**February 7, 2022**

The Common Council of the City of La Porte met in regular session via Zoom on Monday, February 7, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

**Pledge**

Councilman Franke led the Pledge of Allegiance

**Present** Konieczny, Feikes, West, Galloway, Cutler, Franke, Vincent

**Absent** none

**Petitions and Comments of Citizens**

Mayor Dermody invited Bert Cook, Executive Director of La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership to introduce Keith Nichols, CEO of Northwest Health La Porte and Starke Hospitals. Keith Nichols introduced himself and discussed the three guiding principles that will be the foundation of Northwest Health moving forward:

1. Love one another, 2. Welcome Feedback, 3. Lead Change with those opportunities. Partnership is important to the hospital and Mr. Nichols stated he looks forward to working with the City of La Porte.

**Minutes**

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

**Standing Committee Reports**

**Park Board:** Councilwoman Feikes reported Park Board met January 19, 2022 and noted Election of Officers was held naming Mitch Feikes, Park Board President, Nicole Messacar, Park Board Vice President and Roberta Mumaw, Park Board Secretary. Councilwoman Feikes announced Alex Scheuchner was recognized for his Eagle Scout Project. Alex is a Boy Scout in Troop 396 and his project scope started with raising $1600 in donations for the following park improvements that he and his team completed: installation of polls, backboards and rims at Rumley basketball court and the design and construction of a park bench. Alex’s father also announced at the Park Board meeting Troop 396 would like to partner with the Park Department to get other small projects done. Councilwoman Feikes noted permission was granted for a trail run at Soldiers Memorial Park on March 19, 2022. Additionally, permission granted for Beechwood Golf Pro Kyle Cashmer to attend the PGA Spring Meeting. Councilwoman Feikes reported the board granted permission for horses to be in the park for Winter Fest. Councilwoman Feikes reported La Porte Chrysler was unable to get Jeep Latitudes which were previously approved by Board of Public Works and Safety to be purchased with American Rescue Plan funds, however, are able to provide upgraded Jeep Grand Cherokees for the same price; Park Board approved the amended purchase and this vote will move to Board of Public Works and Safety for final authorization. Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board approved providing a Letter of Support for a Planning Assistance Grant through the Indiana Department of Health to revise the Greenway Master Plan. This is a 50/50 grant for up to $20,000. Councilwoman Feikes announced Jace Peterson is the new Beechwood Superintendent coming from Innsbrook Country Club in Merrillville.

**Redevelopment Commission:** Councilman Franke reported Redevelopment Commission met on January 26, 2022. A Real Estate Purchase and Development Agreement for Boyd Blvd. property was discussed. Additionally, Councilman Franke reported Don George Property is demolished. Councilman Franke reported an update was given on Clear Lake and Truesdell Avenue Reconstruction Project.

**Diversity and Inclusion Commission:** Councilman Franke reported the Diversity and Inclusion Commission met January 27, 2022 and announced a new member, Susie Equizabal. Discussion was held for planning and strategizing in 2022.

**School Board:** Councilman Franke reported School Board will meet February 14 at the Educational Services Center.

**Police Merit Commission:** Councilman Galloway reported Police Merit Commission will meet February 8, 2022 at the Police Station.

**Business Improvement District Board:** Councilwoman Cutler reported at the January meeting, new member Dawn Melchiorre was welcomed and the need for a downtown banner schedule was discussed. Business Improvement District will work in conjunction with the Planning Department to put together the banner schedule for 2022. Councilwoman Cutler reported the next Business Improvement District Board meeting will be held February 14, 2022 at 5:00 PM at City Hall.

**Urban Enterprise Association:** Councilwoman Cutler reported at the January Urban Enterprise Association meeting, new members Scott Cooley and Jim Barnhart were welcomed. Councilwoman Cutler reported applications are now being accepted for Business Improvement grants. Businesses within the Zone can find the application on the City’s website under the Urban Enterprise Association and can also contact Mary Ann Richards for assistance. Councilwoman Cutler reported the Urban Enterprise Association will meet February 16, 2022 at 4:00 PM at City Hall.

**Fire Merit Commission:** Councilwoman West reported due to last week’s weather, the Fire Merit Commission meeting was rescheduled to February 9, 2022.

**Plan Commission:** Councilwoman West reported there will be no Plan Commission meeting this week due to no applications being submitted.

**Airport Authority:** Councilwoman Konieczny reported Airport Authority will meet February 9, 2022 at 5:15 PM via Zoom.

**Historic Preservation Commission:** Councilwoman Konieczny reported the Historic Preservation Commission will meet February 15, 2022 at 5:30 PM at City Hall.

Mayor Dermody announced Safety is an important cornerstone for the success of the City of La Porte and the Police Department is currently in the planning stages of forming an Emergency Response Team, a high-risk team, that will serve the public in high-risk situations. They are in need of equipment and training and the Mayor is suggesting using Federal Funds to pay for the equipment. Mayor Dermody reported Council will be hearing more from Police Officers involved in the planning of the Emergency Response Team.

