

September 17, 2024

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Wednesday, September 17, 2024, at 9:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor Dermody, Jessica Romine, Mark Kosior

Absent:

Brett Binversie 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

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

Public Comment

None

Claims Approval

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Payroll from September 13, 2024 in the amount of \$533,074.86.

Motion/Vote – Approval of September 13, 2024 Payroll

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the September 13, 2024 Payroll as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of \$1,142,605.88.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Civil City Claims

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

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Sewage Claims in the amount of \$137,752.87.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Sewage Claims

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

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Water Claims in the amount of \$275,896.51.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Water Claims

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

R-43382-INDOT Indiana Ave Project

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented R-43382-INDOT Indiana Ave Project. This is an invoice in the amount of \$3,179,624.98. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated this was bid in August and this payment is for the city's portion. Mr. Kosior questioned with the rebuild if there was a specific reason INDOT felt as if this needed to be taken of now, rather than later. City Engineer Nick Minich stated this is part of the betterment agreement, which is everything above and beyond what INDOT would normally do. INDOT allows communities participating in betterment 30 days during the contract phase to pay for these additional items that go above and beyond. Mr. Mincih stated this is essentially a two-and-a-half-year project, and we are paying for all that up front. If the entire amount is not used, we will be reimbursed any unutilized funds.

Motion/Vote – Approval of R-43382-INDOT Indiana Ave Project

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve R-43382-INDOT Indiana Ave Project as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Department Head Reports

Water: Water Superintendent Tim Werner reported they are approximately halfway through the Park Street project; this is the first phase of the project. In addition, Mr. Werner stated the construction crew is working on addressing some leaks. Mr. Werner reported they have staked out two new potential well sites to continue to grow the well field.

Wastewater: Water Superintendent Jerry Jackson reported the main sewer on McClung Road has been in for some time now and they are getting interest in customers who want to connect. There are currently 10 customers who want to connect, two of those being in the county. The residents in the county will be going through the annexation process to connect.

Code: Code Director Jeff Batchelor reported they are currently working on dilapidated housing and overgrown grass throughout the city. Mayor Dermody stated they have been coming down on out-of-town landlords and stated they are held to high standards in La Porte and need to take care of their properties. Mr. Batchelor stated they have an out-of-town landlord that has 11 properties with many violations that they have scheduled to meet with face to face. Mayor Dermody stated he would prefer this landlord to sell his properties and get them into the hands of someone who cares.

Street: Street Superintendent Mike Frazee reported they are street sweeping, preparing for Sunflower Fest, patching holes and cutting trees.

Park: Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber reported the 25th Sunflower Fair will be this weekend and will kick off Friday with Night on the Ave from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. Naughty will be performing Friday night and Sunflower Fair will be from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. on Saturday.

In Addition, Mr. Schreiber reported a new kayak launch was installed on Pine Lake. This kayak launch was donated by Jim and Kathy Nova through a donation to the Park Foundation. Mr. Schreiber recognized and thanked them for their donation. Mayor Dermody also thank Mr. and Mrs. Nova for their investment in La Porte and recognized Brett Binversie and his team for all their hard work.

IT: IT Director Roscoe Hoffman reported he is still working through the contract with Proven IT. Mr. Hoffman stated he has been able to get that contract price lowered but he is still negotiating as he would like to see it even lower to save the city money. Mr. Hoffman also noted there are services that we are currently paying for that we can solicit through the state for free without sacrificing quality of service.

Human Resources: Human Resources Director Andrea Smith reminded department heads that everyone received a letter last week with their pay advice, notifying them of the medical insurance change from UMR to Anthem on October 1st. A meeting regarding these changes will be held on Monday at the Civic Auditorium. The times were listed in the letter received by employees with the scheduled times and as of today, only 12 people have signed up. Mayor Dermody expressed the importance of these meetings to the Department Heads and encouraged them to do whatever they needed to do to make sure that employees are in attendance. Ms. Smith stated a representative from Anthem will be there to answer any questions and spouses are welcome to attend. Ms. Smith stated she has requested IT Director Roscoe Hoffman to record one of the sessions to make it available to any employees that may not be able to attend or for spouses who may want to watch it as well. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun emphasized with a change to the new insurance, there will be some disruptions and wants to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to have any questions they may have answered ahead of time.

2025 Budget Presentation

Mayor Dermody presented the 2025 Budgets outlining 2025 budget challenges, 2025 budget priorities including continual fiscal responsibility, fulfilling commitments of infrastructure improvements and winning the war on drugs.

