Sarah Brown, Paul Vincent and Chief of Police Paul Brettin.

Park and Recreation – Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board met on January 15, 2020. Election of officers was held. Mitch Feikes was reappointed as President, Nicole Messecar, Vice President and Roberta Mumaw, Secretary. Newly appointed Park Board members are Drew Mullen, Jake Huelat and Kyleen Fuller. The Park Board approved extended park hours as well as off-road parking at Stone Lake Beach on July 2nd and July 3rd of 2020 for the Red, Wine and Brew Fest held on July 3, 2020. Beechwood will initiate a couple's league to be held on the last Friday of each month beginning in May and ending in September. The fee will be \$30 per couple. Park Board approved a request from Kyle Cashmer to attend the PGA spring meeting in Muncie, IN on February 24-25, 2020.

Councilwoman Feikes invited Park Superintendent Mark Schreiber to the podium for a special recognition. Mark Schreiber introduced and congratulated Brent Steck on his recent retirement from

the Park Department at the end of 2019 after serving our community for 30 years. There was a celebratory luncheon on January 17th with a warm send-off from all his co-workers. Mr. Schreiber stated that we may be able to count 30 years measurably, but the impact of 30 years of Brent Steck's service to the community is immeasurable. Mayor Dermody and the Council congratulated Mr. Steck on his retirement and 30 years of service and commitment to our community.

Code Enforcement – Councilwoman West reported that in the month of January, the Code Enforcement Department wrote over 250 violations including cars not having current plates, cars with no plates, cars in the grass and debris and rubbish on properties that need to be removed. In addition, flaking paint will be addressed and action will be taken in the Spring, but owners in violation are aware. Owners of properties in distress have been contacted to see what they plan to do about their properties. Code Enforcement is also working on chronic properties that are causing nuisances in the neighborhoods.

Fire Department – Councilwoman West reported that Fire Merit Commission will be meeting February 5, 2020 at Fire Station 1 at 6 PM. They will begin formalizing the promotional exam list which will be in effect for the next 2 years. The Commission meets the first Wednesday of each month at Fire Station 1 at 6:30 PM. It was noted if there is a conflict due to a holiday or insufficient members for a quorum, an alternate meeting date will be set.

Police Department – Councilman Galloway reported that the Police Merit Commission met on January 14, 2020 and noted Wally Brath is a new member. Promotion school will be held this year. He noted that Trent Mamazza is the President of the FOP and there will be some small changes to the SOP. The Police Department will be looking into providing assistance with stress in the near future.

Site Review Committee - Councilman Galloway reported the Site Review Committee met on January 22nd and there is some interest from a group to purchase Maple School, however, it is in the early stage.

Business Improvement District - Councilwoman Cutler reported at the January Business Improvement District Board meeting, new officers were elected for 2020. Thaddeus Cutler was elected president, Robin Clark Vice-President and John Spiggle as Treasurer. Updating the BID newsletter was discussed and Liz Ward volunteered to oversee the updates. The next meeting of the BID will be Monday, February 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Urban Enterprise Association – Councilwoman Cutler reported at the January Urban Enterprise Association meeting, Mary Ann Richards gave an update on the Neighborhood Improvement Program. She met with Code Enforcement and discussed the possibility of the UEA supporting an initiative to subcontract help in hauling trash for those in the residential district in financial need. The Downtown Director reported there are ten (10) building owners interested in the 80/20 Façade Grant Program for the spring and the Farmers Market will be getting a new logo. The next meeting of the UEA will be Wednesday, February 19th at 4:00 p.m. at the LEAP Offices.

School Board Liaison – Councilman Franke reported the School Board met and approved Larson-Danielson to renovate the Boston Middle School building to accommodate the school corporation's offices, the high school daycare and the Special Education Department. Raises were approved for

support staff and substitute teachers. New board members were assigned as well, Marie Gilliland, President; Mark Kosior, Vice-President; Shari Ott-Large, Secretary. Grants from the LaPorte Education Foundation were awarded to various teachers throughout the school corporation as well as \$3,000 in donations from Representative Jim Pressel and Jeff Johnson were accepted to their alma mater, Kingsford Heights for their Art Program. The next School Board meeting will be held on February 10th at 6:00 p.m. at the Educational Services Center.

Councilman Franke noted an addition to the Police Department report is that a new Police Officer, Ashley Vandermark, will be sworn in at tomorrow's Board of Public Works and Safety meeting at 9:00 a.m. here at City Hall.

Redevelopment Commission – Councilman Franke reported the Redevelopment Commission will be meeting tomorrow evening at 5:15 p.m. here at City Hall. Members of the Redevelopment Commission are Damon Gasaway, Tom Powley, J.T. McDermott, Brian Chalik and Laura Konieczny.

Mayor Dermody invited the public to join the Board of Public Works and Safety tomorrow for the swearing in of a new officer. He stated we need to support our Fire and Police.

Council Appointment to Main Street Association Board

Mayor Dermody advised the Council has an appointment to the Main Street Association Board. He read a letter from Angela Rose, Downtown Director, explaining the by-laws of the board. The Council stated they were not apprised of this appointment and Councilwoman Feikes moved to table; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway. Councilwoman Cutler stated she believes the Main Street Association Board would like the liaison to be someone from the Council, but it doesn't have to be. The motion to table was unanimously carried.

