

March 19, 2024

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 9:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor Dermody, Mark Kosior

Absent: Jessica Romine

Mike Freese led the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Each member received an advance copy of the minutes. Mayor Dermody asked if there were any additions or corrections.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Minutes

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Public Comment

Candy Porter via online comment asked when the code violation will happen for the eyesore on Lincolnway. Mayor Dermody stated they are working every day to clean up a building and is unsure of what is meant by this comment but encouraged Ms. Porter to come to the Code Enforcement Department to discuss it further. City Engineer Nick Minich clarified that the building on Lincolnway that collapsed has been worked on all Winter long and all the structural from the bottom up has almost been complete. Mr. Minich stated most of the work that has been done has been interior, and therefore is not visible to those outside of the building. In addition, Mr. Minich emphasized that this is an active construction site that has been kept very clean. Mayor Dermody encouraged Ms. Porter to text him at 219-363-7293 to set up a time to take a peek at the building and see some of the progress that has been made.

Tyler Darnell via online comment stated the dumpster program is a waste to taxpayer money. Mayor Dermody responded by stating the dumpster program is sponsored by LEAP and expressed his appreciation for that sponsorship. Mr. Cook clarified that the dumpster program is funded to LEAP by the UEA, and stated if this program is not well utilized or something that the community wants, they would be happy to put that funding toward something else.

Claims Approval

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Payroll from February 16, 2024, in the amount of \$517,853.71.

Motion/Vote – Approval of March 15, 2024 Payroll

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the March 15, 2024, Payroll as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of \$816,654.76.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Civil City Claims

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the Civil City Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Water Claims in the amount of \$285,141.12.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Water Claims

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Water Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Sewage Claims in the amount of \$271,308.04.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Sewage Claims

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the Sewage Claims as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Department Reports

Street: Street Superintendent Mike Frazee reported they will be out patching potholes and trimming trees.

Water: Water Superintendent Tim Werner reported they will begin their spring flushing the first or second week of April.

Wastewater: Mayor Dermody questioned Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson if the solar panels were being replaced because there have been some questions from the public about their replacement. Mr. Jackson stated the solar panels on Boyd Boulevard at the turn are being replaced, and he believes they have been there for at least 15 years; however, those are part of the private solar field and are not the property of the City of La Porte. The solar panels at the Wastewater plant are approximately five years old and the output has decreased approximately 3 – 4% over those five years. It is typical to see a decrease in output at an approximate rate of 2% each year. Mr. Jackson stated he did find there are companies that will clean the solar panels that may help with the decreased output, and he will be looking into those services.

Code: Director of Code Enforcement Jeff Batchelor reported they have had some issues with the dumpsters this week. Mr. Batchelor stated they have had some issues with Waste Management and getting the dumpsters emptied which resulted in the dumpsters only being available for one hour on Saturday because they had reached capacity. This resulted in individuals throwing their items over the fence onto the ground. Mr. Batchelor stated if people cannot respect the dumpsters and the program and not dump their items when the dumpster is not available, the program will be cancelled. Mayor Dermody stated they will be

collecting data, taking license plates numbers, and filing police reports for those individuals that choose to dump their items. In addition, Mr. Batchelor stated the Code Department is working on vacant houses, items in the tree lawns, and getting everything cleaned up for Spring.

Police: Assistant Chief Drangmeister reported applicant Flanigan is going through the process of PERF, has passed the psych eval and physical, and a PERF board meeting will be held on him tomorrow. Assistant Chief Drangmeister stated if everything goes well, he should be attending the Academy by the end of April if all the spots are not filled. A spot at the academy cannot be reserved until after their acceptance into PERF. Mr. Kosior questioned how close we were to full strength. Assistant Chief Drangmeister stated they are currently at 41 and full strength would be 44.

Fire: Chief Snyder reminded everyone that they are still accepting applications through next Wednesday and there is one position currently open.

