

Minutes of Regular Meeting, December 18, 2023

The Town Council of the Town of Warren met Monday, December 18, 2023 in a Regular Meeting at Assembly Hall, Council Meeting Room, 131 N. Wayne St, in accordance with rules of Council and applicable for the main purpose of a recap of 2023.

Those present were: Council Members, Steve Buzzard, Tavis Surfus, Michelle Schweikhardt, Jeremy Rufener; Clerk-Treasurer, Marilyn Morrison; Employees, Dennis Spitler, Lee Poulson; others.

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 13, 2023 were approved as submitted.

Ben Adams, Engineer, will be available at the January meeting for project review and 2024 projections. Greg Guerrettaz, financial consultant, had summarized at a previous meeting.

Under Citizens Comment, a resident discussed situation with dog bite to a person and killing of a dog being walked by the person. Reported that a representative from Huntington County Shelter had requested a private meeting with Clerk Treasurer, Town Marshal, and Council President for December 20th.

Police Report submitted in writing was reviewed.

Poulson, Fire Chief, reported that he had been re-elected as Fire Chief with Doug Christie as Assistant Chief, Council concurred.

No reports from HCUED or Warren Area Chamber of Commerce.

Historic Warren representative Becky Souder issued a thanks to the Council for support of "The Exchange" project.

Rob Miller, Huntington County Commissioner, commended the Council for movement on a housing development and summarized a recent Housing Study done in the County which showed the need for such projects. He and Commissioner Tom Wall stated that Financial Assistance from the County would be available if needed to move the project forward. Introduced was a representative of Resource Hub, a consulting firm which had done the County Housing Study, who then summarized services that could be utilized for the Housing project through that group at the cost of \$50,000. No action. Morrison reported that HCCSC Board had approved and signed the Intent to Purchase and had scheduled public discussion of the project at their meeting of this date. In connection with that discussion, 2023 Council recap showed that the project had been discussed during ten of the eleven past months in Regular and Special meetings with one Executive Session.

As the Intent to Purchase has now been finalized with HCCSC, Surfus moved, seconded by Buzzard, to move forward with steps necessary to prepare for consideration of purchase of the twenty two acre site and the fifty five acre site with timing of purchase of the fifty five acres to be determined in discussion with School Officials as it has been cash rented through the end of 2024 and, that discussions with Oakmont Development through the Town Real Estate Attorney be undertaken in regard to consideration of necessary contracts and agreement's. Motion approved unanimously. In connection with that discussion, 2023 recap showed that the project had been discussed publically during ten of the eleven past months in Regular and Special meetings of Town Council with one Executive Session.

Discussed was held in consideration of a location for the proposed Veteran's Memorial. No action.

Morrison reported that Bonnie Myers had agreed to spear head the Hometown Heroes project and requested Council approve the development of a committee for the project. Council concurred.

Ordinances 2003-5, 6, and 7, wages and benefits for 2024, were submitted for adoption based on decisions at the prior meeting. Schweikhardt moved, seconded by Buzzard to adopt. Approved unanimously.

Morrison reported that notice had been received that the OCRA Grant had been audited with no findings and that closing of the grant is scheduled for January which would close out that part of the financial portion of the Water project recently completed.

Morrison reported that more complaints are being received regarding Feral Cats. Marshal Spitler is to move forward to address that issue.

Morrison reported that Hiring Notices have been placed in area newspapers and on Journal Gazette online posting.

Morrison reported that bid opening for the Nancy Street Lift Station replacement is scheduled for December 19th and that soil borings for the project did not show a rocky area but a high water table. Engineer Adams will discuss further at the January meeting.

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Morrison reported that Edgewater Mills had a soft opening scheduled for this date for the office area and store area but that all products would not be available as yet.

Commodity Blenders construction of a holding building for storage of a new product has been completed and that equipment is on site for the transfer of that product from a rail car to a truck for transfer to the SR 218 site.

Golfo site was inspected by a potential buyer but no further information available.

Contact has been made by the company that has purchased the previously used Electric Engineering Company which had been used for several years.

Also reported from the Town's I&M customer representative was that the necessary repairs to the Substation are scheduled for this week as all material is available.

Resolution 4-2023, Council Policy and Procedure for public participation in Council Meetings was submitted for adoption. Buzzard moved, Schweikhardt seconded approval. Rufener made a motion to table the matter but motion failed due to lack of second. In the matter of the Schweikhardt motion, Buzzard, Schweikhart, Surfus voted yes with Rufener voted no. Motion carried.

An agreement for participation in the Indiana TRECS program, a program to recover outstanding utility balances through Indiana Income Tax Returns was approved by consensus. This would be the third year of participation.

Annual Dues to Accelerate Indiana Municipalities in the amount of \$1491 were approved.

Buzzard moved, seconded by Schweikhardt, to approve a contract in the amount of \$4000 from TM Wells for amendment to the Fixed Asset Accounting reports which have to be updated annually. Motion was approved unanimously.

Buzzard moved, seconded by Schweikhardt, to approve a contract with Huntington County United Economic Development in the amount of \$3000 for the year 2024. Motion approved unanimously.

Two names were submitted for consideration of appointment to fill a vacant position on the Warren Board of Zoning Appeals, Carrie Miller and Ben Warpup. Rufener moved to appoint Miller but motion failed due to lack of second. Buzzard moved, seconded by Schweikhart, to appoint Warpup with motion approved unanimously.

Morrison reported that the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance had approved the 2024 budget as submitted.

Accounts Payable in the amount of \$682,936.99 was approved by consensus.

Financial reports will be sent after all payments made in December.

PR docket for November approved as submitted.

Poulson updated that a water leak across the river at Edgewater had been repaired, the heater at the #3 well which had been installed in the Water project was not operational and engineer will be contacted for replacement, and that Huggy Bear Motel had requested connection to municipal water.

A Department of Homeland Security Permit received for construction of a pavilion at Tower Park has been received.

The next Regular Meeting of Council is scheduled for January 8, 2024.

General discussion was held.

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned.

Warren Town Council

As _____ President As _____ Member
Steven Buzzard Michelle Schweikhardt

As _____ Member As _____ Member
Tavis Surfus Jeremy Rufener

ATTEST:

As _____ Clerk-
Marilyn Morrison Treasurer