

**CITY COMMON COUNCIL
OF HARTFORD CITY, INDIANA
SEPTEMBER 8, 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 September 8, 2020

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

MOTION TO SUSPEND COUNCIL MEETING FOR PUBLIC HEARING: Mr. Lytle made a motion to suspend the council meeting and open the public hearing for Ordinance 2020-05, an establishing Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. George seconded the motion. Vote to suspend council meeting carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: The public hearing for Ordinance 2020-05, an ordinance establishing a Historic Preservation Commission was opened for public comment. Mr. Michael Flowers with Indiana Landmarks spoke and said that he helped put this ordinance together. A Historic Preservation Commission can help preserve our city's heritage, potentially increase property value. It can help revitalize our historic downtown which has shown to increase historic tourism. With no further public comment, Mr. Dudelston made a motion to close the public hearing and resume the regular meeting of the Common Council. Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Attorney Murphy made the recommendation to amend the agenda and add under new business to introduce Ordinance 2020-05. He suggested that they have two readings in two separate meetings. He asked them to have a vote tonight on the introduction of this ordinance. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to amend the agenda and add letter (I) under new business to introduce Ordinance 2020-05. Seconded by Mr. Lytle. The vote to amend the agenda was 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: Mr. Lytle made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. The vote to approve the minutes was 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

A.) VACATE ALLEY – E. CONGER ST., E. PERKINS ST., N. OAK ST., N. MULBERRY ST.: Mr. George brought up for discussion in the last City Council meeting that he has been approached by one of his constituents about vacating this alley. Attorney Murphy advised that before City Council can act to vacate this alley they need a petition from an abutting landowner. They are working to get this petition from Mr. Ball (landowner). Mr. George made a motion to table this topic until the petition is acquired. Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

B.) RATIFICATION OF ORDINANCE 2020-06, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING 2019-07 FIXING SALARIES: Mr. Lytle made a motion to ratify this ordinance 2020-06. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The vote to ratify was 5-0.

C.) POLICE DEPARTMENT MID-YEAR UPDATE: Assistant Police Chief Cox gave the update on the Police Department.

- They have taken 2920 calls for service
- They have approximately 150 cases
- They have updated their fleet with 3 new Dodge Durango's and 1 new-to-the-department 2016 Dodge Charger. The PD is no longer using any civilian vehicles.
- They have repaired the radio system. Officers are now able to communicate with dispatch and each other without the problems they used to have.
- They have re-enrolled in the DLA Military Program which gives them the capability to apply for any decommissioned equipment free of charge.
- They were able to sell several items they had received from the DLA program and were able to generate enough funds to purchase the 2016 Dodge Charger without incurring any debt.
- They raised \$12,000 for the K-9 fund. This allowed them to obtain a second K-9. K-9 Hera is a 1 ½ year old Dutch Shepherd. Officer C. Elston is her handler.
- K-9 Bruno was awarded a K-9 vest worth approximately \$3,200 upon completing training and certification. K-9 Hera will be awarded the same upon her completion of her training.
- The Police Department was awarded a \$4,000 grant from General Electric in the form of 1 refrigerator, stove and microwave. These items are currently being used in the PD training center.
- They have started a Part-Time Police Officer Program. They have currently added 2 part-time officers that are currently utilized on a weekly basis.
- They have updated the Police Department's Standard Operating Procedures and Job Descriptions. The PD now has two divisions.

Detective Division – Lieutenant in charge and a Sergeant to assist.

Patrol Division – Lieutenant in charge and a Sergeant to assist.

Future Plans

- They would like to convert all officers over to Tablets. This will streamline their work by having it with them where ever they are.
- CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch System) Implementing this system will help them to communicate with the Sheriff's Department and the Montpelier Police Department.
- They are investigating installing surveillance cameras for City Hall, Parks and the Downtown area.
- They are investigating putting in a new generator for the Police Department and City Hall.
- They would like to eventually add a Reserve Officer Program.

NEW BUSINESS:

A.) BLACKFORD COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

- 1.) **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT:** Mayor Eckstein stated that Hartford City did not fund the Blackford Economic Development Corporation at all in 2020. He stated that there is \$4,500 in the EDIT line item for Hartford City Community Development. Mayor Eckstein asked Council to consider paying that to BEDC to show our appreciation for what Blackford County Economic Director, Warren Brown has brought to the table. There was discussion among the council members and they are aware of all the good things that Mr. Brown has done for Hartford City and Blackford County. They agreed to pay the \$4,500 with the caveat that it go directly towards Mr.

Brown's salary. The Mayor agreed to take this information to the BEDC Board and let them know.