IT: Mayor Dermody expressed his excitement for all the improvements that Roscoe has been making. IT Director Roscoe Hoffman reported the storm that happened two weeks ago, knocked out the main switch and two of our power supplies. Mr. Hoffman stated he was able to replace the power supplies last week and yesterday he did a full reset on the switch, and everything has returned to normal function. Mr. Hoffman stated he is currently working on getting a backup switch.

LEAP: Executive Director of the La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership Bert Cook stated he wants to make everyone aware and express his appreciation for the City Council who supported New York Blowers request to build a new professional office building on Factory Street. They will be investing approximately \$5 million in building a new 14,000 square foot office building as well as a green space. Mr. Cook expressed his excitement for the project in addition to his appreciation for the City Council's support. Mayor Dermody requested Mr. Cook to speak about the county promoting the redevelopment of the Kingsbury Industrial Plant. Mayor Dermody stated he believes there isn't a single person that isn't excited or supportive of Kingsberry and supportive of jobs but is concerned with the trucks that will be running up Indiana Avenue and downtown La Porte and hopes they have plans for alternative routes for truck traffic. Mr. Cook stated they have been very open and clear with the county that LEAP is supportive of economic development and the efforts being made to the Kingsbury Industrial Park, but they do need to put some thought and planning into how the truck traffic will get to and from the Industrial Park. Mr. Cook provided some possible routes but stated running those trucks through the center of the city is not an option that will work for anyone.

Park: Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber reminded the public that park restrooms will open on April 15, 2024. Mr. Schreiber reported there are currently seasonal positions open for lifeguards, maintenance, sports programming, and summer playgrounds. Applications can be submitted at the Park Office at 250 Pine Lake Ave, at City Hall, or on the city's website, cityoflaporte.com. In addition, Mr. Schreiber reported they have had to clean

up construction waste in the parks left behind by residents. Mr. Schreiber reminded the public that the city's dumpers, other than those with the dumpster program, and parks are not a place to dump your waste. Mr. Kosior encouraged residents to say something if they see people disposing of waste improperly as this ultimately is paid to be cleaned up by tax dollars.

Planning: Director of CDP Craig Phillips reported on the continued efforts toward the grants for economic development and housing opportunities for the city. In addition, Mr. Phillips stated they will hopefully be putting the Beechwood Lakes property back out for bid within the next month or two. Mr. Phillips stated they are waiting on word from INDOT to be able to move forward with the City's Comprehensive Plan and is hopeful to hear back within the next few days.

Human Resources: Human Resources Director Andrea Smith referenced the cost to her for having a couch picked up from her home by her trash company and recognized the incredible opportunity the residents in the City of La Porte have with the dumpster program.

New Business:

Request for Signature: INDOT Concurrence form for 4th of July

Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Request for Signature: INDOT Concurrence form for 4th of July. Ms. Loeffler stated this is the form that is required to request the Lincolnway closure for the parade. The form states that we will be using it in a temporary manor and side streets will be used as a detour. Mayor Dermody, stated as the Capital of the State for the day, Ms. Loeffler has again requested the Governor's attendance for the parade.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request for Signature: INDOT Concurrence form for 4th of July

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Request for Signature: INDOT Concurrence form for 4th of July as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Portable Building Quotes

Sergeant Favia presented Portable Building Quotes. The building quotes are for the range. Sergeant Favia stated several years ago, the Wastewater Department donated an old pump house that is used as a shed at the range and has since come to the end of its life. The Police Department has received a donation from Franciscan Health for the purchase of a shed. Franciscan went to Yoder's at Fail Road on East Lincolnway and priced out a new shed and consulted with Ton and Blank, which is owned by Franciscan, and it was determined for the quality of the shed provided by Yoder's, they would not save any money building one themselves. Sergeant Favia stated three quotes were presented, two quotes from the online purchase of a shed from Menards and Lowe's, which would still require assembly and be less quality, and one quote from Yoder's. Sergeant Favia stated the shed is used to store targets and other equipment used at the range, not including firearms or ammunition. Sergeant Favia recommends approval of the shed from Yoder's as it will give them the best quality and shed for their needs. Mr. Freese stated he has owned a construction company in La Porte for almost 27 years and offered his services to construct a shed at no cost, if materials were purchased

by the city. Mayor Dermody thanked Mr. Freese for his offer and stated he would make sure Franciscan is aware of his offered intentions.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Portable Building Quotes

