

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
VALPARAISO, INDIANA  
May 11, 2020**

The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met on Monday April 27, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. by teleconference. Mayor Murphy called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Present were Councilmembers Reed, Cotton, Schmidt, Pupillo, Anderson, Costas and Douglas.

**MINUTES**

Councilmember Reed moved to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2020 meeting. Councilmember Douglas seconded the motion. Upon voice vote the motion to approve passed with a 7-0 vote.

**ORDINANCE NO 8, 2020**

**AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING FUNDS IN THE LOCAL ROAD AND STREET  
FUND AND PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION OF NOTICE**

Councilmember Douglas moved that Ordinance No. 8, 2020 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. Councilmember Douglas moved to adopt Ordinance No. 8, 2020. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion.

Mayor Murphy announced that Ordinance No. 8, 2020 requires a Public Hearing and advised he had Proof of Publication that at tonight's meeting the Council would consider the appropriation of \$475,000 for the 2020 paving budget. The Public has been notified and encouraged to send an email prior to the meeting if they had any questions or concerns regarding this Ordinance. Having received none and no one asking to speak to the Council, Mayor Murphy declared the Public Hearing closed.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor addressed the Council and explained this is the appropriation of money for paving streets for the 2020 season. Mayor Murphy did a roll call of Councilmembers asking if they had questions or concerns regarding Ordinance No. 8, 2020.

Upon roll call vote the motion to adopt Ordinance No. 8, 2020 passed with a 7-0 vote.

**Other Business  
Pack a Pantry**

Mayor Murphy discussed Pack a Pantry with Hilltop that was held this past weekend. There were 8,000 lbs. of food collected for the Pantry.

**Superintendent of Valparaiso Community Schools**

Mayor Murphy has been in contact with the School Board President and assured them the City will help if needed, in the search for a new Superintendent of Schools. Mike Berta will be interim Superintendent until a replacement is found for Julie Lauck.

**Indiana Back on Track Update**

Mayor Murphy reviewed Governor Holcomb's 5-stage Back on Track plan to reopen Indiana's economy. Stage 2 began today. He then reviewed how the City of Valparaiso is working together to also reopen City offices. To date, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 among City employees. Mayor Murphy stated he feels confident in the finances at this point. He conducts a weekly meeting to review fund balances and plan for possible reductions in future tax draws. More will be known after the tax draw at the beginning of June.

Councilmember Cotton discussed his desire to know the circumstances of the 2008 great recession. If there has been a historical study regarding how the City was affected financially, he would like to see it. Mike Jessen advised there is a weekly meeting to review status and see if anything needs to be addressed. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor advised she was not here during that time. She can get the information if he wants it but it will take some time.

Councilmember Pupillo questioned if the next meeting will be Zoom also. Councilmember Douglas clarified the second meeting date in May is Memorial Day so the next Council meeting is June 8, 2020. It is anticipated that meeting can be back in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Patrick Lyp discussed Councilmember Cotton's concern of the historical study. He indicated in the weekly meetings they look at past years to see where they should be at this time. He explained government financing is a lagging indicator. The effect of what is happening now could not be recognized until a few years from now.

#### **Community Engagement Update**

Maggie Clifton gave a Community Engagement Update. Her Department was created in 2018. She explained her job and how it helps keep the community involved and builds spirit. The response to her projects varies. She feels her programs and meetings are a success. She has been communicating with other communities to see what projects they are working on.

#### **School Board Appointment**

Councilmember Reed discussed the School Board appointment. Six applications were received. The next round of interviews is expected to be held June 1<sup>st</sup> and hope to be a face to face meeting. This would allow the public to participate. Councilmembers stated the June 1<sup>st</sup> day would work for them. Patrick Lyp is waiting to hear from a few of the candidates. Councilmember Cotton asked for a list of the questions to be asked at the interviews. He would like to have this before the interviews.

#### **City Council Meeting Time Discussion**

Councilmember Schmidt moved to set future City Council meetings to 6:00 p.m. Councilmember Anderson seconded the motion.

Councilmember Douglas stated he has researched meeting times in the area. There is a wide range of times including some in the mornings.

Mike Jessen stated they are working on live streaming the meetings once they are being held in the Council Chambers. It is anticipated this will be at the June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. The meetings will be archived on the City's web page.

Patrick Lyp stated the Council has a correct motion in front of them. The Council has the right to change the meeting time. As a housekeeping matter, the Municipal Code should be amended. Possibly it could be considered to take this section out of the Code. It is not a required section.

Councilmember Douglas stated he is in favor of the 6:00 p.m. time. There is no perfect time. If it is an issue important to someone, they will find a way to come to the meeting. Live Streaming makes this much easier and transparent. If after a while it does not seem to work, it can be discussed and changed.

Councilmember Reed stated she likes the 6:00 p.m. time versus 5:30 p.m. She asked if the meetings will continue to be ADA when they are using live streaming. This will be investigated.

Councilmember Cotton stated this is a solution to a problem that does not exist. Accessibility should be to the greatest range of people. This vote should be tabled so the public can say what time they would like the meetings. If there is a meeting that could run late into the evening, then a special meeting could be set up. This current proposal is only convenient to the people downtown.

Mayor Murphy discussed when he was a Councilman, he always thought the 7:00p.m. start time was too late. As the meetings would go on and get later, people would leave the meeting. Councilmember Cotton stated far more people stay than leave. He restated his reasoning that this is not convenient for the commuter from Chicago or the shift workers in town.

Councilmember Schmidt stated he has thought about this issue and has done research on it. He found people overwhelmingly positive with the 6:00 p.m. start. Zoom makes meetings more accessible.

Councilmember Pupillo has also done research and found a wide range of meeting times and feels 6:00 p.m. is reasonable.

Councilmember Anderson stated with the addition of live streaming it makes the meetings more accessible.

Councilmember Costas stated he was hesitant at the 5:30 p.m. start but feels 6:00 p.m. is reasonable. It needs to be considered how late the meetings go.

Councilmember Cotton stated the City shouldn't govern to the few who leave a meeting.

Councilmember Cotton moved to table the vote on the motion to change the meeting start time to 6:00 p.m. Seeing no second, the motion died.

Councilmember Reed asked for clarification that should this time not work; it can be moved back. Mayor Murphy replied it is up to the Council.

Upon roll call vote the motion to change the City Council meeting start time to 6:00 p.m. passed with a 6-0 vote. Councilmember Cotton voted No.

Councilmember Douglas announced the RDC will have a Zoom meeting Thursday at 4:00 p.m.

Councilmember Schmidt announced a third grader passed away this week. He asked for prayers for the family in moving forward.

Councilmember Cotton discussed the pump station report for the Silhavy corridor. This is being done to determine if another pump station is needed in this area.

Councilmember Costas asked about the status of the housing study. Mike Jessen replied it is being work on. It should be complete late summer or early fall.

Councilmember Cotton asked to see the report. He wants to know what the money went for. He wants the raw data so he can see what the City is getting. Beth Shrader further explained the company hired is still gathering information. They started this project early this year. If Councilmember Cotton has any further questions, she will meet with him to discuss. The consultant hired is out of Philadelphia and she meets with them regularly.

#### **Public Comment**

Mayor Murphy stated the request for Public Comment was stated on the Meeting Notice and Citizens are required to send their comments, questions, concerns via e-mail and they would be addressed at the meeting. This is done according to the Governor's Executive Order. No e-mails have been received.

Councilmember Douglas moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

/s/ Holly Taylor, Clerk-Treasurer