

**June 17, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of La Porte met in regular session Monday, June 17, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Councilwoman West led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Franke, Huffman, Feikes, Galloway, Konieczny, Buchanan, West

Absent: None

**Approval of 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 was seconded by Councilwoman Huffman and unanimously carried.

**Petitions and Comments of Citizens**

Robert Cichon, 3516 W. Small Court, addressed the Council regarding the lily pads on Fish Trap Lake. He stated the lily pads are being killed off and as he has fished that lake for fifteen (15) years he does not want them to go away. Mr. Cichon stated the lily pads started dying when the condos were built on the lake a few years ago, which is what he was afraid of. Councilman Galloway reported the VFW had someone come in and get rid of the lily pads. He advised there is a process where you have to go through the DNR and County to get approval. Councilman Galloway stated Fish Trap Lake is in the County not the City.

Sierra Sue Jesch, 200 block of Jefferson Avenue, wanted to take the time to thank the Code Enforcement Department for mowing the grass at the property next to hers. She reported when she saw the house had been broken into, she called Jeff Batchelor and he had it taken care of. Ms. Jesch stated she tried watching the BID Board meeting and the members did not have their microphones on and you could not hear most of the meeting. She stated she was interested in hearing their meeting as they were discussing a plan for downtown sidewalks and crosswalks. Councilwoman West apologized that Ms. Jesch was not able to hear the meeting and she will address it.

Rick Ogle, 1902 Indiana Avenue, inquired if the City and INDOT have had discussions regarding placing a crosswalk on Indiana Avenue at South Avenue. He stated that currently there isn't a crosswalk. City Attorney Otis stated that is a question for the City Engineer. Mayor Dermody reported there have been discussions with the State regarding this project, but he does not know if the crosswalk Mr. Ogle is referring to has been discussed. The Mayor advised Mr. Ogle to contact the City Engineer and he should be able to answer his question.

Dennis Nelson, 1102 L Street, stated he owns several rental properties in La Porte, and he appreciates the work that is being done with tree removal and sidewalk repairs but is concerned that when the work is being done the driveways aren't being put back where they were. Mr. Nelson stated he knows it is hard these days to get companies to do quality work, but the City needs to do better at looking at the finished product. He stated 16<sup>th</sup> Street is a brand-new road and it looks great however, when he drove down the road after a rain, there were puddles in the middle of the road. Mr. Nelson reported he owns a property at 121 Kosciusko and the property next to it, 119 Kosciusko, had an addition put on the house about ten years ago and it has never been finished. It is open to the elements and animals. He stated he is here to help in any way that he can.

Dean White stated he owns a rental property at 605 Rumley where a Maple tree has raised the sidewalk about eleven inches. He reported while improving the property with new wiring, windows, plumbing, etc. the contractor he hired for the plumbing work stated the tree root has damaged the sewer line and only has about a one-inch flow. Mr. White stated he understands the City and County are partnering for a Vista View, however, when he spoke to Commissioner Mrozinske he was told the City is holding up the start of the project. Mayor Dermody stated he is not aware of the City holding back on any project. The Mayor informed Mr. White he met with Jerry Jackson, Director of Wastewater, yesterday at 605 Rumley and they will be discussing it further tomorrow.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

#### **Redevelopment Commission:**

Councilman Franke reported the Redevelopment Commission will meet on Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

**Sustainability Commission:**

Councilwoman Huffman reported the Sustainability Commission will be meeting on Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

**Park Board:**

Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board met on Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> at which time the Board approved the agreement with Advantix Development Corporation for residential development on part of Scott Park. Todd Taylor attended the meeting and gave an update on the new well fields in Soldiers Memorial Park. At that time two wells have been drilled and one has been tested showing good productivity and water quality. Councilwoman Feikes reported when the Craven Drive to Orchard Drive phase of Chessie Trail begins, there will be restrooms and a storage area added at the Soldiers Memorial Trailhead. The new buildings are being funded by the Healthcare Foundation. The Board approved Pavey Construction to begin the kayak launch at Kiwanis-Teledyne Park with concrete work and lawn restoration being done. Security cameras will be installed in City parks, beginning with the Park Office and Maintenance building. The Park Department is submitting for a grant for the funding of these new cameras, and they will be placed when funding becomes available. The next Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. at the Park Office.

**Traffic Commission:**

Councilwoman Feikes reported the Traffic Commission will meet on Tuesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. at the Police Station.

**Mayor's Veterans Committee:**

Councilman Galloway reported the Veterans' Brick Dedication was held on June 8<sup>th</sup> and was very well attended.