**Annual Investment Report:** Clerk-Treasurer Courtney Parthun reported the State of Indiana requires the Clerk-Treasurer to present the Council with an Annual Investment Report. For 2021, the City of La Porte earned $9,208.03 for seven funds that are invested in the State’s Hoosier Fund with Lake City Bank. The Hoosier Fund is a money market fund allowed by State Statute specifically for units of government per Indiana Code 36-1-7-1. Funds are pooled together to earn more interest, as advised by Baker Tilly. We earn interest daily and can access the funds, if needed, within twenty-four hours with no penalties. The current rate is .30%. City of La Porte has been investing in the Hoosier Fund for the past ten years. Interest earned on the City’s checking accounts for 2021 was $47,045.83 between eighteen checking accounts at local banks. Clerk-Treasurer Courtney Parthun noted no action is needed from the Council as this is for information purposes only.

**Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance Creating Section 2-103 in Chapter 2 of the La Porte Municipal Code Establishing a Commission on Sustainability**

Councilwoman Konieczny made a motion to read an Ordinance for the second time by title only; motion seconded by Councilman Vincent and unanimously carried.

Councilwoman Cutler asked if any prior Tree Commission members expressed interest in serving the Commission on Sustainability and if Councilwoman Konieczny will still serve as liaison. Councilwoman Konieczny responded it is to be determined noting new requirements and vast expansion of duties may make the commitment more challenging for previous commission members.

Mayor Dermody announced Councilwoman Konieczny will serve on the ARP Housing Working Group and Councilman Franke will take her place as liaison of the Commission on Sustainability.

**Motion/Vote to Adopt** **an Ordinance Creating Section 2-103 in Chapter 2 of the La Porte Municipal Code Establishing a Commission on Sustainability**

Councilwoman Cutler made a motion to adopt an Ordinance Creating Section 2-103 in Chapter 2 of the La Porte Municipal Code Establishing a Commission on Sustainability; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

**Ordinance No. 2-2022**

**Ordinance Creating Section 2-103 in Chapter 2 of the La Porte Municipal Code Establishing a Commission on Sustainability**

**Public Safety Local Income Tax Presentation:**

Mayor Dermody made a presentation on Public Safety Local Income Tax discussing the need for a sustainable revenue source for the future of public safety not only in the City of La Porte, but every other taxing unit in La Porte County. Mayor Dermody noted Property Tax Caps in La Porte County give $32.6 million of relief to property owners that comes out of local government budgets. This Public Safety Local Income Tax at .5%, would create an additional $1.8 million of revenue for the City of La Porte to use specifically for Public Safety. La Porte County Council is the voting body for this Local Income Tax and required a resolution be passed in support of the Public Safety Local Income Tax by every other governmental unit in the County. Kingsford Heights and Wanatah Councils have fully supported this Public Safety Local Income Tax and the support continues to come in from other governmental units in La Porte County.

**Introduction of a Resolution Supporting the La Porte County Common Council Establishing a Public Safety Local Income Tax**

Councilman Franke made a motion to read a Resolution for the first and only time in its entirety; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

Mayor Dermody asked if there were any questions from the public and offered budgets or City Financials to be discussed with resident by Mayor Dermody or Clerk-Treasurer Parthun. Mayor Dermody noted it is important to put political parties aside and stop worrying about the next election cycle and do what is right for our community to keep residents safe.

Dustin Johnson asked about the allocation of the Public Safety Local Income Tax.

Mayor Dermody responded the revenue is divided amongst the units according to the property tax levy percentage the unit has. The larger the property tax levy a unit has, the more revenue they will receive from the Public Safety Lit. City of La Porte is slated to receive $1.8 million in revenue should the .5% Public Safety Local Income Tax pass by La Porte County Common Council.

**Motion/Vote to Adopt**

Councilman Franke made a motion to adopt a Resolution Supporting the La Porte County Common Council Establishing a Public Safety Local Income Tax; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried.

**RESOLUTION NO. R-2-2022**

**Resolution Supporting the La Porte County Common Council Establishing a Public Safety Local Income Tax**

**Motion/Vote to Take off the Table 1403 Indiana Avenue**

Councilwoman Feikes made a motion to take off the table an Ordinance Designating 1403 Indiana Avenue; George Wood Allen House as a Single Site Historic Preservation District Within the City of La Porte; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried.

City Attorney noted that the request to withdraw this Ordinance came from the owners of 1403 Indiana Avenue.

**Motion/Vote to Withdraw Request of an Ordinance Designating 1403 Indiana Avenue George Wood Allen House as a Single Site Historic Preservation District Within the City of La Porte**

Councilwoman Feikes made a motion to withdraw an Ordinance Designating 1403 Indiana Avenue; George Wood Allen House as a Single Site Historic Preservation District Within the City of La Porte; motion seconded by Councilman Vincent and unanimously carried.

Councilwoman Feikes noted the property has been sold and property owners are requesting to withdraw the request.

**Other Business**

Mayor Dermody announced the Third House Discussion at the Performing Arts Center at La Porte High School put on by La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership on February 11, 2022 at 8:15 AM. Six local legislators are slated to present on local legislative updates and actions.

**Adjourn**

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

**Approve: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor**

**Attest: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer**

**Approved: February 21, 2022**