

JUNE 5, 2024

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Those present:

Jim Smith	Carrie Mugford	Craig Walters	Eric Christiansen
Laura Rager	Matt Mize	Cam Kissinger	Maddy Shultz
Allen Miracle	Shannon Carter	Ryan Shock	Sally Krouse
Gary Montel	Dave McVicker	Alex Downard	Ben Gleason
Chalmer Tobias	Nate Birch	Tenille Zartman	John Gunn
Adam Penrod	Jennifer Hotchkiss	Chelsea Parson	Joe Sands

Those absent: None. A quorum was attained.

The June meeting of the North Manchester Town Council was held at the Public Safety Building, 709 W. Main Street, North Manchester, Indiana, on June 5, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., pursuant to notice duly given in accordance with the rules of the Council. The meeting was called to order by Council President Jim Smith, who presided.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 04/16/24 and 05/01/24 meetings were presented for approval. Motion to approve the minutes as presented: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None.

UPDATES

1. Imagine One 85, Alex Downard – Imagine One 85 Director, Alex Downard, gave an update on the work being done and what will be coming up in the near future. Downard thanked the council for their support and noted that this is the third installment of the three-year commitment to the implementation of One 85. The initial strategic planning process began in 2019 and has progressed quickly to the third year of implementation. Downard was excited to announce that the population is expected to show positive growth next year. Several project funding opportunities should be released soon: Next Level Connections, MU Initiatives and Lilly Grant, Lilly Endowment Gift Aid Initiative, LiveIn Wabash County funding, Stellar Pathways, and Readi 2.0. Each of these programs requires some sort of planning process. The county is in a better place because of these processes. Moving projects forward and having projects that are shovel ready is the focus of the implementation process. Council President Jim Smith expressed his appreciation for Downard's work and confirmed that Wabash County is a model for other communities. Smith recognized the commitment for the third year of funding.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Tax Abatement Non-Compliance – Town Manager Adam Penrod explained that this has been a different kind of year for businesses with tax abatements. Tax abatements are for businesses who are planning to purchase property or equipment with a significant financial impact and desire to lessen their tax burden in subsequent years. The purchase is required to score high enough on the tax abatement rubric to receive the abatement. The three businesses making requests tonight all do so after making their investments. Typically, abatement requests are submitted as part of the planning process before an investment is made. However, state statute does allow a

request post investment with the addition of a public hearing. This allows residents a chance to speak on the consideration of the abatement. Smith opened the public hearing for residents to speak about the abatement requests from HF Group, Precision Medical, and S&T Investment. No Comments. Smith closed the public hearing.

2. Trash/Recycle Rate Increase – Town Manager Penrod explained that 3 proposals were received for providing trash and recycling services. Republic Services was the low proposal and that new contract was awarded in May. The new service fee is more than what our current trash fee can sustain. Therefore, the trash and recycling fee has to be increased. The current rate is \$16.50 and will go to \$18.00 with \$0.75 per year increase until the fee reaches \$20.25. This increase coincides with escalations in the Republic Services contract. Penrod stated that the public hearing was advertised in the newspaper and an ordinance adopting the rate will have three readings. The new rate should take effect in September if adopted. No comments were heard. The public hearing was closed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Manchester Recreation Association Board Request for One-Time Alcohol Ordinance, GO #4, third reading – Clerk-Treasurer Carrie Mugford read general ordinance #4 by title only. Penrod stated that the event on June 21st is a fund raiser for the MRA. The MRA is located on town property and requires an exception to the alcohol prohibition ordinance. Penrod noted that the MRA has submitted the required certificate of insurance. Motion to approve GO#4 on third reading: Rager/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Appointments: Library Board & Human Rights Commission – Council President Jim Smith explained that two appointments are presented for approval. The North Manchester Library Board is recommending Kathy Garber for another 4-year term. Also, the original appointment to the Human Rights Commission is no longer able to serve. Smith and Council Vice-President Laura Rager recommend Jody Sarber be appointed to serve on the Human Rights Commission. Motion to approve the appointments: Tobias/Montel. Motion passes unanimously.

