

December 3, 2024

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 9:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor Dermody, Jessica Romine, Mark Kosior

Absent:

Mike Frazee 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 November 22, 2024 in the amount of \$552,851.75.

Motion/Vote – Approval of November 22, 2024 Payroll

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the November 22, 2024 Payroll as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of \$1,151,838.37.

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 \$399,298.17.

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 \$1,273,110.52. This does include some transfers.

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.

Department Head Reports

Code: Code Enforcement Officer Dan Drake reported they are continuing to address vacant and trouble properties. The vacant property on Freemont has been demolished. In addition, Mr. Drake stated they recently condemned a house on Lansing. Mayor Dermody thanked Code Enforcement and the Police for making this happen in addition to thanking the neighbor that purchased the property to make sure the problems that were happening there will no longer go on.

Water: Water Superintendent Tim Werner provided an update on the Park Street development. They will finish installing the main in the interior of the triangle next Friday. The pressure testing and bac-t testing will begin this week and will be done in segments. The portion of the project on Seivers Road from Genesis to 100 W will be held off until Spring due to not being able to get it paved this year. Park Street will be open for both lanes throughout the winter. Mr. Werner stated they have had some issues with two-way traffic on the one lane of Park Street. There is a road-closed sign and the only individuals that should be accessing this road are those going to the five houses that reside in that section. Mr. Werner reminded the public that this is an active construction site.

Wastewater: Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson reported that FH Passion has started on the storm basin for Indiana Avenue on Boyd Boulevard by the treatment plant. They will begin work on the storm sewer soon, however the pipe has not been delivered. This project will go on all winter as weather allows. In addition, part of this project includes replacing a brick sewer across Indiana Avenue along with the alignment of St Paul's Court and Noble. The replacement of the rest of the storm sewer has been designed with the intent to bid the work this winter.

Engineering: City Engineer Nick Minch reported on two grants from INDOT for safety. These are HSIP, highway safety improvement programs. Mr. Minich stated just under \$2 million dollars was received and recognized Jamie Novak and the Engineering for their work securing those funds. Mr. Minich stated the first project is sign replacements and the second project will be looking at safer crossings from Pine Lake Ave. Mr. Minich stated there are funds for design of these projects in fiscal year 2025, construction dollars for one project in 2026 and construction dollars for one project in 2027.

Clerk-Treasurer: Clerk-Treasurer Parthun reminded everyone that CBIZ is here this week and will be coming to all the departments for physical inventory. In addition, Clerk-Treasurer Parthun reminded everyone that she has sent out information regarding all the year-end stuff for encumbrances, transfers, etcetera and all departments should get this turned in as soon as possible.

Police: Chief Buell reported last Monday he attended the County Council Meeting and Prosecutor Sean Fagan made a presentation to request funds to purchase four digital speed limit signs and it was approved. Chief Buell stated we should be receiving those within a few weeks and two will be put up on Lincolnway and two will be put up on Pine Lake Ave. Chief Buell emphasized these are beneficial because they collect data; the volume of traffic and at what time of day and the speed at which vehicles are travelling. Mr. Kosior questioned if these are similar to the kind that are in Soldier's Memorial Park that are solar and flash your speed. Chief Buell stated they are similar because they will tell you at what speed you are traveling but will also collect all of the data and encourage people to slow down.

Park: Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber reported they have opened up the downtown ice rink over the weekend and had almost 100 skaters on the first day. Mr. Schreiber stated there will be another free skate Friday coming up this Friday and is sponsored by the Health Foundation of La Porte. In addition, there will be a buy-one-get-one skate on Sunday that is sponsored by the Centers for Pain Control and Vein Care. Mr. Schreiber thanked those sponsors for their support and stated there are still opportunities for other local businesses to sponsor these opportunities to get people out on the ice rink this winter. The deadline for Letters to Santa is this Friday at the Park Office. In addition, Mr. Schreiber stated there are five great Christmas performances coming up at the Civic Auditorium:

- December 7th: Eclipse Performing Arts will be performing the Sugar Plum Suite.
- December 8th: Christmas Pop-Up Market
- December 14th: Holiday at the Pops
- December 15th: Prancer Palooza
- December 20th: The Christmas Wizards – a tribute to the Trans Siberian Orchestra

Street: Street Superintendent Mike Frazee reported they are currently doing leaf pickup and working 10-hour days this week to get caught up. Mayor Dermody questioned where they are currently working. Mr. Frazee stated the loader crew is on K by the Street Department and will be going to Weller area next. The leaf vac is working in the area of Monroe Manor. Mr. Kosior questioned if this was the second round of pickup or still the first. Mr. Frazee stated this is still the first round and they anticipate the next two rounds going much quicker as there should not be as many leaves left to pick up. Mayor Dermody reminded the public that they work clockwise throughout the city. Mr. Frazee stated they have been getting calls that they are missing leaf piles, but they cannot get to them when there are vehicles parked on them. Ms. Romine questioned if the cars are parked on the leaves, does the city go back to them if they receive a call about them. Mr. Frazee stated they will have to wait until the second round.