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Portable Building Quotes as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Request Permission for Mayor to Sign US Forestry Grant

Assistant City Engineer Tucker King presented Request Permission for Mayor to Sign US Forestry grant. Mr. King stated the grant is in the amount of \$1 million. \$295,000 of this grant money will come back and bolster the efforts of city and the remaining \$700,000 will be focused on contractor work. The contractor's work will consist of tree removal in addition to planting new trees. Mayor Dermody recognized Mr. King for all the hard work he put into this grant and asked Mr. King to briefly speak about the distribution process of these funds. Mr. King stated the funds will be received over a three-and-a-half-year period. Mr. King expressed his hopes of getting the work done in less than the three-and-a-half-year period. If the program is successful, there is the potential for more monies to be received in the future. The funds that have been granted will go toward planting 500 new trees and removing approximately 150 of the aging trees that need to be removed. Mayor Dermody questioned if maple trees will be planted. Mr. King responded by stating there will be some maple trees planted, however, the current tree canopy consists of approximately 80% maples trees. Any disease specific to maple trees would be devastating to the tree canopy and beyond the financial capability of the City to remove and replace, therefore with the planting of the new trees we will be trying to increase the diversity. Mayor Dermody requested that maples trees not be planted near the sidewalks as we have learned the hard way the damage those can cause to sidewalks. Mr. King stated there is a process in place with the contracted arborist resistograph. He will go to each site before trees are planted and determine through a multitude of factors what trees would fit best in those planting sites.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request Permission for Mayor to Sign US Forestry Grant

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Permission for Mayor to Sign US Forestry Grant as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

2024 Certifications and Assurances

TransPorte Director Beth West presented 2024 Certifications and Assurances. Ms. West stated these are the annual contracts with NIRPC that are required to be signed to secure Federal funding and ensure we stay compliant. Ms. West stated one requires a signature from Mayor Dermody and Attorney Otis, one requires signature from Mayor Dermody and the Clerk-Treasurer, and one requires signature from Mayor Dermody, the Clerk-Treasurer, and herself.

Motion/Vote – Approval of 2024 Certifications and Assurances

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve 2024 Certifications and Assurances as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Authorization to Solicit Bids for the 2023 Sidewalk Replacement Program

CDBG Manager Mary Ann Richards presented Authorization to Solicit Bids for the 2023 Sidewalk Replacement Program. Ms. Richards stated this area is in census track 423 and is a continuation from last year's program. Mayor Dermody questioned what the dollar amount is that is being put out for bid for sidewalk work. Ms. Richards responded by stating over \$600,000. Ms. Richards stated the hope is for work to be done through the Spring and Summer. Bids will be due and opened on April 2, 2024 with anticipation of a contract awarded two weeks later. There will be a pre-bid meeting held on March 27, 2024 at 10:30 A.M. in Council Chambers.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Authorization to Solicit Bids for the 2023 Sidewalk Replacement Program

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Solicit bids for the 2023 Sidewalk Replacement Program as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Recommendation for Acceptance-Emergency Vehicle Preemption

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Recommendation for Acceptance-Emergency Vehicle Preemption. Mr. Minich stated he spoke with Chief Snyder and there are still a couple intersections that they are having a little issue with. Mr. Minich stated the request is for approval of signature, pending the resolution of those issues. The experienced issues are not necessarily associated with the INDOT contract directly but rather the operational side of things. Mr. Kosior questioned if these issues were for preemption work that was already complete. Mr. Minich stated there are two intersections that are not responding as well as they would like and believes some minor adjustments can be made to correct the issues.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Recommendation for Acceptance-Emergency Vehicle Preemption

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Recommendation for Acceptance-Emergency Vehicle Preemption as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Tipton Street Overpass ROW-Partial Payment for Invoice #81120

