

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF THE COMMON COUNCIL VALPARAISO, INDIANA

May 8, 2023

The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met on Monday May 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall. Mayor Murphy called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Present were Councilmembers Reed, Cotton, Schmidt, Pupillo, Peterson, and Costas. Councilmember Anderson was absent.

Presentation

Mayor's Youth Council Presentation

The members of the Youth Council did a presentation on their experiences on the Youth Council and what the Council is all about. Their final project is the Color Fun Run.

State of Ivy Tech Valparaiso – Chancellor Sikoski

This year is Ivy Tech's 60th Anniversary. They have been in Valparaiso since 1971. Their saying is "Higher Education at the Speed of Life". They have frozen tuition and provide free textbooks. In 2022 they had 81% graduate with no debt. Their goal is to remove barriers for students. They are awarding over 2,500 credits per year. They have enrollment of 10,000. Four out of five students graduate without any debt.

Councilmember Cotton – He thanked Ivy Tech for what they do in the community. Where does the advance placement credit apply?

Chancellor Sikoski – They have transfer agreements with Purdue and IU. They discuss with the High School when they are working on dual credits where they can maximize the benefit.

MINUTES

Councilmember Cotton – He discussed comments he made at the last meeting regarding Brian William's comments on guns and the students who walked out of VHS.

MOTION: Councilmember Schmidt moved to adopt minutes of the April 24, 2023 meeting.

Councilmember Pupillo seconded the motion. Upon voice vote the motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 16, 2023

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING FUNDS IN THE OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS AND PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION OF NOTICE

Councilmember Schmidt moved that Ordinance No. 16, 2023 be read a second time by title and a third time in full and be considered for adoption and the opportunity be given for the offering of amendments.

Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read the Ordinance.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor addressed the Council. Funds will be used for the Agreement with PACT for the CCRC. There will be \$6,500 appropriated for a Service Agreement with MJ Thomas and Associates. This is for any grants that might be available.

Public Hearing

Mayor Murphy announced Ordinance No. 16, 2023 requires a Public Hearing. He presented Proof of Publication that at tonight's meeting the Council will hear comments and questions regarding the appropriation of money in the Opioid Settlement Funds.

Seeing no one wishing to address the Council, Mayor Murphy declared the Public Hearing closed.

Councilmember Cotton – He doesn't remember the \$6,500 being discussed.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor – This is an addition she made and added to the Agenda. She went through the 10 day Publication Notice for a Public Hearing.

Councilmember Cotton – So the person to be used was handled exclusively by you?

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor – The Board of Works made this decision.

MOTION: Councilmember Schmidt moved to adopt Ordinance No. 16, 2023. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 6-0 roll call vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 17, 2023

AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING THE CURRENT REFUNDING BY THE CITY OF VALPARAISO, INDIANA, OF ITS WATERWORKS REVENUE BONDS, SERIES 2014A AND WATERWORKS REVENUE BONDS, SERIES 2014B; AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF WATERWORKS REFUNDING REVENUE BONDS FOR SUCH PURPOSE; PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION, SEGREGATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE REVENUES OF THE WATERWORKS AND THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTERESTS OF THE OWNERS OF SAID WATERWORKS REFUNDING REVENUE BONDS; OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH; AND REPEALING ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT HEREWITH

Councilmember Schmidt moved that Ordinance No. 17, 2023 be read a first time and considered on first reading. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read Ordinance No. 17, 2023.

Steve Poulos addressed the Council. He presented the refinancing proposal with an estimated \$30,000-\$40,000 annual savings. The City Utilities Board of Directors unanimously approved and supports this refunding via Resolution and is making this recommendation via the Ordinance before the Council tonight.

Eric Walsh of Baker Tilly - This is the legal step of the Bond Ordinance related to approval to move forward with the refinancing of the 2014 Bonds. This does not commit the Water Utility to refinancing the Bonds. It takes this step out of the process then if interest rates are in a favorable manner so they can save with refinancing, then they can move forward with that. After this step is out of the way, it would take 3-4 weeks to get pricing locked in.

Councilmember Cotton – Where was the market when there was a \$300,000-\$400,000 savings?

