

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Study Session/Meeting Convened Electronically
Twenty-Ninth Town Council of Highland
Monday, February 01, 2021**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met *electronically* in a study session on **Monday, February 01, 2021** at 6:30 O'clock P.M., in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.*

**Special note:* This meeting was convened allowing members of the Town Council to participate electronically without being physically present, to be counted in the quorum and able to simultaneously listen and respond to matters taken up in the meeting, all pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Orders 20-04 and 20-09, extended by Executive Order No. 21-03 allowing meetings to be convened pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 for the duration of the Corona Virus COVID 19 emergency. All members of the Town Council participated electronically with the Clerk-Treasurer participating as well. The electronic platform also allowed the public to observe and participate from on-line access.

The meeting was streamed live on the Town of Highland, Indiana Facebook page and participation was supported by the Zoom on-line communication platform.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Bernie Zemen, Mark Herak, Mark J. Schocke, Tom Black and Roger Sheeman were present (electronically) as indicated. The Clerk-Treasurer, Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings (electronically). A quorum was attained.

Officials Present: John P. Reed, Town Attorney was also present, participating electronically.

Additional Officials Present Richard Underkofler of the Tree Board; Larry Kondrat of the Board of Waterworks Directors; and Ed Dabrowski, IT Consultant (Contract) and Board of Waterworks Directors, (electronically) were present.

Guests: Theresa Badovich and Robin Carlascio of the Idea Factory were also present (electronically).

General Substance of Matters Discussed.

- 1. Discussion:** *Discuss request to reimburse workers who on their own paid for a COVID rapid test.* This is associated with Introduced **Enactment No. 2021-04:** An Enactment To Permit one time reimbursements for certain health expenses, notwithstanding the Compensation, Benefits And Personnel Program Of The Municipality, To Be Known As The Compensation And Benefits Ordinance Commonly Known as the Employees Handbook. *(The reimbursement is taxable.)* The Clerk-Treasurer reviewed for the Town Council the situation before it: Three workers feeling as if they may be symptomatic with COVID virus, elected to obtain rapid test from the nearby MD Urgent Care, 9636 Cline Avenue, Highland. Test results were rendered in 15 minutes. However, the test had a published efficacy of 70-78% effective. Further, in addition to supplying insurance information to support the cost of the test, employees were required to pay a copay, of \$75 for non-public safety worker and \$60 for public safety workers.

At the Town Council plenary meeting of Monday, January 25, the Town Council considered Enactment No. 2021-04 to allow reimbursement to the workers for this

copy. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that any reimbursement authorized by the enactment would be subject to tax.

The Clerk-Treasurer stated that this reimbursement is a taxable fringe benefit and not on the list of exemptions. He further reported that he reviewed whether the reimbursement would trigger a need to have established a Health Reimbursement Account as part of the group health plan. The Clerk-Treasurer stated that he believed that it would not require such a plan nor create an issue regarding such plans.

The Town Council discussed the several instances in which workers or others had obtained COVID tests that did not require additional out of pocket costs. It was noted that there were examples of such testing. It was further noted that in some cases the results could be obtained in 24 hours or less. The Town Council engaged in an extended colloquy regarding whether rapid testing or tests that require any out of pocket should be entertained in the future.

The President indicated that the Enactment 2021-04 could be placed in the agenda for the meeting of February 8, 2021.

2. **Discussion:** *Continue to discuss the use of the reimbursement from CARES ACT and alternative uses.*
 - (a) \$ 11,725.72 CDBG Funded through Lake County CDD.
 - (b) \$ 726,156.00 CARES ACT IFA money.

The Clerk-Treasurer reported that the CDBG money was all based upon expenses for PPE and other COVID 19 related expenses. So this funding could be transferred to the Corporation General Fund and reappropriated to the Police Department of that fund. At a previous study session of 01.18.2021, this was suggested to be an acceptable approach without objection.

The Clerk-Treasurer also reviewed with the Town Council the following preliminary reports of PPE and COVID related expenses that were gathered from the several departments.

Parks and Recreation Department:	\$ 12,766.00
Public Works & CT Office:	\$ 5,453.31
Public Safety LIT paid expenses	<u>\$ 50,060.74</u>
	\$ 68,280.05

It was further noted that there was an informal understanding that \$250,000 would be coupled with another locals resource to support a local match of \$500,000 to support an application for Community Crossings Grant funds.

The Town Council noted that there could be possibly as much as \$407,875.95 that could be reprogrammed. The Town Council discussed the possibility of depositing this with the Rainy day Fund or using it if possible to perhaps pay some debt.

The Town Council President stated that he would communicate with department heads and seek input from them regarding possible uses.

3. **Discussion:** *Appointments – times to interview remaining prospective applicants.* Council President Sheeman and the Town Council discussed the desirability of conducting further interviews of the remaining prospective applicants. It was

noted that applications can continue to arrive. The Town Council President suggested that he would indicate that only applications received no later than Friday, February 5 would be considered for appointments or interviews for this year.

Informally, the Town Council seemed open to authorizing a special meeting for interviews for Friday, February 12 perhaps at 5:00 p.m. There was no objection.

- 4. Discussion:** *Discuss process of moving forward on hiring of a Town Manager.* Council President Sheeman and the Town Council discussed the next steps that would be necessary or desirable if the Town Council desired to appoint a Town Manager.

It was noted that if the Town Council was ready, it use an online human resource recruiting platform such as INDEED or engage with a firm that does that kind recruiting such as HRGovUSA. It could further advertise in Aim or locally somehow. Before any appointment would be made, the Town Council would need to pass and adopt an ordinance to establish the office. It was noted that the Town of Highland had adopted such an ordinance in February 2005. It was later repealed to abolish the office December 10, 2007.

The Town Council discussed whether it was ready for the next steps. The discussion included exploring what duties and tasks such a position would be assigned. The discussion included whether or not there would be consolidation or elimination of any existing positions assigning those responsibilities to the position of Town Manager. The discussion noted that the Indiana statute providing for the office of Town manager was included in the packet and listed the express duties of the office. It was noted that perhaps such other tasks be added.

The discussion included whether some other position such as administrative assistant might be preferable. Councilor Schocke noted that he would have valued someone who could compose correspondence for him during his time as Town Council President to response to resident inquiries.

The Town Council discussed the desirability of soliciting the job descriptions or enabling ordinances for the position of Town Manager from neighboring towns.

- 5. Discussion ad hoc.** *Councilor Zemen noted that he is often contacted by residents who owing to their advanced age or other health challenge are not able to attend to snow removal.* Councilor Zemen asked if there were any volunteers that anyone was aware of to assist with this. Councilor Zemen asked perhaps an inquiry could be placed in the Gazebo Express, the monthly newsletter of the Town.

Also all members of the Town Council praised the public works staff and its work in clearing the streets from snow during the recent weekend.

There being no further business necessary or desired to be discussed by the Town Council, the *electronically convened* regular study session of the Town Council of **Monday, February 01, 2021**, was adjourned by the Town Council President, at 7:29 O'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO
Clerk-Treasurer