New Business:

Proposed 2025 Holiday Schedule

Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Proposed 2025 Holiday Schedule. Ms. Loeffler stated she has always tried to match the county's holiday calendar in the past but it is hard because they do theirs really late sometimes. Ms. Loeffler stated the calendar includes all of the basic holidays, excluding election days because this is not an election year. Ms. Loeffler

stated there has always been a floating holiday used and this year she added it to the Friday after Christmas for consideration. Ms. Romine questioned if this was the correct number of days off. Ms. Loeffler stated the number of days off isn't exact every year as it depends on when certain holidays fall and whether or not it is an election year but there are typically 15-17 days off each year. Ms. Romine questioned if New Years Eve should be considered for a day off as she felt it was an appropriate day to take off. Ms. Loeffler stated that is something that can be addressed at a later date if the board would like that day to be considered. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated this time of year is extremely busy for her office and there is already a short week for Christmas and a shortened week for the New Year and therefore does not see the need for New Years Eve to be listed as a holiday.

Motion/Vote – Approval of 2025 Holiday Schedule

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve 2025 Holiday Schedule as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Proposed 2025 BOW Meeting Schedule

Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Proposed 2025 BOW Meeting Schedule. Ms. Loeffler stated the meeting will continue to be set for the day following the City Council meetings. There are three meetings that are effected by Monday holidays and therefore pushes those Board of Works meetings back one day to Wednesday instead of a Tuesday. Mayor Dermody recognized Ms. Romine and Mr. Kosior for their work and effort and continued leadership in 2025 as members of the Board of Works.

Motion/Vote – Approval of 2025 BOW Meeting Schedule

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve 2025 BOW Meeting Schedule as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Demolition Reimbursement for 4155 N SR 39

Executive Director of the La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership Bert Cook presented Demolition Reimbursement for 4155 N SR 39. This is part of the Bella Largo project. There was a home on the property that was partially demoed and then ultimately moved. Holiday Properties completed this work. Mr. Cook stated Jeff Batchelor and himself were able to get out and inspect the work and demolition funds were a component of the incentive offer. Mr. cook stated the work has been completed and this will be paid for from the Code Enforcement budget to Holladay Construction Group0, LLC in the amount of \$31,206.90.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Demolition Reimbursement for 4155 N SR 39

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Demolition Reimbursement for 4155 N SR 39 as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Executive Director of the La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership Bert Cook announced that Linde on 39 N will be expanding their trucking area. This is approximately a \$1.3 million capital investment and Larson Danielson construction company will be building this expansion. This expansion will create about 25 new jobs paying approximately \$52 an hour.

Orthopedic Service Agreement and Cardiovascular Agreement

Human Resources Director Andrea Smith presented two new programs that will be available to City of La Porte employees beginning in 2025. The first is Ascension Cardiovascular Center. This is a high-quality specialty care program that is offered as part of the employer's health benefits. Testing, surgeries, and procedures performed at the Ascension St Vincent Center or Ascension Medical Group Cardiology are included with no deductibles, co-insurance, and costs are waved for eligible care. In addition, Hendricks Regional Health Orthopedic Center is a center of excellence and is a premier destination in Indiana for comprehensive orthopedic and spine care. They are nationally recognized as a leader in orthopedic surgery. If you have surgery at Hendricks, we may issue a shared savings check ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 depending on the type of surgery. There are no additional costs to the employee and the city pays nothing to participate in this program. The city is not locked into this program and can discontinue at any time. There are currently no centers in Northwest Indiana, they are all located in central Indiana. Ms. Smith invited Nick Napier, our representative from Brown and Brown, to speak.

Mr. Napier stated the orthopedic program at Hendricks is rated number two in the state and has the best patient outcomes, most transparency, and most efficient procedures. The cardiovascular program is rated number two in the nation, beating places such as Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins, and UCLA. These are two very high-quality programs. Mr. Napier stated when Brown and Brown went into negotiations with these hospital systems, the number one thing that was looked at first was the quality of the outcomes and from there they went into negotiating pricing at a better level. Mr. Napier clarified procedures done with these facilities are voluntary procedures that would be done outside of the group health plan, and you are not paying toward your deductible or out of pocket maximum. Mr. Napier stated he has recently pulled a report to see who utilizes these facilities in Indiana with a travel distance of two hours or more and there were 147 procedures from clients with the orthopedic center and 40 procedures at cardiovascular services. Mr. Napier stated having a procedure such as a knee or hip replacement at the orthopedic care could potentially save you thousands of dollars and then could have your follow-up care closer to home with another provider. Mr. Napier stated these programs are voluntary and are an additional resource for individuals and does not mean that local providers cannot be utilized if people choose to stay local. Mayor Dermody asked Mr. Napier to provide an example of potential savings. Mr. Napier stated they typically see a standard heart procedure come through a group health plan at \$193,000 and the city is contracted directly for these same types of procedures at approximately \$95,000 so there is the potential to save approximately \$100,000. Although these programs are voluntary, there is the incentive for group members to use them as their deductibles and out of pocket are waved and the additional benefit of the shared savings check incentive. Mr. Kosior questioned if employees would be able to see what their bill will be beforehand, so they are able to make the best financial decision for themselves. Mr. Napier stated the best part of these programs are the employee will never receive a bill. If an employee chooses to utilize one of the programs, all they will have to do is call the dedicated concierge line and provide their information and it is directly billed to the city. Mr. Napier