Mr. Brown encouraged the City Council to consider signing the agreement regardless of the payment. He felt it is important that he has a signed agreement by the council to show that he does represent Hartford City. He has been sending the Mayor and the Council monthly updates and will continue to keep them apprised of everything that is going on in the city and the county. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to accept the agreement. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

2.) AEP BUILDING DONATION TO BE USED AS A SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER:

Mr. Brown stated that he had a meeting with AEP in February 2020 about the AEP building located on Mill Street in Hartford City be donated to the city as a Senior Citizen's Center. He would like to formalize the City Council's intent to take on this building. The building does seem to be very sound structurally. There are facts that are not known such as how much it would cost to run the electricity in that building. AEP does not meter the buildings they occupy, so there is no way of knowing how much it would cost. If Hartford City does not want this building, then AEP plans on demolishing it. The case was made by Deb, Senior Citizen's Director that the senior citizens really need and depend on this facility for meals and social interaction. There are also aspirations to provide Telehealth services for our seniors, in the future. Our Police Department utilizes the back half of the building for a training center/conference center. There is a garage to store vehicles, wash vehicles, etc. There is a fenced in area that would work perfectly as an impound lot. The Senior Citizen's Center is a 501c3 and their principal funding organization is Blackford County. They do have \$12,000 budgeted for rent and expenditures if it would come to that. Mr. Brown stated that he will go back to AEP, with council direction, and ask them to continue paying for the electric. He stated that AEP has a foundation that is dedicated to doing good in the communities they serve. Mr. Dudelston made a motion for Warren Brown to move forward in talks with AEP about the donation of this building. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The motion to move forward passed 5-0.

B.) FIRE DEPARTMENT – ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF'S PAY: Mayor Eckstein stated that he noticed that there is a large discrepancy between the annual pay for the Assistant Fire Chief and the Assistant Police Chief. He stated he felt that since both of these positions are first responder positions and carry a lot of responsibility and risk with them, that both positions should make equal amounts of money or at least start working towards closing that gap. It was stated that being a fireman short, currently there are funds available to pro-rate that increase in the 2020 budget year and then budgeting appropriately in the years going forward. Mayor Eckstein stated that we would re-visit other departments in the normal budget process. Attorney Murphy asked the council if they would vote to give him direction to draft a salary amendment ordinance to bring back to the October City Council meeting. Mr. Lytle made a motion to give Attorney Murphy that direction. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

C.) WATER DEPARTMENT – CREATE A WATER IMPROVEMENT LINE ITEM IN BUDGET: Clerk-Treasurer Whatley along with Water Superintendent Bacon requested that council would approve the creation of a Water Improvement Line Item in the budget. The plan is to make a transfer of anything over \$110,000 in the Water Operating Line Item and put it in the new Water Improvement Line Item. This will give the Water Department the capability of saving money for future expenditures without incurring additional debt. Mr. Dudelston made the motion to approve. Mr. Scaggs seconded the motion. The vote was approved 5-0.

D.) COUNCIL DISCUSSION – NO PARKING ZONES FRANKLIN ST. AND JEFFERSON ST. ADJACENT TO NATURE PLAY AREA: Mr. George explained that The Hartford City Urban Forest Greenscape Commission is now the project manager for the Nature Play area at the Hartford City Public Library. Mr. George would like the council to consider making no parking zones on the north side of Franklin Street between High Street & Jefferson St. and the west side of Jefferson Street between Franklin Street & Kickapoo Street. He stated that the design allows for soft borders that will prohibit children from running out in front of oncoming traffic. He also shared some exciting things coming to the Nature Play Area with raised gardening beds being planted by the Purdue Extension Office. This will also add to the interactive learning the children can participate in. Mr. George asked the council members to drive by the Nature Play Area and take a look at it and give him feedback. The council will address this topic at their October meeting.

E.) HARTFORD CITY UTILITIES – PAYMENT AGREEMENT FOR PAST DUE UTILITY BILLS RELATED TO COVID-19: Clerk-Treasurer Whatley presented a form that she had found on the ILMCT (Indiana League of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers) regarding payment of past due utility bills. She fashioned it to reflect the City of Hartford City and shared it with Attorney, Brandon Murphy for his review. Upon his approval, she presented it to the council for their blessing. Mr. Scaggs made a motion to utilize this form as a payment agreement with our utility customers who desired to use it. Mr. George seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

F.) WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT

1.) PURCHASE OF DUMP TRUCK: Wastewater Department Supervisor Williamson stated that the 1994 dump truck that the Wastewater Treatment Plant is currently using had come to the end of its life expectancy. He has narrowed it down to 3 quotes to purchase a new dump truck. After obtaining opinions from his heavy equipment operators, he came to the council with the recommendation of going with the quote from Selking International for the International brand of dump truck for the cost of \$91,480. Mr. Williamson shared that the hauling his department does is either really busy or sometimes more sparing. He does have a future plan to haul some of their sludge drying to an offsite dump rather than paying a company to transport all of their loads. This could potentially save \$400 per month. He has a Lease/Purchase Line Item that no longer has any payments coming out of it. It currently has \$68,000 budgeted. He would like to seek financing for approximately \$30,000 for 3 years. Mr. George made the motion to approve spending over \$5,000 on the International dump truck. Mr. Dudelston seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

2.) IWORQ – MAINTENANCE SOFTWARE: Mr. Williamson stated that he is just in the exploratory phase of looking into a software program that tracks and logs the maintenance on his department's equipment. He told them that this is just an FYI report and he asked them to come out to visit the Wastewater Treatment Plant to see what they are doing and give him input. This is something that he would like to implement in early 2021 if possible.

