

**CITY COMMON COUNCIL
OF HARTFORD CITY, INDIANA
AUGUST 3, 2020
MEETING MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME: Mayor Eckstein called to order a meeting of the Common Council of the City of Hartford City at 6:00pm August 3, 2020.

ROLL CALL: Members of the council present were Michael Wolfe, Dustin George, Jimmy Lytle, and Ron Dudelston. Tony Scaggs was absent. Also present were Mayor Dan Eckstein, City Attorney, Brandon Murphy and Dana Whatley, Clerk Treasurer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mayor Eckstein stated that we needed to amend the agenda to add The Blackford County Economic Development Commission as (A-1) under new business and change the Blackford County Zoning Ordinance as (A-2). Mr. Lytle made the motion to amend the agenda. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

- 1.) **JULY 6, 2020 MEETING MINUTES:** Mr. Lytle made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. George seconded. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.
- 2.) **JULY 28, 2020 MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING:** Mr. Dudelston made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A.) **ORDINANCE 2020-03 – HISTORIC PRESERVATION INDIANA LANDMARKS:**
Michelle Risinger, from the Hartford City Public Library, asked that this topic be tabled until the next meeting in September to give Attorney Murphy more time to look over the ordinance. Mr. Lytle made the motion to table. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to table was 4-0-1.
- B.) **AMENDMENT TO SALARY ORDINANCE 2019-07 – PARKS BOARD SALARY DISCREPANCY:** The amendment will reflect that each Park Board Member will be paid \$1,000 for 2020. Attorney Murphy will return the document at the September 2020 meeting for ratification. Mr. Lytle made motion to amend the salary ordinance 2019-07. Mr. George seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A-1.) **BLACKFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:** Mr. Ted Leas gave a summary of the BEDC. He thanked Hartford City for being a funding partner since 1988. He asked the Council to consider being a funding partner going forward. Mr. John Lancaster also stated that the BEDC Board represents a wide cross section of our county municipalities. The board oversees the position of the Blackford County Economic Development Director and they create and oversee the budget for the BEDC. Mr. Lancaster stated that the missing piece this year was the \$50,000 funding that the City Council cut from the City of Hartford City's budget for 2020. He asked for the Council's input and to please consider being a funding partner going forward. The BEDC Board of Directors need to have a definite dollar figure when preparing their next budget. They believe having the City of Hartford City as a funding partner is a

critical piece for Blackford County to succeed. Mr. Lancaster said that every part, of our county, is utilizing the BEDC. Mr. Warren Brown, Blackford County Economic Development Director has been working hard for all municipalities since he came on board in November of 2019. Everyone was in agreement that Mr. Brown has been a great asset to Blackford County and is producing a lot of good and exciting things for our community, Hartford City included. Mr. Brown gave a brief update on everything he's been working on in our county. There was discussion, from the council, of the disappointments with the BEDC, in prior years, before Mr. Brown took over this position. The council will take all of this information under advisement and they will have further discussions on this topic when the 2021 budget is addressed.

A-2.) BLACKFORD COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE – REGULATION OF COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY CONVERSION SYSTEMS: Ms. Anne Owen, Executive Director of the Blackford County Area Planning and Zoning office came to the Council for their favorable recommendation of Article 11, Blackford County Zoning Ordinance Regulation of Commercial Solar Energy Conversion Systems. Mr. Lytle made the motion to give a favorable recommendation for Article 11. Mr. George seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1.

B.) WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT – PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS FOR SEWER CLEANING DEBRIS DISPOSAL STATION: Mr. T. Williamson, WWTP Supervisor presented 3 proposals from area contractors who bid for this project. Ramseyer Excavating, Inc. was the lowest bid and the only local contractor who bid on the project. There was discussion as to where this sewer debris station will be located. This location will be determined at a later date. Mr. Lytle made a motion to spend over \$5,000 for this project with location to be determined. Mr. George seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1.

C.) WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT MID-YEAR UPDATE: Mr. Williamson stated that for the first six months of 2020 they have taken in and treated the equivalent of 826 Olympic sized swimming pools, of water. They are currently at 99% of ammonia removal. They are at 98% of total suspended solids removed; this is the equivalent of 200 tons of removed suspended solids that did not end up in our waterways. They are at 93% removal of general pollution. They have removed 10 tons of ammonia out of the water. The WWTP was recently released from the Toxicity Re-evaluation Program after passing 3 consecutive tests. They were in this program because of a problem they had a few years ago.

One of the WWTP employees, N. Richardson is maintaining the certification so that our WWTP can continue to do, in house, lab testing.

The WWTP has recently purchased a new truck and gave the Parks Department one of their other trucks.

They have recently purchased a new GIS mapping hardware/software and are currently being trained to use this equipment.

The WWTP recently had their server and data backup system updated.

Mr. Williamson shared that he currently has two employees that are enrolled in the Alliance Indiana Apprenticeship Program. This uses grant money to pay their salaries while they are in the program.