Council Appointment to Alcohol Beverage Review Committee

Mayor Dermody stated the Council has an appointment to the Alcohol Beverage Review Committee and opened the floor for nominations.

Councilwoman Feikes moved to appoint Councilwoman Cutler; motion seconded by Councilman Franke and unanimously carried.

Second & Final Reading of an Ordinance Repealing Ordinance No. 3-2011 and Creating a New Ordinance Regarding Filing of Memoranda of any Public Meeting

Councilman Galloway moved to read an Ordinance for the second and final time by title only; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilman Galloway read an Ordinance Repealing Ordinance No. 3-2011 and Creating a New Ordinance Regarding Filing of Memoranda of any Public Meeting by title only.

Motion/Vote – Amend Ordinance

Councilman Vincent moved to amend the Ordinance by striking the words 'reasonable time' in Section II and replace with 'within thirty (30) days of approval'; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes.

Councilman Vincent stated this Ordinance was introduced at the last Council meeting to set a time in which City Boards and Commissions are required to post their minutes to the City's website. He stated several Council members felt the Council should raise the bar and require the minutes to be posted as soon as possible. The motion to amend the Ordinance was unanimously carried.

Motion/Vote – Adopt Ordinance 1-2020

Councilwoman Feikes moved to adopt the Ordinance as amended; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and unanimously carried.

**ORDINANCE 1-2020
ORDINANCE REPEALING ORDINANE NO. 3-2011 AND CREATING A NEW ORDINANCE
REGARDING THE FILING OF MEMORANDA OF ANY PUBLIC MEETING**

Second & Final Reading of an Ordinance Amending the Municipal Code of the City of LaPorte Concerning Prevention of Certain Contractor Fraud

Councilwoman Cutler moved to read an Ordinance for the second and final time by title only; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilwoman Cutler read an Ordinance Amending the Municipal Code of the City of LaPorte Concerning Prevention of Certain Contractor Fraud by title only.

Motion/Vote – Adopt Ordinance 2-2020

Councilwoman Feikes moved to adopt the Ordinance as presented; motion seconded by Councilman Vincent and unanimously carried.

**ORDINANCE 2-2020
ORDINANCE AMENDING THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF LAPORTE
CONCERNING PREVENTION OF CERTAIN CONTRACTOR FRAUD**

Introduction of an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 27-2016, an Ordinance for Establishment of City Cash Change Funds and Petty Cash Funds for the City of LaPorte, Indiana

Councilman Vincent moved to introduce an Ordinance for the first time in its entirety; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilman Vincent read an Ordinance Amending Ordinance Nol. 27-2016, an Ordinance for Establishment of City Cash Change Funds and Petty Cash Funds for the City of LaPorte, Indiana in its entirety.

Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer, advised in order to comply with the State Board of Accounts and to set up better internal controls for the Park Department we are asking the Council to approve two (2) additional cash change drawers for the Park Office.

Mayor Dermody asked if there were any questions or comments. Seeing none, he stated this Ordinance will be placed on the February 3rd Council agenda for the second and final reading.

Other Business

Motion/Vote – Remove Council Appointments to the Business Improvement District from the Table

Councilwoman Cutler moved to remove the Council appointments to the Business Improvement District from the table; motion seconded by Councilman Vincent and unanimously carried.

Councilwoman Cutler advised there are three (3) terms expiring on the BID Board seeking renewal which are John Spiggle, Thaddeus Cutler and Liz Ward and one (1) term expiring that needs a replacement for Paul Vincent. She reported there is a minimum requirement on the BID of seven (7) members and a maximum of ten (10). They currently operate with nine (9) members. The requirement for serving on the BID Board is that you must live or work or own a business or own a building within the BID. There are two (2) individuals within the BID that have also expressed interest in serving. Jessica Granger, owner of Thode Floral and Jourdan Anderson who works for her family owned restaurant, Enzo. Every BID Board member is appointed by the Council and they are all two-year terms. Councilwoman Cutler stated they are currently four (4) positions open, three (3) are seeking re-appointment, one needs to be replaced and there are two (2) that are requesting to be appointed. Councilwoman Cutler advised BID President Thaddeus Cutler is in the audience should the Council have any questions for him.

Thaddeus Cutler stated the BID Board can have ten (10) members on the Board, so by re-appointing the three (3) and adding the two (2) new members they would be at the maximum of ten (10) members. Mr. Cutler advised Jessica Granger moved Thode Floral recently to the downtown and has become a huge downtown partner and would be a great asset to the Board. He reported it is very difficult for the BID to get a representative of the restaurant business on the BID because most restaurants are open at 5:00 p.m. on Mondays when the BID Board meets. Fortunately, Enzo is not so Jourdan would be a representative of her family’s business.

Motion/Vote – Council Appointments to the Business Improvement District

Councilwoman Feikes moved to re-appoint John Spiggle, Thaddeus Cutler and Liz Ward as well as the other two (2) recommendations of Jessica Granger and Jourdan Anderson; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried.

Mayor Dermody commended the LaPorte Fire and Police Departments for jobs well done. He reported the Fire Department assisted McDonalds when they needed help to unravel their flag that was twisted around the eagle. The Police Department quickly apprehended two seventeen-year-olds that were not from our community over the weekend involved in shots fired.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Councilman Galloway moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

Approved: _____
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: February 3, 2020