Eric Walsh – The N & D Scale which is what municipal securities are typically priced off of, was about 40 basis points lower. All they are doing is replacing the current debt with a lower interest rate. There will be no expenses incurred unless the deal is actually performed.

MOTION: Councilmember Schmidt moved to carry Ordinance No. 17, 2023 to the May 22, 2023 meeting. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 6-0 voice vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 18, 2023

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING FUNDS IN THE CEMETERY FUND AND PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION OF NOTICE

Councilmember Schmidt moved that Ordinance No. 18, 2023 be read a first time and considered on first reading. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read Ordinance No. 18, 2023.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor addressed the Council. The City oversees four cemeteries. Two the City still buries in. One they still sell in. Two are very old. With those cemeteries comes maintenance.

Councilmember Pupillo – Recently they had their Clean Up Day. Is there something this group can do to help defray the cost?

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor – She will talk with Brian Dishman and see what can be done.

MOTION: Councilmember Schmidt moved to carry Ordinance No. 18, 2023 to the May 22, 2023 meeting. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 6-0 voice vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 19, 2023

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO, INDIANA, ADOPTING THE GRAND GARDNER HOTEL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD)

Councilmember Schmidt moved that Ordinance No. 19, 2023 be read a first time and considered on first reading. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read Ordinance No. 19, 2023.

Beth Shrader addressed the Council. This project was before the City at Site Review in December. It went to Plan Commission for a Public Hearing. There have been changes made to better meet City needs. Plan Commission at their April meeting made a positive recommendation to the City Council recommending approval as long as items were addressed. Those items have been addressed.

Todd Leeth - The Petitioner is here for a PUD to repurpose the old Boys and Girls Club to a boutique hotel. Jennifer Brooks is also here to help answer questions. There has been a lot of work on this with months of revisions. The hotel will be called The Grand Gardner Hotel. There will be 57 guest rooms and amenities. This is a single use PUD. A PUD is a document that writes a zoning ordinance for a specific piece of property. In this case one and one-half acres. This gives the City control. The property is at the corner of Campbell and Jefferson. There is a small existing parking lot north of the east west alley. On the east end of the existing building there were three homes. This all together forms the parcel size. It is currently zoned NC60. It nearly touches the CBD. He has encouraged the architects to have the main focus be on the existing school building. The wings to be added on the west and east sides are shorter than the existing building. In the Ordinance they define what is allowed. It also incorporates the site plan, the schematic buildings, and the landscape plan. Any changes are limited and, in every case, require staff, plan commission or council approval. They know parking is the issue here. They will work with the City. They will provide remote parking, shuttle services or whatever is needed. That is a cooperative venture with the City to make sure the wording is there to make those things happen. Utilities are an issue and concern. Stormwater is an issue and concern. Abonmarche has been working with the Engineering Department. This is a commercial use. If this is not here as a hotel the alternate uses are health care or public speaking. If for some reason the building is not there it defaults back to NC 60.

Questions/Comments from the Council

Councilmember Reed – 58 Rooms, 100 people banquet, 2 bars. There are 64 parking spaces. What would the parking requirements be for the banquet and bars if they stood along.

Todd Leeth – He does not know. The Ordinance says one parking space for every room plus one additional for every 10 rooms.

Councilmember Reed- Potentially all rooms and facilities could be full. What would happen with parking. She doesn't want to repeat the issues that should have already been learned. With Uptown they are dealing with parking issues. This is all due to overbuilding. She wants to find solutions before the problem is created here.

Todd Leeth – Over the last few months he has been discussing with Beth, what are the solutions. They believe they have a good handle on what they are. When those need to be implemented is something that is a work in progress and they won't know until they have experience. They have identified the City parking in close proximity. That provides them the opportunity to have remote parking where people can walk. They have the ability to find other spaces or other spots that might not be used on a particular evening that they could rent. All of those things will be provided at the hotel's expense.

Beth Shrader – Parking was one of the main concerns of staff. The real resolution of that came with help from the Redevelopment Commission who is hiring to have a consultant do a parking study. The consultant will work with the petitioner and the results will be brought to the Board of Works and will be implemented per the study. She believes this will be an intermittent problem. She does not want to overbuild parking facilities. She wants to use other options to better use the current parking resources.

Councilmember Cotton – His concern is the rain.