They transitioned the Sewer Maintenance Crew from Department of Public Works to the Wastewater Treatment Plant on June 1st. Mr. Williamson stated that the transition went pretty smoothly but it was extremely busy.

They have several future projects that the Wastewater Treatment Plant will be involved in. They have the Phosphorous Treatment Program and the construction process will start in the summer of 2021. The WWTP will also be a part of the Highway 3 South rehabilitation program. They have been awarded the hardship grant to replace aging sewer infrastructure underneath the highway. They will be concentrating on the 3rd phase of the long term CSO project with the window of 2021-2023 for construction plans. Mr. Williamson said that 2021 is shaping up to be a very busy year.

Mr. Williamson said that really the only problem that COVID-19 did to effect his department was many delays on receiving products that they ordered. Of course, all on-site training courses that the WWTP had scheduled were cancelled or moved to virtual meetings. They also worked with a more limited staff that usual during the COVID shutdown which really put them behind schedule.

D.) WATER DEPARTMENT MID-YEAR UPDATE: Mr. B. Bacon, Water Department Supervisor stated that their lead/copper samples came back good. The HAA5/TTHN's all samples came back good. He said the Hartford City residents should have recently received the CCR report.

From March to current date, they have completed 27 digs for water main breaks, and changing shut offs in meter pits.

They have implemented a preventative maintenance program for heavy equipment and back up motors. All back up motors are started once a month and all fluids checked. They have a checklist that they go through each month.

They have used 36 tons of asphalt to repair the areas of the 15 digs. They have replaced 2 well motors this year. They have painted 75 fire hydrants, as well.

The Water Department has upcoming projects. They will be repairing the raw water meter. The State wants to know how much well water is coming in and going out. They will be cleaning out the aerators. Mr. Bacon wants to clean out the reaction basin, in the plant, of any iron and rust accumulation. He wants to examine the clear well to see what kind of shape it is in. The Water Department will start flushing hydrants soon.

GIS – Meters and hydrants are all installed. They are turning valves and then will go back and GIS them. There are 5 to 10 two inch or larger meters in the industrial park that need to be changed.

The Water Department will be doing a water audit for the first time at the end of this year.

Future Plans – Mr. Bacon would like to get our water towers on an asset management program. He stated that the filters are in desperate need of replacing.

They will have the State Road 3 Project coming up in the spring of 2021.

He would like to put flow meters on all wells. They plan to repair and seal the floors in the Water plant.

Someday, when COVID-19 is under control, Mr. Bacon would like to get the high school students involved, with the Water Department, to see how the Waterworks system operates and show them the career opportunities they could have someday.

Mr. Bacon stated that during the COVID-19 shutdown his staff worked in split staff shifts to reduce the chance of his entire team being infected with the virus and potentially shutting down the entire water department. They no longer have customer's sign work orders to limit close contact with customers. The Water Office has been emailing work orders to the Water Department Staff to eliminate extra personnel coming in and out of the Water Office. If they do come to the Water Office, they limit to one person at a time.

Mr. Bacon has a contingency plan in case something was to happen. He has contacted Montpelier, Dunkirk and Eaton Water Superintendents and extended our offer of assistance if needed and asked for theirs in return. He put together a package of contact information, also where and how to collect readings.

Mr. Bacon stated that the COVID shutdown did help out the Water Department because they didn't have the normal influx of public calls and they were able to utilize the extra time for cleaning and maintenance.

Mr. Lytle asked Mr. Bacon what his top concern was out of all that he listed. Mr. Bacon stated that the filters are his biggest concern. He said that they have been let go for so long and need to be fixed to continue to have quality water. He stated that, at some point, we have to take a stand and fix this issue. He said it would approximately cost \$750,000 to do this. Mr. Bacon has a five year plan to raise the funds for this. It would be in small percentage increases in the water bills, over a period of 5 years.

E.) FIRE DEPARTMENT MID-YEAR UPDATE: Chief Rinker was unable to attend the meeting and Mayor Eckstein stated that we would table this report until September meeting.

F.) POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

- 1.) **SECURITY CAMERAS** – The Police Department hosted a virtual demonstration of security cameras by Verkada. They demonstrated how their product is scalable to the City's needs and can help with surveillance in our Parks, Downtown area, City Hall and any problem areas that the City finds it has. They demonstrated the following benefits, to their camera system:
 - a.) Cameras can be monitored via computer, smart phone with alerts via SMS or email in case of emergency.
 - b.) The cameras can search footage by day, time block or hour by hour. The footage can be zoomed in or out.
 - c.) These cameras offer heat mapping which would help if there are large gatherings of people, with social distancing, being a hot topic issue during the pandemic.
 - d.) There is also motion detection which can be drilled down by people making motion or just any motion, in general.
 - e.) They offer a seek feature which multiple cameras can be accessed to track someone or something.
 - f.) These cameras have an intersection feature which can be searched by motion, people, vehicles (color, make and model if searching for a specific vehicle). By the end of the year Verkada plans to offer LPR (license plate recognition).

