

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOBART
LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA
August 16, 2023**

Call to Order: Mayor Snedecor called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance, and moment of silence. The meeting was held with the building open to the public. The call-in number for the zoom connection was available and listed on the agenda and the website.

Roll Call: The following members were present in person: Mr. Kopil, Mr. Huddlestun, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Vinzant, Mr. Wells, Mr. Claussen and Mr. Waldrop. Also present: Clerk-Treasurer Longer and City Attorney McCarthy.

Reading of the Minutes: Motion by Mr. Kopil, seconded by Mr. Brooks to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 2, 2023 as presented. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Correspondence: Mr. Snedecor noted that there were funds received for the opioid settlement and the City has ordered 7 AED's to be placed in first responder vehicles and additional expenditures will be considered with recommendations from the public safety officers. Clerk-Treasurer Longer stated the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) has sent the Council the annual reporting documents and she will be completing the report on behalf of the Council by September 15th as required.

Committee Reports: Mr. Kopil stated the parcel acquisition on the 73rd Ave. sanitary sewer project is almost complete and MCD and Robinson Engineering will be moving forward with this project.

Mr. Vinzant stated the Comprehensive Plan is very close to being completed, has been approved by the Plan Commission with some minor modifications and should be coming to the Council at the September 6th meeting.

Mr. Vinzant stated the Park Board has scheduled a ribbon cutting for Robinson Lake on August 30th at 10AM.

Mr. Snedecor updated the Council on construction projects: US51 near Sappers being done by INDOT: utility interference is the hold-up and it will continue once the utilities move their lines. US30 and Colorado St.: the utility work will be completed within the next few weeks and the lane closure on Colorado, south of US30 will need to be shifted as work progresses; Wisconsin St. bridge project is still slated to be bid this winter with some work to begin this winter as to closing and overburdening the current bridge. Mr. Huddlestun requested the city look into moving the barricade on 10th St., placing it before the island to prevent traffic from making the curve and then having to turn around. Mr. Gralik will discuss this with INDOT.

Approval of Agenda: Mr. Snedecor stated the Plan Commission has forwarded Ordinance 2023-21 regarding the PUD Amendment for St. Mary's Medical Center if the Council would consider adding this to their agenda. Motion by Mr. Vinzant, seconded by Mr. Wells, to approve the agenda with the addition. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Unfinished Business:

Tabled: Request for a Use Variance: to permit a boat & trailer dealership at 603 S. Wisconsin St., located approx. 150' north from the Wisconsin St. & North Lake Shore Drive intersection, zoned R-1, 0.248 acres: Baitmasters, LLC.: This item remains on the table until further information is provided from the petitioner.

New Business:

Consideration of Hobart Capital Improvement Plan 2023-2027: Bob Fulton, Assistant to the Mayor, stated that this is the annual update for the CIP that is key to financial planning as to projects planned for the next 5 years. Motion by Mr. Brooks, seconded by Mr. Vinzant, to approve the Capital Improvement Plan 2023-2027 as presented. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Ordinance 2023-14: An Ordinance Replacing Ordinance 2022-23, Fixing the Salaries of the Officers and Employees of the City of Hobart, Lake County, Indiana for the Fiscal Year Commencing January 1, 2024 and Ending December 31, 2024: The Ordinance was read. Mr. Snedecor and Mr. Waldrop thanked the subcommittee and HR for their diligent work, meeting with the teamsters and adjusting some civilian staff positions to be more competitive and in-line with similar positions in the area and shifting some benefit costs away from the General Fund. Motion by Mr. Vinzant, seconded by Mr. Wells, to pass Ordinance 2023-14 on first reading. Roll Call Vote taken. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Ordinance 2023-15: An Ordinance Fixing the Salaries of Police Department Sworn Personnel of the City of Hobart, Lake County, Indiana, for the Fiscal Year Commencing January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. The Ordinance was read. Motion by Mr. Kopil, seconded by Mr. Vinzant, to pass Ordinance 2023-15 on first reading. Roll Call Vote taken. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Ordinance 2023-16: An Ordinance Fixing the Salaries of Firefighter Sworn Personnel of the City of Hobart, Lake County, Indiana, for the Fiscal Year Commencing January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. The Ordinance was read. Motion by Mr. Brooks, seconded by Mr. Kopil, to pass Ordinance 2023-16 on first reading. Roll Call Vote taken. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Ordinance 2023-17: An Ordinance Fixing the Salaries of Elected Officials of the City of Hobart, Lake County, Indiana for the Fiscal Year Commencing January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. The Ordinance was read. It was noted that this is unchanged from the current year. Motion by Mr. Vinzant, seconded by Mr. Wells, to pass Ordinance 2023-17 on first reading. Mr. Snedecor noted that it has been a number of years since the Council has received an increase and suggested the Council consider a modification to enable attracting new people to get involved in City Government as well as compensating the Council for all of the additional meetings they attend and other times they make themselves available. Mr. Wells noted that he did not agree if there are still employees who are not in line for an increase. Mr. Snedecor called for a vote on the motion. Roll Call Vote taken. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Ordinance 2023-18: An Ordinance Repealing Ordinance 2022-27 and Establishing the Amount of Additional Compensation of Certain Officers of the Municipal Utilities of the City of Hobart, Lake County, Indiana and Designating the Fund from which said additional compensation is to be paid commencing January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. The Ordinance was read. Motion by Mr. Vinzant, seconded by Mr. Wells, to pass Ordinance 2023-18 on first reading. Roll Call Vote taken. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Ordinance 2023-20: An Ordinance Amending Various Sections of the City of Hobart Employee Handbook: The Ordinance was read. Mr. Waldrop stated these changes clarified some sections and updated other areas and includes the 12-hour shifts for Police Patrolmen beginning January 1st 2024. Motion by Mr. Claussen, seconded by Mr. Waldrop, to pass Ordinance 2023-20 on first reading. Roll Call Vote taken. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Motion by Mr. Claussen, seconded by Mr. Wells, to suspend the rules, declare an emergency and proceed with the second reading of the ordinance this evening. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Ordinance 2023-20: An Ordinance Amending Various Sections of the City of Hobart Employee Handbook: The second reading of the Ordinance was held. Ms. Longer noted that if adopted, the 12-hour shifts for Police Patrol Officers would not begin until January 1, 2024. Mr. Kopil thanked HR and the City Attorney for their work on this update. Motion by Mr. Vinzant, seconded by Mr. Brooks, to adopt Ordinance 2023-20 as presented. Roll Call Vote taken. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Ordinance 2023-21: An Ordinance of the City of Hobart, Indiana providing that the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Hobart, Lake County, Indiana be Amended by Amending the Preliminary Plan for Certain Parcels of Real Estate in an established PUD Zoning Classification: Proposed 5th Amendment to PUD for St. Mary Medical Center, 1500 S. Lake Park Ave.: The Ordinance was read. The Plan Commission forwarded a favorable recommendation contingent on the owners being in compliance with the Industrial Pretreatment Program by September 1, 2023 and that contingency has been met with the IPP Permit being issued. Motion by Mr. Vinzant, seconded by Mr. Brooks, to pass Ordinance 2023-21 on first reading. Roll Call Vote taken. All aye, motion carried. (7-0)

Announcements: Mayor Snedecor reminded the public that Hobart Lakefront Fest runs August 17th-20th at Festival Park.

Teamster Ed Wonso, long time Public Works employee, stated the department has always expected fair and equal treatment along with all the employees but he has watched the public works employees falling farther behind in wage increases over the last 6-7 years rather than having a percentage increase across all departments. He noted with the increased inflation, the lack of increases affects him and his fellow workers more now than ever before. Mr. Wonso stated the \$1.50 proposed increase for teamsters is not a cost-of-living increase and does not keep pace with inflation and hopes the City can do better for their employees.