noted that these programs are a bundled strategy, and even though the readmittance rates are very low, if a patient needed to be readmitted to the hospital there are no additional costs incurred by anyone. Mr. Napier stated this is why they pick these types of programs because of their efficiency and higher quality of outcomes. City Attorney Nick Otis clarified there are two separate agreements that are being approved; One with Hendricks Regional Health Orthopedic and the second agreement is with Ascension Cardiovascular Center. One agreement is for a five-year contract, however both can be dissolved with a 60 or 90-day notice. The contract guarantees the percentage rates that will be charged during the contract timeframe.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Orthopedic Service Agreement and Cardiovascular Agreement

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Orthopedic Service Agreement and Cardiovascular Agreeen as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Request Permission to Solicit Qualifications for WWTP Headworks Project

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Request Permission to Solicit Qualifications for WWTP Headworks Project. Mr. Jackson stated this would be a guaranteed savings contract, which is a little different than the standard bid procedure. The way this works is qualifications are requested and reviewed and then a contractor is chosen to do the work and then the city and the contractor work out a contract. The contract would have regular bid items and then the engineers estimate to compare bid item prices versus the contractor's proposal. If a contract can be agreed upon, then the contract is signed and the project proceeds. Mr. Jackson stated these types of contracts have been used in the past. The advantage of this type of contract is it's more of a cooperative project than getting the low bid who then tries to constantly do change orders. This allows us to see pricing up front and decide if something is outside of the budget and you can pick and choose line items. Mr. Jackson stated he would take the traditional bid route, however, it seems other cities are going to these guaranteed savings contracts and contractors seem to be responding to these types of requests versus getting no bids. Mr. Jackson stated if approved, they will begin reviewing qualifications in early January. Mayor Dermody questioned if this is the same type of contract that the Water Department tried, and it didn't work out. Water Superintendent Tim Werner confirmed this. Mr. Werner stated it was for the well field project and engineers' estimate came in at \$3.8 million and the guaranteed savings contract came in at almost \$10 million so they chose a different route. Mr. Werner stated he is aware of other success stories within the city using guaranteed savings contracts, however the water department has not had good luck with them. Mr. Jackson stated they have a good set of plans and a good engineers estimate and if this does not work out their fallback is to then go through with the traditional bid process. Ms. Romine questioned if they are required to solicit from a specific number of contractors. City Engineer Nick Minich stated it does not require a specific number of solicited bids; it will be advertised in the newspaper. There are very specific requirements in Indiana Code for doing solicitations like this. Mr. Jackson stated they will send out notices to the contractors that they are interested in. Ms. Romine questioned how this type of contract would come before the board. Mr. Jackson stated they would review qualifications and choose a contractor and bring that recommendation before the board, once approved,

they will begin contract negotiations and then a contract will be brought before the board for approval.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Permission to Solicit Qualifications for WWTP Headworks Project

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Permission to Solicit Qualifications for WWTP Headworks Project as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Change Order #1 – Fire Training Center Foundation

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Change Order #1 – Fire Training Center Foundation in the amount of \$3,997. Mr. Minich stated during the initial bidding process it was not foreseen to need additional time, and the contractor rented their forms. Mr. Minich stated M5 construction has done a great job getting things done the way they needed to be done and recommends approval. Mr. Minich noted that even with this small change order, M5 Construction was a significant cost savings to the city. Mayor Dermody questioned if this is the only change order we should expect to see. Mr. Minich stated this is it as the next agenda item is the final invoice.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Change Order #1 – Fire Training Center Foundation

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Change Order #1 – Fire Training Center Foundation as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Pay App #1 – Fire Training Center Foundation

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Pay App #1 – Fire Training Center Foundation payable to M5 Construction in the amount of \$64,297.01. This is the final payment and closes out this contract.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Pay App #1 – Fire Training Center Foundation

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Pay App #1 – Fire Training Center Foundation as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Unfinished Business

Other Business:

Next regularly scheduled meeting: Tuesday December 17, 2024 at 9 A.M. Mayor Dermody reminded everyone that this is the time of year to put your hand out and help others in need. This is a great community to do this in. There can be struggling issues for individuals and families, and we should all be there to help one another. In addition, Mayor Dermody reminded everyone that we will have Prancer Palooza on December 15th. Despite Sam Elliott not being able to attend, we will still have a full crowd of individuals to enjoy the 35th anniversary of the film Prancer. There will be two reindeer, Santa Clause, and a concert beforehand.

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: December 17, 2024