New Business:

Request to Close Utility Billing Office for Training

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Request to Close Utility Billing Office for Training. The request is for permission to close the Utility Billing Office from 9 A.M. to 10 A.M. on Thursday September 19th for training on the new 39 N billing credits. The goal of the Utility Billing office is to make the transition on the October 28th bill to be as smooth as possible, not only for the new residents but also for State Board of Accounts purposes. This training will be held by Bakertilly.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request to Close Utility Billing Office for Training

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request to Close Utility Billing Office for Training as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Request for Use: HPC Trick or Treat

Chair of the HPC Sallie LaRocco presented Request for Use: HPC Trick or Treat. Ms. LaRocco stated the HPC must do two outreach events per year. These events can be either educational or just fun events. Ms. LaRocco stated Michigan Ave sees anywhere from 1200 to 2000 kids on the night of trick or treat and the HPC would like to sponsor closing Michigan Ave for the two hours during trick or treat to allow for a safer experience to the kids coming to that neighborhood. Mayor Dermody thanked Ms. LaRocco for her passion and support for wanting to keep the kids safe and requested input from both fire and police. Assistant Chief Burke stated he does not see any issues with it from his perspective and is supportive of it. Chief Buell stated although he appreciates what Ms. LaRocco is trying to do, he is not in favor of this from a law enforcement standpoint because when streets have barricades, people start taking down those barricades or try to drive around them. In addition, moving trick or treat to 5 P.M. to 7 P.M. individuals will be trying to get home and may cause people to get upset when they cannot get to their homes. Chief Buell stated individuals that use their vehicles or golf carts to take their children trick or treating would have no choice but to walk and some may not be able to do so, resulting in issues. Chief Buell also noted that this would open the door for other neighborhoods to want their streets closed during trick or treat as well. Ms. LaRocco emphasized they are not trying to keep residents of their neighborhood out of their homes and the HPS is willing to go door to door to speak with residents and provide a phone number of someone that can help them during that time if needed. Ms. LaRocco stated they are specifically trying to keep out individuals in vehicles that are not paying attention to where they are going but rather paying attention to their child that is walking. Ms. LaRocco encourage those individuals to park their cars and walk with their children and those that are unable to walk and need to drive, she encourages them to go to a neighborhood that has more lighting. Ms. Romine stated as someone who takes her children trick or treating on Michigan Ave, she would love to see it close to make is safer for her children and others, however, that would open the door for every neighborhood to request closures and would ultimately cause the resources of the city to be spread too thin.

Motion/Vote – Deny Request for Use: HPC Trick or Treat

Mayor Dermody made a motion to deny request to close Michigan Ave as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Water Tower Purchase Agreement

City Attorney Nick Otis stated this is the land purchase agreement for the future water tower along 39 N with Southshore. Attorney Otis stated this is for a small parcel along the Indiana Toll Road. The land is being donated to the City of La Porte with the expectation that a water tower will be built on the land within three years and the tower will feature a logo prominently of the City of La Porte and Southshore that will be clearly visible from the Indiana Toll Road.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Water Tower Purchase Agreement

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Water Tower Purchase Agreement as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Sanitary Sewer and Water Extension Agreement – Shady Grove and 39N

City Attorney Nick Otis stated these are both part of the 39 N asset purchase agreement and they were not specifically referenced in the purchase agreement, and this was brought to the city’s attention by 39 N. Attorney Otis stated his request is for these to be approved by the Board of Works to be included in the asset purchase agreement.

Motion/Vote - Approval Sanitary Sewer and Water Extension Agreement – shady Grove and 39N

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Sanitary Sewer and Water Extension Agreement – Shady Grove and 39N as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Resolution No. 4-2024-B

City Attorney Nick Otis presented the following resolution:

Resolution No. 4-2024-B.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MAYOR THOMAS DERMODY TO EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS AT CLOSING ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF LA PORTE FOR THE THIRTY-NINE NORTH ASSET PURCHASE AGREEMENT.

