

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting  
Study Session/Meeting Convened Electronically  
Twenty-Ninth Town Council of Highland  
Monday, February 15, 2021**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met *electronically* in a study session on **Monday, February 15, 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; Pete Hojnicky, Police Chief; and Mark Knesek, Public Works Director were also present, participating electronically.

*Additional Officials Present* Ed Dabrowski, IT Consultant (Contract) and Board of Waterworks Directors, (electronically); Robin Radford of the Redevelopment Commission were present.

*Guests:* Theresa Badovich of the Idea Factory was also present (electronically).

**General Substance of Matters Discussed.**

**1. Discussion:** *Continue to discuss the use of the reimbursement from CARES ACT*

The Town Council was briefed on the following resources, deposited into administratively created funds as "staging" funds, pursuant to the guidance from the State Examiner for these reimbursed proceeds.

- (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. The Clerk-Treasurer reminded all that at the study session of 01.18.2021, this was suggested to be an acceptable approach without objection.

The full amount of \$11,725.72 once transferred to the Corporation General Fund would be allowed to be appropriated to the accounts in the Police Department of the fund. The Clerk-Treasurer further suggested that he desired to have these

additional appropriations that would be emanating from all these proceeds to be advertised as part of a single public hearing.

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.

<b>Parks and Recreation Department:</b>	<b>\$ 12,766.00</b>
<b>Public Works &amp; CT Office:</b>	<b>\$ 5,453.31</b>
<b>Public Safety LIT paid expenses</b>	<b><u>\$ 47,320.01</u></b>
	<b>\$ 65,539.40</b>

It was further noted that there was an informal understanding that \$250,000 would be coupled with another local 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 \$410,616.50 that could be reprogrammed.

The Town Council reviewed the lists of capital initiatives of the Police Department and discussed them with the Police Chief. The items' cost totaled \$214,046.00 excluding future operating costs such as future annual SWAT membership (\$4,000) and other annual user fees identified as \$10,000. It was further noted that in the enrolled budget bill in the Indiana House for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, is a provision to provide grants to support body cameras for first time purchasers. It would be monitored to see what remains when the legislature adjourns.

The Clerk-Treasurer also noted that he had obtained a proposal for a modular safety upgrade to the desks and workstations in the Town Hall that would provide greater protection totaling \$17,300.

The Town Council also discussed the list of needs submitted by the Fire Department. It totaled \$167,140.

Finally, the Town Council discussed the Public Works Agency's hope to obtain two electronic message boards that would have utility for many municipal purposes. The cost estimate was \$17,000 each for a total of \$34,000.

- 2. Discussion:** *Review the Status of Appointments.* Council President Sheeman and the Town Council reviewed the list of appointments due and pending. The Board reviewed the incumbent candidate as well as considered the candidates recently interviewed. The positions subject to executive appointment and those subject to legislative appointment were all reviewed and discussed.

The Town Council discussed the element of diversity as a part of the appointing authorities' consideration in making appointments.

In some cases the attendance of members seeking reappointment was discussed. The discussion included the status of the current Main Street Bureau board of directors and the need to recruit and rebuild its membership if possible. It was noted that this was underway.

- 3. 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.

The Town Council discussed the report relayed by the Town Council President based upon his recent meetings with the Town Manager of the Town of Schererville and the Town Manager of the Town of Dyer. He further reported his discussion with the Town's department leadership regarding their regard for the idea of establishing the office and hiring a Town Manager. It was noted that the idea was received without rancor.

The Town Council discussed whether it was ready for the next steps again. The discussion included exploring what duties and tasks such a position would be assigned. The discussion included concerns about the salaries presented in a separate report from the Town Council President, from a survey of the information available on the Indiana Gateway Portal.

The Town Council discussed the administrative merits of such a position. The discussion included concern whether the people of the town believed that to create such a position would suggest a delegation by the Town Council of duties it should perform.

4. **Discussion:** *Ad Hoc Matter of Recent Contact regarding the site of the former Ultra Foods Super Grocery.* The Town Council discussed a communication from a resident regarding a communication that the resident reported the resident had with owners of the Ultra Property (Former Ultra Super Grocery Store, now vacant, at the site 8401 Indianapolis Boulevard). It was noted that the resident reported that posing as a developer cost of purchase prices were obtained and that it could be worth using redevelopment resources to assemble the property for future development. The Town Council President indicated that he would ask the Redevelopment Director to contact the owners and provide some added information.

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 15, 2021**, was adjourned by the Town Council President, at 8:17 O'clock p.m.

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