

WANATAH TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
October 5th, 2023
6:30 pm

PRESENT: Councilman LaFoone, Councilman Cook, President Newburn, Vice President Mayo, Clerk/Treasurer Ebert & Attorney Shoffner.

ABSENT: Councilman Oehmen

GUESTS: Chuck Mack, Chuck Jonas, Brady Jonas, Cade Smith, Andrew Robarge, Gabrielle Biciunas from Commonwealth and Jeff Rough from Bakertilly.

Call To Order:

- President Newburn called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was held.

Roll Call:

- Councilman LaFoone-Here, Councilman Cook-Here, President Newburn –Here, Councilman Oehmen - Absent, Vice President Mayo-Here, A quorum is present.

Appointments Needed

- None

Correspondence

- None

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- Motion by Councilman Mayo; Second by Councilman Cook to approve the minutes of the Public Hearing on September 7th, 2023. Vote was taken. All Ayes. Minutes were approved as presented.
- Motion by Councilman Mayo; Second by Councilman Cook to approve the minutes of the Public Hearing on September 7th, 2023 Regular Meeting. Vote was taken. All Ayes. Minutes were approved as presented.

Officer's Reports

- Plan Commission – Chuck Mack reported in Nathan Howell's absence about wanting the Council's approval to hire an engineer to approve Casey's updated drawings. Discussion was had and they don't feel that the town should be responsible for that debt. However they would approve it as long as a contractual agreement was provided that Casey's would reimburse the town for the cost of that engineer.
- BZA – No Report
- Traffic Commission – No Report
- Park Board – President Newburn reported that they will meet in October.
- Animal Control – No Report.
- Building Commissioner – Councilman Mayo reported 3 Contractor Registrations for \$225.00, 2 Accessory Buildings for \$90.00, 2 Decks for \$60.00 total amount is \$375.00.

Clerk's Office Reports

- Personnel Committee – No Report
- Facilities Coordinator – No Report
- NIRPC – No Report

- Other-Clerk Treasurer Ebert confirmed with the Council that Halloween still be on October 31st, from 5-7 PM? They did approve that date and time.
 - She also reported that the renewal for our Keystone licenses were paid in the amount of \$9,815.00 (increased by \$805.00 from last year).
- Clerk Treasurer Ebert reported that she was invited, along with the Town Council, to the 2023 Ethics Summit. The date is October 24th, 2023 at 8AM at the Avalon in Merrillville. She was told by Dr. Dale Combs, member of the ethics board, that as of now, there is no representation for the Town of Wanatah. Councilman LaFoone showed interest in attending.

Public Works

- Commonwealth- Discussion was held by Andrew Robarge and Gabrielle Biciunas from Commonwealth, as well as Jeffery Rough from Bakertilly to give us an update on the funding for the Wastewater project. Here are some of their ideas.
 - Andrew stated that they need to finalize the alternative plan before funds can be submitted for funding considerations.
 - File with the IFA (Indiana Finance Authority) SRF with subsidized funds- typically a 20-year loan which is typically the best option for this project because they have additional funding.
 - Need an Asset Management Program before we can pursue funding
 - PER Form is already established (just need a few more adjustments)
 - Gabrielle is going to be attending the Ready 2.0 meeting to better understand this process.
 - Jeffery Rough discussed a possibility to get a Bond where the interest rates would be comparable to what the town would normally get.
 - Going to need to increase our water/sewer rates for this project.
 - Lastly to try and file for an OCRA grant dollars, but would need to hire a grant writer.
 - Asked us to reach out to LaPorte County to see if they would be willing to share some of their American Relief Plan dollars to us for this issue.
 - That he would try to get a proposal for the town for a 20-year plan
 - Andrew closed the conversation by stating that we need to decide to pick a plan that would be the final recommendation. We would also need to get an Asset Management Program. Probably would be a 3-4 month process. Could take a trip to look at other facilities. Will work with Chuck moving forward.

New Business

- None

Unfinished Business

- Motion by Councilman Mayo; Second by Councilman Cook to adopt Ordinance 03-2023 Budget for 2024. Roll call was taken, all ayes.

Financial Report and Claims Approval

- Motion by Councilman Mayo Second by Councilman LaFoone to approve the claims as presented. Vote was taken. All Ayes. Councilman Cook abstained.

Any Other Business to come before the Council

- Attorney Shoffner brought to the Councils attention that he looked into the "Storage Container" issue from the Firework store, from our previous council meeting and said that it is interpreted that it is an accessory building and that it would be allowed on either a commercial and or residential property. If the Town wanted to challenge this, then we

- would have to pay for the State survey. Council would like to update the residential portion of this Ordinance. He also stated that the Ordinance we have regarding grass and rank weed is too lenient. That he would work with Natalie on updating this and present it at the next Council meeting.

Public Comment

- Cade Smith, resident of Wanatah, came before the Council seeking reimbursement for his tire wheel that was damaged while driving on an unpaved road, northbound on 1050, next to JMAR fueling station. That reimbursement amount would total \$711.24. He also claims that that there was no signage to support that construction. Discussion was held and Cade Smith was told by the Council that his situation was being turned over to Reith-Riley since they were the ones that were doing that construction. That they were responsible for any damages and he should be hearing from them moving forward.

Adjournment

President Newburn asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Councilman Mayo; Second by Councilman Cook. A vote was taken.

All Ayes.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM

ATTEST:



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Denise Ebert". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Denise Ebert
Clerk-Treasurer