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Tipton Street Overpass ROW-Partial Payment for Invoice #81120. Mr. Minich stated this is for the local match portion and the total invoice is in the amount of \$132,000, however his request is to pay only a portion of the invoice. Mr. Minich stated a portion of this is a condemnation and one of the properties is NIPSCO and everything is going well with that one. The total agreed value for the court is \$349,000, so the local match would be in the amount of \$69,800. Mr. Minich stated his request is for partial payment of the INDOT invoice in the amount of \$69,800. This allows INDOT to get a check to the court and finalize the condemnation proceedings for that site. Mayor Dermody questioned where

these funds would be coming from. Mr. Minich stated they will come from Major Moves, and they have already been allocated to the project.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Tipton Street Overpass ROW-Partial Payment for Invoice #81120

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Tipton Street Overpass ROW-Partial Payment for Invoice #81120 as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

ADA Sidewalk Program – Change Order #1

City Engineer Nick Minich presented ADA Sidewalk Program – Change Order #1. Mr. Minich stated this project was bid at the end of 2022, however, Assistant Engineering Director Tucker King did not come to the department until mid-2023, therefore this project has been stretched out. To start closing everything out, there is a change order for two ADA repairs that were not part of the original scope. Mr. Minich stated the scope is somewhat flexible, as locations can be added, but these repairs had specific details within the work that were different than some of the other locations. The change order is in the amount of \$53,424.02. Mr. Minich stated he recommends approval, and this brings the total contract amount to \$316,984.29. Mr. Minich stated they are adding these lump sum items to the contract but will more than likely be removing some unit price items later and therefore does not anticipate going over the original contract amount of \$263,560.

Motion/Vote-Approval of ADA Sidewalk Program – Change Order #1

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve ADA Sidewalk Program - Change Order #1 as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Accept Proposal for 219 E Lincolnway

Director of CDP Craig Phillips presented Accept Proposal for 219 E Lincolnway. Mr. Phillips stated the city has received an offer for 219 E Lincolnway. This is a property that is owned by the city that was previously put out for bid and no bids were received. Mr. Phillips Stated they have since received an offer from Michael Freese. The appraised value of the property is \$18,000. The offer from Mr. Freese is in the amount of \$18,000 with a payment of \$2,000 to be made upon approval and the remaining balance of \$16,000 to be paid within 60 days. Mr. Phillips stated he has received the proper form for this, and it has been reviewed by the city attorney. Mr. Freese's intentions for the property are to build a contractor's office, which the site is zoned for. Mr. Phillips stated he recommends approval of the offer.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Accept Proposal for 219 E Lincolnway

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Accept Proposal for 219 E Lincolnway as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Occ Health – Workers Comp Agreement

Human Resources Director Andrea Smith presented Occ Health – Workers Comp Agreement. Ms. Smith read a letter in its entirety that was received from Northwest Health on February 27, 2024, informing the City of Laporte of the permanent closure of their occupational

services in La Porte and Valparaiso, as of March 22, 2024. Ms. Smith stated she had already been speaking with Franciscan Health to utilize their Working Well Clinic, before receiving this letter from Northwest Health. Ms. Smith stated there is a new facility in La Porte that is currently being worked on near the North Shore Clinic and a clinic at I Street has been opened until the completion of the new clinic. The clinic located on I Street will be utilized for all injuries, workers comp, and pre-employment screenings. Mayor Dermody questioned if there was an option for these services through North Shore. Ms. Smith stated this is not a service North Shore offers and there are few companies offering these services. Ms. Smith stated once approved, she will send out an email notifying department heads of the change and instructions on how to utilize the Working Well Clinic. Mr. Kosior questioned if there were any concerns about moving to this new clinic and if there would be any delay in new employment because of these changes. Ms. Smith stated there will be no disruption to the hiring process, price wise they are comparable to what we were previously paying, and she feels confident we will be happy with their services as she has worked with them in the past.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Occ Health – Workers Comp Agreement

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Occ health - Workers Comp Agreement as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Unfinished Business

Other Business:

Next regularly scheduled meeting: Tuesday April 2, 2024, at 9 A.M.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Mr. Kosior made a motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Approve: _____
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: April 2, 2024