**Police Merit Commission:**

Councilman Galloway reported the Police Merit Commission met on June 11<sup>th</sup> at which time Isaias Rivera Reyes was sworn in as a new police officer for the City of La Porte.

**Business Improvement District:**

Councilwoman West reported the Business Improvement District met on June 10<sup>th</sup>. All the downtown planters have been planted and the flowers look beautiful. Discussion and approval were given for replacing downtown sidewalk pavers. This will take some time and will be done in the order of top priority. Some downtown trash receptacle lids need replacement. A quote was received from Amy Feikes and approved. Approval was given for

electrical repairs on La Stitch for City downtown events and the Farmed to Forged Market. Craig Phillips, Director of Community Development and Planning, is working with Hitchcock Design for a proposal for an alley for the test block of the BID's long-term plan.

**Urban Enterprise Association:**

Councilwoman West reported the Urban Enterprise Association has planned some additions to the downtown coordinating with the Lubeznik Center. A sculpture will be placed in Plaza 618 before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Work will begin on a mural on the Smiles on Jefferson property and placing window designs in vacant buildings in the downtown area. A public meeting will be on Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at City Hall to meet with Artist and the Lubeznik Center for the Arts to help create the mural that best reflects the City of La Porte. The public is invited to attend. At the meeting tomorrow, La Porte Interim Superintendent, Dr. Peggy Hinckley will present a special grant request for financial assistance with a parking lot expansion at the Administrative Offices at Boston Middle School.

**Fire Merit Commission:**

Councilwoman West reported the Fire Merit Commission meeting has been moved from July 3<sup>rd</sup> to July 10<sup>th</sup> due the Fourth of July festivities.

**Historic Preservation Commission:**

Councilman Buchanan reported the Historic Preservation Commission will be meeting tomorrow, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.

**Airport Authority:**

Councilwoman Konieczny reported it has been a busy month at the Airport. Last week they wrapped up the Aviation Camp with 60 students in attendance, which included solar, air traffic control, La Porte native and fighter pilot, Bruce Allen, gave a presentation as well as other events and topics. Tomorrow is the Air Race Classic 2024 with La Porte as the first stop for pilots. The public is welcome to come to watch and cheer these amazing racers with the expected time of arrival to start around 9:30 a.m. Councilwoman Konieczny reported fuel sales are up and are back to where they need to be. The next Airport Authority meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 p.m. at the Airport.

**Public Hearing and Introduction of a Resolution for an Additional Appropriation for Fund 2445 – DEA Asset Forfeiture Fund**

Councilman Galloway moved to introduce a Resolution for the first and only time in its entirety; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilman Galloway read a Resolution for an Additional Appropriation for Fund 2445 – DEA Asset Forfeiture Fund in its entirety.

Richard Buell, Police Chief, reported the additional appropriation is to purchase equipment for six police cars that connect to the body cameras. He stated he is unsure as to why, but there weren't enough ordered with the original order. Chief Buell answered questions from the Council.

As this Resolution requires a public hearing, the Mayor declared the public hearing open and asked if there was anyone present who wished to address the Council regarding this matter. Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Ashley Knoll presented proof of publication for the public hearing. As no one came forward the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

**Motion/Vote – Approve Resolution R-15-2024**

Councilwoman Konieczny moved to approve the Resolution as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Huffman and unanimously carried.

**RESOLUTION R-15-2024  
RESOLUTION FOR AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FOR  
FUND 2445 – DEA ASSET FORFEITURE FUND**

**Introduction of a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets**

Councilwoman West moved to read a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets for the first time within its entirety; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilwoman West read a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets in its entirety.

**Motion/Vote – Approve Resolution R-16-2024**

Councilwoman Konieczny moved to approve the Resolution as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

**RESOLUTION R-16-2024  
A RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER FUNDS WITHIN THE 2024 BUDGETS**

**Other Business**

Mayor Dermody stated as many of you already know, Governor Holcomb will be here in La Porte for our Fourth of July parade as well as John Hancock, a native of La Porte County and famous for the movie "Prancer" which was filmed in La Porte and surrounding areas. Those who are wanting to know if Actor Sam Elliott will also be here, the City is in communications with his agent.

Councilman Galloway reported the VFW will be hosting a Car Show this Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. with Middle of the Road Band playing from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. at the VFW. Food will be available.

**Adjourn**

Councilman Galloway moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilwoman Huffman and unanimously carried.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: July 1, 2024