- g.) This system also offers people analytics. They have facial recognition, gender, clothing color, etc.
- h.) If the Police Department has a known offender or a person of interest, this person's picture can be added to the database and anytime that person crosses a Verkada camera, in our city or anywhere else in the US that has a Verkada system, it will send an alert to our Police Department. This will cut down on time consuming Police searches tremendously.
- i.) Verkada partners with a company named Gridless. They offer remote, removable, cordless cameras where power and internet are not available. They are solar powered and the batteries can run up to 7 days without sunlight. These cameras can be installed in less than 10 minutes and can be put up in Parks or areas that are troublesome or have a high crime rate.
- j.) The Verkada system has unlimited archiving or saving of clips. They can be saved and will remain there until physically deleted.

2.) **HIRING PROCESS FOR NEW OFFICER** – Chief McKissack asked the Council's permission to start the hiring process to replace the vacancy left by Lt. J. Allred. Mr. Lytle asked Chief McKissack about the Reserve Officer Program. Mr. McKissack stated the Police Department is concentrating on the Part-Time Officer Program for now and once that is working smoothly, they will circle back to the Reserve Officer Program, in the future. Mr. George made a motion to give Chief McKissack permission to start the hiring process. Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1.

3.) **BUDGET PROPOSAL** – Detective C. Crouse presented the Council with a budget proposal starting in 2021. He explained that the HCPD has become a revolving door in officer turn over. He shared that since 2010, 22 officers have left HCPD for various reasons.

- 1 due to disability
- 5 due to personal reasons
- 2 retired
- 14 left the department for jobs elsewhere that paid more money/benefits

Det. Crouse stated that it costs a bare minimum of \$17,721 per officer to put them through 16 weeks at the Police Academy, plus the cost of uniforms. With the loss of these 22 officers It has cost the city \$400,000 estimated investment that we no longer see a return on. He also shared that the hiring pool is significantly dwindling for various reasons. This fact makes it that much harder to hire new officers, as well.

Mr. Crouse shared that there are also benefits to keeping officers here in our community. The Citizens generally feel more comfortable when they are familiar with a police officer and it can alleviate stressful situations, at times, if a familiar face shows up on a scene rather than an officer they do not know.

Detective Crouse proposed a 4 year plan to increase pay 5% per year over these 4 years to bring Hartford City into a competitive pay range, with our neighboring cities. He also proposed an increased clothing allowance to \$1,300 per year vs. the current \$650 per year they receive. He explained how much it is to maintain 3 different types of uniforms and the cost that officers end up spending out of their personal funds because the current clothing allowance is not enough to cover it.

This budget proposal will be looked at when we do the budget hearing in September.

- 4.) **MID-YEAR UPDATE FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT** – Due to the length of the camera demonstration and the how long the current meeting was running, it was decided to table this report, until the September meeting.

MAYORS REPORT: Mayor Eckstein stated that the owner of the Hartford City Health Club would like to build a sidewalk, from their building, around the pond and connect to the new walking trail. They will be using a local contractor and will build it to match the current sidewalk that is in place and it will be ADA approved. They are just seeking the Council's blessing, to do this. Mr. Lytle made a motion to approve the building of this sidewalk by the Hartford City Health Club. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 4-0-1.

PARKS BOARD - Mayor Eckstein stated that since the pool did not open this year, the Parks Department has some extra funding available. The Parks Department Supervisor shared the desire to have a new Parks Building constructed. The current building is located at 825 W. Fulton St. It was built in the 1970's and is currently utilized beyond its capacity. The current building has significant water damage, signs of age and is not heated. To keep water pipes from freezing in the winter, they rely on unattended space heaters. With 2020 being an unprecedented year, it has opened up some opportunities to explore building a new facility on that same lot. The vision of the Parks Department is that the building would be a pole barn style facility. They have had conversations with some contractors and believe they can complete this project within their current budget and not incur any additional debt for the city. They are seeking approval from the Council to take bids for this project. Mr. George made a motion to move forward with the bid process. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0-1.

STATE ROAD 3 SOUTH PROJECT – Mayor Eckstein stated that the Board of Works approved the On-Call Agreement with Keith Bryant, from United Consulting, for the State Road 3 South Project. He also stated that INDOT approved the hardship grant for the infrastructure piece of this project.

PROPOSED NEW ORDINANCE FOR ABANDONED AND VACANT BUILDINGS – Mr. Dudelston mentioned that he has obtained an ordinance from Rushville, Indiana regarding this topic and he would like to discuss this for Hartford City and possibly modeling our ordinance after Rushville's.

REQUEST TO VACATE AN ALLEY – Mr. George said he has received a request to vacate an alley between E. Conger St, E. Perkins St., N. Oak St and N. Mulberry St. Mr. George requested that this topic be put on the September council agenda.

ADJOURNMENT: With there being no further business, Mr. Lytle made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wolfe seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:27pm

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