

## PORTER TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES

March 26, 2024

The Town Council of the Town of Porter, Indiana met in a regularly scheduled session on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at the Porter Town Hall, 303 Franklin St., Porter, Indiana. The meeting was called to order by Town Council President Laura Madigan at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited.

#### Roll Call

William "Bill" Lopez.....Present  
Laura Madigan .....Present  
Don Craft .....Present  
Kelly Karriman .....Present  
James Burge .....Present

A quorum was attained. Clerk-Treasurer Corinne Peffers was also present.

#### Additional Officials Present

Attorney Laura Frost; Fire Chief Jay Craig; Lieutenant Jason Holaway; Public Works Director Jamie Spanier; Building Commissioner/Director of Development Michael Barry and Park Director Brian Bugajski.

#### Approval of Minutes

Lopez motioned to approve the Minutes of March 12, 2024. Burge seconded the motion. Motion passed by all in favor vote.

#### Consideration of Claims and Sewer Adjustments

Craft motioned to approve the claims and sewer adjustments as presented. Karriman seconded the motion. Motion passed by all in favor vote.

#### Chesterton-Porter Rotary Club Fireworks Check Presentation

Chesterton-Porter Rotary Club President Jim Anton presented a \$6,000 to the Porter Park Department for fireworks on July 4, 2024 as part of the Chesterton-Porter Rotary Club Fourth of July Festival at Hawthorne Park. The donation will cover two-thirds of the cost of the fireworks. The Club is trying to find more attractions for children for the festival at an economic price.

#### Petitions & Comments from the Floor

Tim Hershman of the 500 block of Oak Hill Road, Porter, spoke his concerns about squatters' rights. Hershman said, "We need laws that are going to protect the homeowners in this state." He encouraged everyone to call their state representatives and the governor and ask them to write laws to protect our homes. He shared that he was told that if you put cameras up, you would be able to prove that squatters broke in, and law enforcement could then remove them upon proof that the property is yours without having to go to court.

Jennifer Klug of the 200 block of Franklin Street, Porter, asked for clarification about a small stop sign at Woodlawn Avenue and League Lane near the bike/pedestrian trail. Barry said that the stop sign is for the bike trail, not vehicular traffic, and needs to be moved to the other side of the post.

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Annette Hansen of the Izaak Walton League of America-Porter County Chapter, asked for approval to host a Gnomes Day Out Fairy Festival from 1 to 6 p.m. on June 8, 2024 at Hawthorne Park. She provided a certificate of insurance, and event map, and said the event will be attended mostly by children and their families. The event is a fundraiser for their non-profit organization and this year will be the fifth year at Hawthorne Park. She has submitted an assemblage permit to the Porter Police Department. Bugajski commented that they are great stewards of the park.

Karriman motioned to approve Izaak Walton League of America-Porter County Chapter's use of Hawthorne Park for the Gnomes Day Out Fairy Festival on June 8, 2024. Craft seconded the motion. Motion passed by all in favor vote.

### Reports

#### *Clerk-Treasurer Report*

Peffers reported that beach permits sold out today. There is a batch of approximately 87 certified mailings that were sent out on March 14, and the postal service is showing that the pieces are delayed in transit. We have been communicating with the post office and they are actively attempting to get the mail pieces moving. We will make sure that everyone that was issued and paid for a permit receives theirs. Council members received the 2023 TIF Management Report from the Redevelopment Commission. There will be a short presentation of it at the next council meeting, in accordance with a new law effective this year, it has to be presented at a Town Council meeting in addition to filing the report with the DLGF through Gateway, which as to be submitted by April 15, 2024. Peffers also reported that she attended the Indiana League of Municipal Clerks & Treasurers Institute and Academy last week. The days were packed with learning and networking, and there were classes on Internal controls, fraud, human resources, record retention, time management strategies, public speaking and more. She reminded the Council that ARPA funds must be obligated by the end of this year. We have \$769,630.85 remaining. Also, House Bill 1167 will require us to livestream public meetings and archive those streams for 90 days. This is scheduled to go into effect in July of 2025, so we should start preparing for that.

#### *Attorney Report*

No report.

#### *Police Department Report*

No report.

#### *Fire Department Report*

Chief Craig reported the baby box was installed, however, it is not operational yet. The landscaping and sidewalk work still needs to be done, the alarm is set to be installed April 27<sup>th</sup>, and that service will be donated. He said the department had their busiest week on record, with three or four calls per day. He thanked the volunteers for all of their work.

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***Public Works Department Report***

Spanier presented a quote obtained from Sourcewell for a 2024 F650 Dump Truck from Lindco Equipment Sales in the amount of \$116,065.00 to replace the department's 2009 GMC. Spanier said this truck does not require the driver to possess a CDL, and the MVH Unrestricted Fund has money in the fund to cover it.

Lopez motioned to approve the purchase of the Ford F650 from the MVH Fund in the amount of \$116,065.00. Craft seconded the motion. Lopez asked Spanier if he will be taking a truck out of service, and Spanier said yes, but delivery of the new vehicle is not expected until October or November. Sourcewell does not take trades, so when we do take the old vehicle out of service, we can use it as a trade in on another piece of equipment, accept sealed bids, or auction it off. Motion passed by all in favor vote.