G.) HARTFORD CITY FIBER PROJECT – INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE TO INTERCONNECT AEP I&M ASSETS AND SUBSTATION: Mr. Dudelston said that AEP needs to run Fiber Optic cable from behind the building on Mill Street to the substation. They are going to run this aerially. They need to get this project done ASAP. They are seeking approval from Council to move forward. Mr. Dudelston made a motion to approve AEP's request. Mr. Lytle seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

H.) INTERSECTION OF HIGH STREET & KICKAPOO STREET – PARKING AND VISIBILITY: Mr. Wolfe was contacted by a citizen about the visibility problem at this intersection when traveling west bound on Kickapoo Street. After some discussion, it was thought best if there is a 4-way stop put at this intersection. Attorney Murphy asked council for permission to draft an ordinance for a 4-way stop and bring it back at the October council meeting. Mr. Scaggs made a motion for Attorney Murphy to draft this ordinance. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. The vote to approve was 5-0.

I.) INTRODUCE ORDINANCE 2020-05, AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: Mr. Lytle made a motion to approve the first reading and bring this ordinance back in the October meeting for ratification. Mr. George seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

MAYORS REPORT:

A.) Mayor Eckstein told the council that the Board of Public Works and Safety approved the contract with AME Consulting. Mr. Eric Woodmansee will be working with The Water Department and The Street Department on upcoming projects.

B.) Mayor Eckstein introduced Nick Parrott to the council and audience. Mr. Parrott is the new Fire Chief for Hartford City.

C.) Park Board – New Building: Park Superintendent, B. Maddox told the council that they have the contracts ready to go to construct the new Parks building. The cost will be \$94,414 for this building. He was asking for the council's blessing to spend more than \$5,000 for this building. He was instructed that he will need to take these contracts to the Board of Works meeting on September 21, 2020. Mr. Lytle made a motion to approve the expenditure of over \$5,000 to construct the building for the Parks Department pending the approval of the Board of Works. Mr. George seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

CLERK-TREASURER'S REPORT: Clerk-Treasurer Whatley announced that we will have a public hearing for the 2021 proposed budget on Monday, September 21, 2020 at 6:00pm at City Hall.

COUNCIL COMMENT:

A.) Mr. George stated that he's been approached by his constituent about a parking problem on Main Street between Jefferson Street and Monroe Street. The specific issue is the parking in front of Granny's Bloomers and Amazing Glaze bakery. The complaint is that when cars are parked in the parallel spots in front of the bakery then larger vehicles parked in front of Granny's Bloomers cannot back out safely. He requested that the council members drive by and take a look at this. He would like to have discussion on this topic at the October meeting.

B.) Mr. Scaggs asked Clerk-Treasurer Whatley if she had received any communication from Pam Bonham at the Blackford County Animal Shelter. Ms. Whatley stated that she had received an email and a claim requesting the first ½ of what the Animal Shelter assumed Hartford City is budgeting for 2021. Ms. Bonham stated in that email, that the Animal Shelter is in an emergency situation and was requesting \$19,094.40 no later than September 8, 2020. Ms. Whatley said that she looked back at the 2020 budget and the previous Clerk-Treasurer had paid the Animal Shelter the first ½ of 2020's budgeted amount of \$19,094.40 on October 18, 2019 and paid the second ½ of 2020's budgeted amount of \$19,094.40 on December 10, 2019. Ms. Whatley responded to Ms. Bonham's email and stated that the 2021 budget hasn't even been adopted yet and that Ms.

Whatley didn't feel it was in best practices to pay 2021 budgeted monies in 2020. Ms. Whatley stated in her email that after January 1, 2021 that she'd be happy to cut the Animal Shelter a check for their budgeted money. Ms. Whatley explained to the council that she didn't feel comfortable paying money in the year prior to the budgeted year. Attorney Murphy stated that we should not pay out 2021 budgeted monies in 2020. He said that the Animal Shelter can come to City Council and ask for additional money for 2020 if it is needed and the council can decide if it is appropriate to allocate more funds. Mr. Lytle said that he recalled that the previous Clerk-Treasurer came before council last year when the 2020 funds were mistakenly paid in 2019 and the council made a good faith approval after the fact. Mr. Warren Brown made a comment that an auto renewable contract exists between the municipalities and the Animal Shelter. Ms. Whatley stated that she hasn't found a copy of this contract and asked if she could obtain a copy of it. Mayor Eckstein asked if the Animal Shelter ever supplies a copy of their financial statement for the City Council to review. Ms. Whatley stated that she would reach out to Ms. Bonham and request a copy of it.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further business, Mayor Eckstein asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wolfe made that motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm