

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Study Session/Meeting (Convened Electronically/Hybrid)
Twenty-Ninth Town Council of Highland
Monday, November 28, 2022**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a study session on **Monday, November 28, 2022**, at 6:30 O'clock P.M., in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.

*This meeting was convened as both an in person and an electronic meeting. Some persons were participating remotely on a Zoom platform that allowed for real time interaction between and among all of the Town Council and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings. People were able to participate in person and remotely, allowing for all councilors to be simultaneously seen and heard. When the agenda item provided for public comment, this was supported as well. Councilor Toya Smith, Councilor Mark Schocke, Councilor Tom Black, Councilor Roger Sheeman, Councilor Zemen all participated in person.

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, Toya Smith, Mark Schocke, Tom Black, Roger Sheeman, were present in person as indicated. The Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak was present to memorialize the proceedings. *A quorum was attained.*

Officials Present: Pete Hojnicky, Metropolitan Police Chief, Ed Dabrowski, IT Director were in person.

This meeting contributes to Agenda building for the plenary meeting. Please, also be aware of the running enrolled list of matters that are likely for the plenary meeting, subject to review by the municipal executive. By practice and local ordinance, study sessions are distinguished from plenary (regular business) meetings of the Town Council "as they shall be conducted with less formality and with no votes or final actions of a dispositive nature unless provided otherwise by proper notice, pursuant to IC [5-14-1.5](#) et seq." (Confer HMC Section 2.05.130(3))

General Substance of Matters Discussed.

- x. **DISCUSSION: WORKS BOARD ORDER NO. 2022-39: AN ORDER AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING AN EXTENSION OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE IDEA FACTORY AND THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND TO PERFORM PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY FOR A TERM OF ONE MONTH, WITH AN OPTION TO RENEW AND EXTEND.**

THE CLERK-TREASURER MADE THE COUNCIL AWARE THAT THE AGREEMENT WITH THE IDEA FACTORY EXPIRES ON DECEMBER 31ST OF THIS YEAR. NOT KNOWING WHAT THE COUNCIL WANTED TO DO. THE CLERK-TREASURER PREPARED A MONTH EXTENSION TO GIVE THE COUNCIL TIME TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANTED TO DO IF THEY DIDN'T ALREADY HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE.

COUNCILOR SCHOCKE ASKED IF THERE WAS A PROVISION IN THE CONTRACT THAT ALLOWS TERMINATION OR CANCELLING BY EITHER BY GIVING THE OTHER PARTY A 30 DAY NOTICE. THAT WAS ANSWERED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE.

THERE WAS DIRECTION GIVEN SO THE TOPIC WILL BE ON THE DECEMBER 5, 2022 STUDY SESSION.

X. DISCUSSION: PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 1772: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 12 OF THE HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER WORKS BY AMENDING SECTION §12.05.120 (B) REGARDING RATES AND CHARGES, ALL PURSUANT TO I.C. 36-1-4, IC 36-1-5, IC 8-1.5-3-8.1 AND IC 8-1.5-4 ET SEQUITUR. (CANNOT BE ACTED UPON BEFORE A PUBLIC HEARING)

WATERWORKS BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOMMENDS TO THE TOWN COUNCIL THESE REASONABLE, JUST, NON-DISCRIMINATORY AND REDESIGNED RATES AND CHARGES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE WATER UTILITY. AT ITS MEETING OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2022, THE BOARD APPROVED THESE RATES AND CHARGES CONTAINED IN THE ORDINANCE AS PROPOSED. THESE WERE DETERMINED FOLLOWING A RATE AND COST OF SERVICE STUDY. THE LAST GENERAL RATE INCREASE WAS APPROVED NOVEMBER 1990.

THE CLERK-TREASURER ADVISED THAT THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS SCHEDULED FOR THE 12TH OF DECEMBER. THE COUNCIL COULD EITHER VOTE UP ON THE ORDINANCE OR VOTE IT DOWN OR MODIFY THE ORDINANCE. THE ORDINANCE CONTAINS THE HIGHEST RATE SUGGESTED BY THE WATER BOARD.

COUNCILOR SCHOCKE AND ATTORNEY REED ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION ON THE CONSUMPTION CHARGE. IS THE CONSUMPTION CHARGE INCLUSIVE OF THE TRACKER OR DOES THE TRACKER HAVE TO BE ADDED ON TOP OF THE CONSUMPTION CHARGE. THE CLERK-TREASURER EXPLAINED THAT TRACKER IS A PASS THROUGH FROM HAMMOND AND IS INCLUSIVE IN THE CONSUMPTION CHARGE. IT IS ALREADY BUILT INTO THE FINAL CHARGE BUT IS BROKEN OUT IN THE EXHIBIT TO SHOW THE RATE IS MADE UP OF 2 COMPONENTS.

WITHOUT MAKING A FORMAL DECISION, THE CONSENSUS OF THE COUNCIL WAS TO PROCEED WITH ORDINANCE 1772 AS PRESENTED.

X. Discussion: IC 36-5-2-4.1 (g)(1), provides that the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Indiana is required in 2022 to perform a reapportionment of its legislative districts, based upon the 2020 Census, but provides that the division of the legislative districts may be made in any other year;

Two maps were presented to Council by Nies Engineering. The Council was reminded that redistricting must be completed and submitted to the County Election Board by December 31st. Introduction of Ordinance 1773 is scheduled for the Council's December 12th plenary meeting. In order to prepare the Ordinance, the Council needs to determine which map should be incorporated into the Ordinance. The Council is not bound by this selection.

Councilor Sheeman began by stating he felt map 2 was more contiguous by shrinking the overall footprint of 3 of the 5 wards. He felt it would be a better option. All the wards comply with redistricting guidelines of no more of a difference than 10% between wards or districts.

Councilor Black agreed with Councilor Sheeman as he felt map 2 was more desirable from his perspective. He said the current map has his ward snaking all the way the Hammond line or Little Cal to the Griffith line. The second map appears more concentrated which makes sense instead of the current configuration.

Councilor Schocke said he always felt the current ward map was weird and he too liked map 2 as it was most logical. The only real difference between maps 1 and 2 is that the population between wards 3 and 4 are changed a little bit. Wards 1,2 and 5 stay basically the same.

Without making a decision, the consensus of the Council was to have the Clerk-Treasurer prepare Ordinance using map 2 as submitted by Nies Engineering.

x. Discussion: Works Board No. 2022-37: AN ORDER for the TEMPORARY CLOSING OF MUNICIPAL OFFICES at the MUNICIPAL BUILDING 3333 RIDGE ROAD on FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2022 FOR YEAR-END FISCAL AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION TASKS

COUNCILOR SHEEMAN ASKED WHAT DAYS THE TOWN HALL WOULD BE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY. HE WAS ADVISED THE 23RD AND 26TH OF DECEMBER. THE COUNCIL WAS ADVISED THAT THE LAST BUSINESS MEETING OF THE YEAR IS SCHEDULED FOR THE 26TH DAY OF DECEMBER. THE COUNCIL WOULD BE MEETING EVEN THOUGH THE TOWN HALL WAS CLOSED. MANY OF THE COUNCILORS DIDN'T WANT TO MEET THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS AND WERE INCLINED TO MOVE THE DATE PENDING ROOM AVAILABILITY AND WHAT OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS WERE THE WEEK BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S.

WITHOUT MAKING A DECISION, THE GENERAL CONSENSUS OF THE COUNCIL WAS FOR THE CLERK-TREASURER TO PLACE WORKS BOARD NO. 202-37 ON THE COUNCIL'S DECEMBER 12TH PLENARY MEETING AGENDA.

x. Discussion: Ordinance 1774: AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE WAGE AND SALARY RATES OF THE ELECTED OFFICERS, THE NON-ELECTED OFFICERS, AND THE EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND, INDIANA.

THE CLERK-TREASURER SAID ORDINANCE 1774 WILL BE READY FOR INTRODUCTION AT THE COUNCIL'S DECEMBER 12TH, PLENARY MEETING. THERE IS SOME DISAGREEMENT ON THE PART-TIME RAISES AMONGST DEPARTMENT HEADS. THOSE WITH A FEW PART-TIME SLOTS PREFER THE 4% INCREASE BUT WITH THE PARK DEPARTMENT WHICH THE MOST PART-TIME EMPLOYEES, THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS, ALEX BROWN, WOULD LIKE THE CLAUSE REFERENCING THE DISCRETION OF THE DEPARTMENT HEAD TO INCREASE A PART-TIME WAGE BY 0.35.

COUNCILOR SHEEMAN ASKED IF LONGEVITY WAS PAID IN 1 LUMP SUM LIKE SOME COMMUNITIES. HE WAS ADVISED IT WASN'T BUT PAID AS PART OF THE EMPLOYEES MONTHLY WAGE. HE THEN BROUGHT UP ABOUT THE FIREFIGHTERS HOURLY RATE. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CHIEF TIMMER, HIGHLAND'S FIREFIGHTERS ARE PAID AN HOURLY RATE OF \$17.50 PER HOURS VERSUS THE FIREFIGHTERS FROM MUNSTER WHO ARE PAID \$18.00 PER HOUR. HE ALSO ASKED ABOUT WHERE THE TOWN STOOD WITH PAYING THE POLICE OFFICERS WHO WORK A HOLIDAY DOUBLE TIME. HE WAS ADVISED THAT WITH ALL OF THE OTHER CHANGES, OFFICERS GETTING TIME AND A HALF FOR HOURS WORKED OVER 40 HOURS, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CARS, REINSTATING THE DEPUTY COMMANDER POSITIONS, THE CHIEF THAT BE PULLED FROM CONSIDERATION. HE THEN SAID HE REALLY FEELS THAT THERE IS AN INEQUITY HERE AND WE REALLY NEED TO ADD A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SALARY REQUIREMENTS OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. I FEEL THERE IS AN INEQUITY HERE, ESPECIALLY COMPARING OUR FIREFIGHTERS RATE WITH THAT OF OUR NEIGHBOR TO THE WEST. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A DISCUSSION ON THAT TOPIC AT OUR NEXT STUDY SESSION. COUNCILOR SCHOCKE SAID WERE IN STUDY SESSION, LET'S DISCUSS IT. COUNCILOR SHEEMAN SAID HE WASN'T PREPARED TO DISCUSS IT AT THIS TIME AS HE DIDN'T HAVE ALL OF HIS NUMBERS HANDY.

THE CLERK-TREASURER SAID HE DID INCREASE THE QUARTERLY STIPEND OF THE OFFICERS BY 4% BUT DID NOT INCREASE THE FIREFIGHTERS AS THEY RECEIVED 2 RAISES IN THE CALENDAR YEAR 2022.

COUNCILOR SCHOCKE SAID HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN FAVOR WHAT WE CAN DO FOR OUR FIRST RESPONDERS. HE TOLD COUNCILOR SHEEMAN HE WANTED TO WORK WITH HIM ON THE REGARD. ONE OF THE THINGS HE NOTICED ABOUT MUNSTER'S POLICE AND FIRE IS A BUNCH OF BENEFITS THEY GET LIKE FREE OR DISCOUNTED MEMBERSHIPS AND ALL THIS STUFF WHICH RAISED THE QUESTION AGAIN WHY ARE FIREFIGHTERS CAN'T HAVE FREE GYM MEMBERSHIP OR AT LEAST A DISCOUNTED RATE? THESE FIREFIGHTERS ARE TO BE IN DECENT ENOUGH SHAPE TO GO INTO A BURNING BUILDING TO SAVE LIVES. MUNSTER POLICE AND FIRE GET BENEFITS LIKE GOLF AND A POOL MEMBERSHIP.

X. DISCUSSION: REGARDING THE WAYFINDING SIGNS.

COUNCILOR BLACK BEGAN BY TALKING ABOUT THE QR CODES ON THE WAYFINDING SIGNS AND ONE OF THE GOALS OF REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION IS TO INCORPORATE A LANDING PAGE WITH THE TIMES MEDIA PROPOSAL. THE REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION IS HOPING TO GET DIRECTION OR A DECISION FROM THE COUNCIL AS IF THE COUNCIL HAS ANY INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN THE TIMES MEDIA PROPOSAL. I KNOW WE ARE TALKING ABOUT IT NOW BUT I'M INCLINED TO THINK THAT MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE A WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE AND

SEE IF ANY OTHER COMMUNITIES WHO HAVE SIGNED UP WITH THE TIMES PROJECT, THEIR SUCCESS RATE BEFORE JUMPING ON BOARD.

COUNCILOR SHEEMAN SAID I NOT REALLY SURE SPENDING \$10,000 A YEAR IS GOING TO DRAW A LOT OF PEOPLE TO HIGHLAND. I'M MEAN WE HAVE A DOWNTOWN THAT IS VIABLE. WE HAVE RESTAURANTS AND BUSINESSES. I THINK THE NEWSPAPER IS TRYING SOMETHING GOOD BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, I THINK THEY'RE LOOKING TO MAKE SOME MONEY BECAUSE NEWSPAPERS ARE FAILING AND SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE OFF.

COUNCILOR SCHOCKE SAID HE WEIRDLY AGREES WITH COUNCILOR SHEEMAN AS I AM A NO FOR BOTH, INCLUDING THE WAYFINDING SIGNS. COUNCILOR SCHOCKE THEN PULLED OUT HIS CELL PHONE AND ASKED SIRI FOR A LIST OF RESTAURANTS IN DOWNTOWN HIGHLAND. WITHIN SECONDS HE HAD A LIST. HE THEN HIT MAPS AND HAD DIRECTIONS. HE SAID MOST RESIDENTS HAVE CELL PHONES AND CAN DO THE SAME THING HE JUST DID AND SO THERE IS NO NEED FOR WAYFINDING SIGNS.

COUNCILOR SHEEMAN SAID THAT THE SIGNS, LIKE THE LIGHTED SIGNS AT 5TH AND RIDGE OR KENNEDY AND HIGHWAY ADDS TO AMBIENCE TO THE DOWNTOWN, TO MAKE IT A NICE LITTLE AREA FOR THE PEOPLE. I THINK YOU WANT TO HAVE A MAP AT THE MAIN PARKING LOT WITH THE QR CODE SO VISITORS CAN SEE WHERE THEY ARE GOING. I WOULDN'T THINK YOU WOULD BE OPPOSED TO THAT COUNCILOR SCHOCKE. THE SIGN WOULD HAVE ALL THE LOCATIONS OF THE VARIOUS DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES ON IT, WITH ARROWS SHOWING VISITORS HOW TO GET THERE. THE SIGNS WOULD ADD CHARACTER TO THE DOWNTOWN.

COUNCILOR SCHOCKE AGAIN PULLED OUT HIS PHONE AND ASKED SIRI THE NAMES OF BUSINESSES LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN HIGHLAND. HE SAID ANOTHER CLICK AND I CAN GET A MAP ON HOW TO GET THERE. ANOTHER CLICK AND I CAN GET THE MENU. IF YOU WANT TO ENHANCE THE DOWNTOWN, I'M ALL IN FAVOR OF INCREASING THE LANDSCAPING BUDGET AND TAKING OUT SOME OF THE TREES ALONG JEWETT THAT ARE GROWING LIKE WEEDS.

COUNCILOR SHEEMAN ASKED THE REDEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR IF SHE HAD A PICTURE OF THE SIGNS. SHE DIDN'T SO COUNCILOR SHEEMAN ASKED HER TO SEND A PICTURE OF THE PROPOSED SIGNS TO THE COUNCIL.

GENERAL CONSENSUS WAS TO PUT THE WAYFINDING DISCUSSION ON THE DECEMBER 5TH STUDY SESSION AGENDA.

- **Plenary Business Meeting of Monday December 12, 2022 Likely matters**
- Minutes of the Meeting of Monday, November 28, 2022.
- Public Hearing – Additional appropriation for the Redevelopment Capital Fund

- Public Hearing – Ordinance 1772 – Water Rate Increase
 - Introduction of the Wage and Salary Ordinance
 - Introduction of the Redistricting Ordinance
 - Accounts payable vouchers Docket
 - Payroll Docket for the payday of December 2, 2022
- Discussion: Meeting with the Highland Neighbors for Sustainability .** Councilor Zemen asked that this be placed on the agenda.