Spanier said the grant for the six Ford Lightnings is expected to be complete by the end of this month, and asked permission—if the grant paperwork is done and payments from each budget is coordinated—for the Town to make payment and accept delivery immediately because Ford has sat on these vehicles for over a year and half. Peffers asked for the cost of each vehicle, and Spanier noted that each one is around \$50,000, it is an 80/20 reimbursable grant, so the cost of the match will be just over \$10,000 per vehicle. Peffers asked for the Council to approve the exact dollar amounts of each vehicle, and Council members stated that they did vote to approve the exact dollar amounts last year, and it's in meeting minutes. The Council discussed when it may have been approved. Council consensus was to approve payment conditional on all the necessary paperwork being received and in order. Attorney Frost said consensus was sufficient because they have already approved the purchase. *(See continued discussion under Council Comments.)*

***Park Department Report***

Bugajski thanked the Porter Volunteer Fire Department, Rob Sufana, Kelly Karriman, 4-H, and everyone else that came out and helped with the Easter Egg Hunt. There was a record crowd. The next community event at Hawthorne Park will be Memorial Day Weekend. Bugajski said that Hawthorne Park will be a community worksite (#12) on the last Saturday in April for Rebuilding Together Duneland. Beautification and tree removal is planned. State Park Little League has started work on the ball diamond at Hawthorne Park and it's moving along great.

***Building Commissioner/Director of Development Report***

Barry reported that are 6 contractors for approval that have met all their requirements and paid their fees.

Craft motioned to approve the 6 contractors. Burge seconded the motion. Motion passed by all in favor vote.

Barry asked for approval to pay Butler, Fairmain & Seufert's invoice for preliminary engineering as part of the FLAP Grant. It has to be paid and then submitted to INDOT for reimbursement.

Lopez motion to approve payment of the Butler, Fairman & Seufert invoice in the amount of \$62,415.00 from the FLAP Grant Fund.

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**Old Business**

None.

**New Business**

*2024 Independence Day Fireworks Contract*

Bugajski noted that the BRJ fireworks contract is the same agreement that we have used the last few years, but it has gone up in price slightly to \$9,000.00. Chesterton-Porter Rotary Club has donated \$6,000 towards the cost, and the remaining \$3,000.00 will come from the Park Department's donation fund. DuneBIG used to run the Fourth of July Festival, and when they folded, they donated around \$8,000-\$9,000 to go to future Fourth of July Festivals. Those funds will run out in two to three years.

Karriman motioned to approve the fireworks contract with BRJ Fireworks in the amount of \$9,000.00. Burge seconded the motion. Motion passed by all in favor vote.

*Community Crossings 2023-2 Change Order*

Barry noted that when we applied for the CCMG 2023-2 grant, we removed a road to bring down the cost. When the drawings were put together, the road wasn't removed, so it was included in the bid. This change order removes that road from the project, so it will decrease the cost by \$30,596.25, which the Town would have had to pay entirely.

Craft motioned to approve CCMG 2023-2 Change Order #1 from Milestone Contractors. Karriman seconded the motion. Motion passed by all in favor vote.

*Stormwater Board Appointment*

Madigan announced that Jim Eriksson has resigned from the Stormwater Board. Madigan appointed Erik Hellmuth to the Stormwater Board to fill the remainder of Eriksson's term.

**Council Comments**

Burge is the town's representative on the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and reported on some noteworthy items. The organization brings in about \$1.7 billion for Northwest Indiana. They recently got House Enrolled Act 1120 approved and that will increase the amount per capita charged for each citizen in each county. The incremental increase will be spread over a 5-year period, and it has been 70 cents for a longtime, but will increase to \$1.50 in 2029. In 2024, Porter County will collect \$121,251 and that will increase to \$259,000 by the end of the 5-year period. Lake and LaPorte counties' funds will double. In 2026, ramp metering will be installed on some entrance ramps to I-94 in Lake County. The exit lanes from eastbound I-94 to southbound I-65 will be converted to three lanes. There will also be dynamic shoulder lanes that can be used when traffic is very congested.

*(Discussion continued from Public Works Report)* Spanier looked for more information in previous meeting minutes and said that the Council talked in general terms and did not approve specific dollar amounts for purchasing the Ford Lightning vehicles as part of a Drive Clean Indiana Grant. The grant is an 80%/20% reimbursable grant. He asked the Council to approve a not to exceed amount to purchase the vehicles. The grant, cost of vehicles and the match amounts were discussed. Two of the trucks were priced at \$51,709 (80% = \$41,367.20, 20% =

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\$10,341.80) and four priced at \$51,564 (80% = \$41,251.20, 20% = \$10,312.80). Total gross amount for all six vehicles is \$309,674. After discussion, the Council decided that payment and further action needs to wait until the next Council meeting on April 9, 2024.

Burge added that Dyer promoted their town with videos and encouraged everyone to visit the welcome section of Dyer's website to see them. He would like to do something similar for our town. Barry said that Porter County Tourism has been working on some for months and should have them shortly. There is a Porter one and once it's ready it can be put on the website.

**Adjournment**

Lopez motioned to adjourn. Burge seconded the motion. Being no further business to discuss, Madigan adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Approved this 9 day of April, 2024.

TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PORTER

Laura Madigan, President  
William Lopez, Vice President  
James Burge  
Don Craft  
Kelly Karriman

Attest: Corinne M. Peffers, Clerk-Treasurer