Attorney Otis stated typically Meridian Title Requires the minutes from the meeting where permission was authorized, however the signing is this Friday, so he created this resolution as a formality to provide to authorize Mayor Dermody to sign.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Resolution No. 4-2024-B

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Resolution No. 4-2024-B as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Civic Auditorium Condensation Pump Quotes

Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber presented Civic Auditorium Condensation Pump. Mr. Schreiber stated the recent updates to the Civic included the HVAC system. With these updates it was found that a new condensate pump is needed to help the radiated system to recirculate properly and not waste any water or chemicals. Mr. Schreiber stated funds were retained from the contract with Schneider and saved in the ARP funds. City Engineer Nick Minich stated quotes were previously requested and opened. Three quotes were received from Arctic Engineering, D. A. Dodd, and Circle “R” Mechanical. Mr. Minich stated Circle "R" Mechanical was the lowest bidder in the amount of \$43,800 and recommends approval of Circle “R”.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Civic Auditorium Condensation Pump

Mr. Kosior made a motion to award condensation pump to Circle “R” Mechanical in the amount of \$43,800; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Change Order #1 – PY 2023 CDBG Sidewalk Replacement

CDBG Manager Mary Ann Richards presented Change Order #1 – PY 2023 CDBG Sidewalk Replacement. Ms. Richards stated they had to remove four additional trees for safety and access to a sidewalk and the policy is to plant two trees for each tree removed. All of the additional trees will be planted in October and November. The contract will be increasing by \$9,469 for a new contract amount of \$616,910. Ms. Richards stated there are CDBG funds available to cover the additional cost.

Motion/Vote- Approval of Change Order #1 – PY 2023 CDBG Sidewalk Replacement

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Change Order #1 – PY 2023 CDBG Sidewalk Replacement as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Emergency Quote for HVAC Unit

Chief Buell presented Emergency Quote for HVAC Unit. Chief Buell stated the largest air handler on the roof has gone out. D.A. Dodd has worked on this handler on numerous occasions, and it can no longer be repaired so this is now an emergency situation. Chief Buell stated he recommends D.A. Dodd to replace. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated herself and Chief Buell worked with Attorney Otis and stated the board does have to declare this an emergency to only require two quotes. Two Quotes were received, one from D.A. Dodd and one from H&G. D.A. Dodd was the low bidder. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated Chief Buell did present a letter stating the emergency need for replacement and a transfer was done at last night's Council meeting from salaries to repairs and maintenance that will cover the entire cost of the repair.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Emergency Quote for HVAC Unit

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Emergency Quote for HVAC Unit as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Emergency Tree Removal

Assistant City Engineer Tucker King presented Emergency Tree Removal. This removal was in the 900 block of G Street. Mr. King stated due to recent storms the tree was cracked and leaning toward the house. Mr. King stated two quotes were received and Foresters Tree Service was the lowest bidder, and the tree was already removed and he is therefore asking for retroactive approval to pay for the tree removal services already rendered. The scope of the work was outside the capabilities of the tree crew; however, the tree crew did do the cleanup portion. Mr. King stated this tree is within the scope of the tree fund grant and funds are available to cover these costs.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Emergency Tree Removal

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Emergency Tree Removal as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Tree Planting Bids

Assistant City Engineer Tucker King presented Tree Planting Bids. Mr. King stated they solicited five bids and requested 86 trees to be planted for the fall planting and looked for it to cost approximately \$40,000. Three quotes were received back, and all quotes were over the anticipated cost of \$40,000. Mr. King stated there are funds in the Forest Service Grant to cover these costs. Mr. King stated Dogwood Hills presented the best overall prices and ability to provide the various varieties requested. Attorney Otis questioned what the size of the trees we will be receiving. Mr. King stated the average size is 2.5 inches diameter but due to the large variety that was requested, some may be smaller and some larger.

Motion/Vote - Approval of Tree Planting Bids

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Tree planting Bids as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Unfinished Business

Un-table Parking Ticket Appeals

Mr. Kosior made a motion to un-table Parking Ticket Appeals; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and Unanimously approved.

Parking Ticket Appeals

Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Parking Ticket Appeals for parking ticket(s) #24-2379, #24-2411, #24-2429. Ms. Loeffler stated she sent these tickets to Assistant Chief Drangmeister for review. Assistant Chief Drangmeister reviewed the parking ticket appeals and sent recommendation back that two of the tickets be voided because it was not clear on those blocks in the areas where the tickets were given and the third ticket, he stated there were visible signs on both sides and it is very clear there is no parking. Chief Buell stated on the two they are recommending voiding, there are posts in place for the signs, however, there is no signage. Mayor Dermody stated he will make sure that the Street Department is aware of the missing signage and make sure that it gets taken care of.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Parking Ticket Appeal

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve removal of fines for parking ticket #24-2379 and #24-2429 as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Motion/Vote – Denial of Parking Ticket Appeal

Ms. Romine made a motion to deny parking ticket appeal for parking ticket #24-2411 as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Other Business:

Next regularly scheduled meeting: Tuesday October 8, 2024 at 9 A.M.

Adjourn

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

Approve: _____
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: October 8, 2024