Teamster Ron Skimehorn, also Public Works employee, stated the City will be losing people and cannot attract people to work if not offering a competitive wage. He asked the Council to give the Teamsters the same consideration as was given to Police and Fire employees last year. Mr. Brooks noted that the Teamsters Union should step in and back the increase, realizing that a City contract is very different from a contract with Mill workers.

Mr. Snedecor noted that in speaking with the Teamster Rep., the hope is that there will be additional increases going forward, some additional pay for certain positions was added and there are discussion of adding 2-3 additional Operators in the near future. Mr. Wells noted the CDL flat additional pay is being changed to an hourly rate in 2024 which can be used in overtime pay and toward INPRS. He also explained the committee's work looking at the salaries throughout the state in comparable sized cities and towns and looking at each job to make what changes they could. Mr. Waldrop stated the 1%, 2%, 3% property tax cap imposed by the State does not help the Cities and Towns and last year the legislators considered reducing those percentages even further which did not pass but as a result, the legislators did pass a levy freeze for the next 3 years which once again is a one-size-fits-all tax structure fix in a State where not everyone is in the same economic climate. Mr. Huddlestun noted that while it is good to compare and contrast with other communities throughout the State, Hobart needs to keep in mind the Chicagoland market as it is significantly higher than most of the other communities in the State.

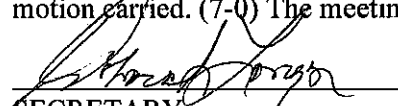
Mr. Fulton reminded the public that the Bureau of Motor Vehicles kiosk is now open 24 hours/day at the PCC building, inside door #4 off of 4th St. He noted the kiosk is only shut down for 2 hours Sunday night/Monday morning for reprogramming but is open to all the rest of the time, regardless of where someone resides.

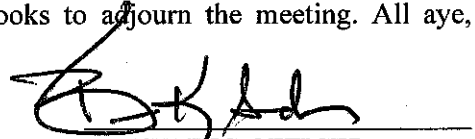
Joe Conn, NWI Medicare for All, asked the Council to reconsider supporting a Resolution asking the Federal Legislators to support a national healthcare system which would ultimately save the City the burden of rising health care costs and provide better healthcare for all citizens. He stated he had not heard from the Council since his presentation at the ordinance committee earlier this year and noted there is a Congressman right now who is on the fence as to supporting this initiative and is looking to see what support may be available from his constituents. Mr. Conn noted he would be happy to make another presentation in the future if the Council desired this.

Samantha Chapman, Indiana State Director for the Humane Society of the U.S., who met with the Council last fall to discuss pet store regulations and encourage local control with regard to puppy mills. She noted the City of Indianapolis and the City of Carmel have since adopted local ordinances similar to what she had proposed to Hobart last year and asked the Council to reconsider adopting an ordinance. She noted the corporate PetLand owners worked very hard during this last legislative session to take away the local authority available in Indiana to regulate pet stores and while they failed in their attempt, she wanted the Council to be aware of their efforts. She also noted there are a number of PetLand stores throughout Indiana that do not sell puppies so it is a viable business without the actual selling of animals. Jennifer Webber, Hobart Humane Society Director, asked to re-engage with the Council regarding some possible changes to the Municipal Code and the City's Contract with the Humane Society, particularly looking at the puppy mill pipeline coming through Hobart and some of the backyard breeding that is becoming problematic. She noted the local Humane Society has seen an increase by 13% in this year alone, including their contractual obligations with Lake Station and New Chicago as well as their transfer-in relationships with other municipalities in Lake County and the national databases point to a rise in need from areas without affordable housing and non-inclusive rental properties and in this post-Covid climate, a consolidation of families and movement of families where pets cannot move with them and changes in the economy. She asked the Council to consider revisiting the work/study session to discuss puppy mills and changes to our ordinances as to licensing within the City and our current contract.

Mr. Snedecor asked if anyone would like to address the Council and there was no further response.

Adjournment: Motion by Mr. Claussen, seconded by Mr. Brooks to adjourn the meeting. All aye, motion carried. (7-0) The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.


SECRETARY


PRESIDING OFFICER