Beth Shrader – There is a concept plan for storm water. It does include underground storage. The Engineering Department is very pleased with that. One of the requirements of the PUD is they have to meet the City's standards for storm water.

Todd Leeth – 80% of the land area in the 1 ½ acres is already impervious surface. They believe they will be doing underground storage.

Councilmember Cotton – He noticed 480' in signage. Are there renderings of the signage?

Todd Leeth – They have not gone to that level of design.

Councilmember Cotton – Before the parking is figured out this is a vote of confidence. They remove themselves from the consideration if they approve this before knowing precisely what will happen with the study. He does not feel they should vote before the Study is received.

Councilmember Costas – He questioned the availability of a downtown liquor license for this project.

Attorney Patrick Lyp – He does not know what they plan on doing. They might fall just within the district. He is not aware that they are going to ask for a downtown license.

Councilmember Pupillo – When is the parking study expected?

Beth Shrader – They expect it before the hotel would be used. For parking they will have an action plan for day one.

Councilmember Pupillo – He understands the concern with regard to parking. He spoke to an employee of a restaurant downtown over the weekend. They are always looking for a place to park.

Todd Leeth – He recognizes 64 spaces is not enough when they have a full hotel and an event. The Ordinance speaks to that in Section 19. It talks about remote parking, shuttle, and those options. He thinks the parking study is going to tell them that game plan. Urschels is working with the City and will continue to work with the City. More importantly the Ordinance legally obligates them to work with the City and parking.

Councilmember Peterson – Is there the possibility of Urschels buying more property for valet parking or other options?

Todd Leeth – That has been discussed.

Councilmember Cotton – He does not want to see a repeat of the Uptown situation. He wants to see the parking study before voting.

Beth Shrader – A parking study takes time. She went through the various parts of it. She feels there is a solution. This is why the Plan Commission made a favorable recommendation.

Councilmember Schmidt – This is a great project. It is a fantastic way to repurpose the school.

MOTION: Councilmember Schmidt moved to carry Ordinance No. 19, 2023 to the May 22, 2023 meeting. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 6-0 voice vote.

Councilmember Reed – She thanked the first responders and others who helped look for Rose Mary Smith. She is a neighbor and went missing on April 25th. She was found unharmed.

COUNCIL LIAISON

Councilmember Reed – The first round of interviews was last Monday for the school board applicants. They are seeking questions from community residents for the next round of interviews to be held on May 15th at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Information on how to submit questions is on the City's website. They are due by Wednesday at noon. In 2021 questions arose about the Critical Race Theory CRT appeared in the public portal. She had not heard of this and was unclear as to the direction of the line of questioning. Following State guidelines, CRT is not part of the school's curriculum. They teach students to be respectful and kind to their classmates, teachers, and community members regardless of ethnicity, gender or disability. They teach history. Not all history is good. It is necessary to learn from mistakes. In 2022 CRT was not brought up. In 2023 it was brought up in the second interview. She has the obligation to listen and weight the pros and cons of a variety of matters. She has worked hard to make sure she is not engulfed with negative narratives. She hopes this body does the same.

Councilmember Pupillo – VPD has hired two new officers. The VFD has its plant sale this weekend.

Councilmember Schmidt – RDC meets Thursday at 4:00 p.m.

Councilmember Peterson - He and Councilmember Pupillo hosted a City Clean Up this past weekend. John Seibert is retiring in July from the Park Department. Kevin Nuppau will be his replacement.

Councilmember Cotton – The water department is in competition to tear down and rebuild a water hydrant.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Brian Williams – 1308 Golfview. He discussed the VHS students who walked out of school on April 5th to register their concern about gun safety He urged then and is now repeating this request that the Mayor and Councilmembers use their positions to speak often about this problem.

Kenard Taylor – 306 Napoleon. In1976 he started Student Government Day., This program is still in existence today. He is very happy to see that Mayor Murphy has gone further and created the Mayor's Youth Council.

Kevin Cornett – Northveiw. He asked if there is a fee for the refinancing bond. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor explained when they go for the rating a fee will be instituted. Kevin also asked if there will be ADA parking at Gardner Hotel. If so, that will take more spaces.

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

/s/ Holly Taylor, Clerk-Treasurer