

Minutes of Regular Meeting, October 14, 2024

The Town Council of the Town of Warren met Monday, October 14, 2024 in a Regular Session at Assembly Hall, Council Meeting Room, 131 N. Wayne St, in accordance with rules of Council and applicable law.

Those present were: Council Members, Steve Buzzard, Ron Boxell, Michelle Schweikhardt, Jeremy Rufener; Clerk-Treasurer, Marilyn Morrison; Employees, Lee Poulson, Marshal Spitler.

President Buzzard opened the meeting at 6:00.

Under Special Order of Business, Ben Adams, Commonwealth Engineering, updated on the four infrastructure projects and other business:

- Reported that the Wayne Street emergency water main replacement project was nearing completion with work on the Wayne Street Reconstruction Project now to continue. Needed was Council approval of an agreement with ERA Railroad which allow boring under the tracks for water main. Following discussion, Buzzard moved, seconded by Schweikhardt, to sign the agreement. Rufener abstained with Buzzard, Sweikhart, Boxell voting for. Motion approved
- PFAS. A recent EPA ruling requires testing of drinking water at the local. The Town has been awarded a grant from Indiana Finance Authority, through EPA, to cover costs to meet required testing.
- Lead and Copper Testing: EPA/IDEM rule mandates testing program. An initial report has been prepared but the next months will see a project to identify possible problem areas. Initial survey in 2023 of utility customers is being used but additional information needed. Many Water Utility Customers can expect to receive additional survey information through the Postal System as required by the mandate.
- Ever Fresh: Work continues with Ever Fresh engineers to address control limits of outflow to the Sewer System and other related matters. In addition, Adams continues to assist in IDEM permitting for the company which has an opening date set for April 2025.

Under Special Order of Business, Greg Guerrettaz and Michael Guerrettaz of Financial Solutions Group, Town consultants:

- A Council request for study of charges within the Electric Utility, as current service charges have been in place since 1983, was submitted and reviewed with recommendation that the base service rate of \$5.86 be increased to \$10.86 for residential and commercial accounts and raised from \$17.92 to \$38.92 for three phase large users. It will take approximately three months to complete the process. While KW rates may be considered in the future, this relates only to the base service charge for each user.
- Again, as has been discussed for the past several months, the local power contract with Wolvering Power Agency, power provider to the Town which purchases through the PJM power grid, is set to expire in 2030. IMMUDA, power group of which the Town is a member, has begun discussions on how to move forward as all indications are there will be substantial increase in costs in every sector across the country. A partnership with Northeastern REMC is one step being considered by IMMUDA as both are not for profit utilities. Guerrettaz, who previously was approved by Council for representation in IMMUDA matters stated that he would keep Council informed as the process moves forward. Council concurred with moving forward as needed.

Minutes of the August 12th and September 16th were approved as submitted.

Marshal Spitler submitted September activity report and reported that a report should be available at the next meeting concerning handling of semi-truck traffic on local streets.

Fire Chief Poulson submitted September activity report. Fire Truck chassis has been ordered, Historic Warren – requested street closure of Second Street from Wayne to Nancy for activity related to the Annual Christmas Walk. Approved by consensus.

Erik Long, Accelerate Huntington County, reminded that a meeting of area municipal officials has been scheduled for October 23th at The Exchange and updated initiatives of the program.

Resolution 5-2024, Reduction in the 2024 budget to support the 2025 budget was submitted for adoption. Boxell moved, seconded by Schweikhardt, moved adoption. Unanimous approval.

Ordinance 2024-8, 2025 Municipal Budget, was submitted for consideration of adoption. Buzzard moved, seconded by Boxell, to adopt. Unanimous approval.

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Ordinance 2024-9, an ordinance to replace the Tower Park Section of Town Code and update the Rules and Regulations to all Town Park areas was submitted in Introduction.

As well over thirty individuals have responded to advertisement for Utility Manager but many do not meet criteria set in the advertisement, discussion held with decision being to remove from consideration any response that did not submit an application.

Schweikhardt updated planning for completion of the Veterans Memorial on First Street. General approval given by Council to the plan so that an announcement can be at a meeting of veterans. Final planning will continue in 2025 to complete work at the site.

Trash Collection Contract expires December 31st. Council reviewed and edited contract form as submitted by attorneys.

Consensus given to incurring expense related to sale of Scout Cabin as some issues must be resolved before a sale can be considered.

Update given on status of purchase of property from Huntington County School Corporation at the Salamonie School Site. Survey being completed.

Historic Warren representatives further discussed the request made at the previous meeting that Council agreed to provide \$25,000 annually for three years to support hiring an Executive Director. No decision made.

Submitted was a wage/salary report to be used in consideration for employee wages/benefits for the year 2025. By consensus, hourly increase of \$1.06 cents is to be used for preparation of necessary ordinances.

Schweikhardt moved, seconded by Buzzard, to accept the TIF District Spending Plan as adopted by the Warren Redevelopment Commission at a meeting just prior to the Council Meeting. Approved unanimously.

A request to use Tower Park for an annual Charity Softball tournament in November was approved by consensus.

Monies in the amount of \$499.89 have been received from the State Attorney General due to the Opioid Settlement agreement. By consensus, Council directed that the funds be forwarded to the Huntington County Community Foundation to be used in a program established that meets criteria for use of the funds.

Accounts Payable Docket was reviewed and approved by consensus in the amount of \$1,174,203.65 while noting that the increased amount was due to payments on three of the four projects and payments to Wolverine Power.

REACH ALERT update: As of this date there have been 140 registrations into the system.

Utility Manager Poulson updated utility department activities with most related to projects.

Tower Park: Working toward development of a Park Plan.

Announcements :	Next Regular Meeting of Town Council	November 12 (rescheduled due to Veterans day)
	Closings, Town Hall and Utility Department	November 5, Election
		November 11, Veterans Day

Submitted	_____	Clerk
	Marilyn Morrison	Treasurer

Warren Town Council:

_____	<u>Steve Buzzard</u> President
_____	<u>Michelle Schweikhardt</u> Vice President
_____	<u>Jeremy Rufener</u> Member
_____	<u>Ron Boxell</u> Member