2. Tax Abatement Approval, HF Group, Resolution #11, 2024 – Penrod introduced John Gunn, HF Group Controller, and Tenille Zartman, Grow Wabash County CEO, to talk about the requested tax abatement for new equipment. The equipment was purchased in December 2023 for approximately \$887,000. Gunn talked about the equipment and the impact on the manufacturing process. This equipment is meant for short run book printing (25-2,000 copies). The expectation is to hire 1-2 new employees in the print shop to run this machine and 3 employees to bind the books it is printing. Gunn explained that they were unaware that abatements had to be filed prior to purchase and installation of new equipment. HF Group is now aware of the process and has hired new accountants from Indiana to ensure the process is done correctly in the future. HF Group currently employs 175-180 employees in North Manchester and another 75 in Nebraska and North Carolina. Councilmember Chalmer Tobias commented on how long HF Group has been an employer in this community, remarking that everyone has either worked there or had a family member work there. Clerk-Treasurer Mugford read resolution #11. Motion to approve the HF Group tax abatement: Montel/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously.

3. Tax Abatement Approval, Precision Medical, Resolution #12, 2024 – Penrod introduced Ben Gleason, Operation Manager for Precision Medical. Gleason stated that this purchase was originally planned for 2025 but the equipment became available sooner than expected. The approximately \$1,293,000 purchase includes coating equipment designed to streamline their

processes. Having the ability to coat their own products increases control of all points of the process and allows them to handle coating for sister manufacturing plants. Future plans include the ability to handle this coating process for competitors because Precision is the first in the state to be certified in this specific type of coating. One additional employee has been hired right now. Zartman confirmed tax abatement eligibility with the rubric numbers. Tobias thanked Gleason for growing in our community. Mugford read resolution #12. Motion to approve the Precision Medical tax abatement: Tobias/Montel. Motion passes unanimously.

4. Tax Abatement Approval, S&T Investment, Resolution #13, 2024 – Penrod introduced Joe Sands, S&T Investment. The property was purchased in May, 2023. Sands and partners have made significant investments in rehabilitating the former Peabody Seating buildings into 89,000 square feet of climate-controlled warehouse space and 2 acres of outdoor storage. Approximately \$1,600,000 has been invested including around \$600,000 to local vendors. Sands acknowledged that modifications can't be completed until a tenant is chosen and their needs determine the finishes. Sands is looking at another venture in town in the near future. Zartman confirmed that the investment qualifies for a 6-year abatement because there are no employees hired or retained. Smith stated appreciation for Sands investment in town. Mugford read resolution #13. Motion to approve the S&T Investment tax abatement: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously.

5. Trash/Recycle Rate Increase, GO # 6, First Reading – Clerk-Treasurer Mugford read general ordinance #6 verbatim. Motion to approve GO#6 on first reading: Montel/Rager. Motion passes unanimously.

6. Jones & Henry Engineering Agreement, Beckley Street Lift Station – Town Manager Penrod explained that this contract is for Jones & Henry to continue their work on the Beckley Street lift station. The design work has been started and some construction administration has been initiated but not billed yet. Approving the contract will allow Jones & Henry to bill for the work started. The contract is not to exceed \$32,000. Motion to approve the proposed Jones & Henry Engineering contract for Beckley Street lift station: Tobias/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.

DEPARTMENTAL & COMMISSION REPORTS

Police Dept. – Report included in packet. Police Chief Nate Birch reported that Sam Allen was hired in May. Allen will go to the police academy in August. The new IRecord system was installed in the building and is working well. The summer has started with 2 foot pursuits and Operation Pull Over traffic blitzes.

Fire Dept. – Report included in packet. Fire Chief Cam Kissinger reported that 6 SCBA sets were put into service in May. The JPS radio repeater was installed May 16 and will begin testing soon. American Test Centers were onsite to test ground ladders and aerial truck. Minor issues will be remedied. Engine 601 has had warranty work completed on May 23. Kissinger stated that fireworks in town will be July 4th with a rain date on July 6th.

Building Commissioner – Report in packet.

Plan Commission – Will meet June 24.

Board of Zoning Appeals – Will meet June 24.

Traffic Commission – No meeting.

Parks & Recreation – Report in packet. Park and Recreation Superintendent Jennifer Hotchkiss reported that day camp is averaging 28 kids per day. This keeps the facility very busy. The steam room tile has arrived and will be installed by the end of next week.

Town Life Center – Superintendent Hotchkiss reported that the fire department was called to rescue 4 adults trapped in the elevator at TLC. The adults were able to be evacuated. Repairs will be made this week so that the elevator will be back in service.

Tree Advisory – Report in packet

Grow Wabash County –

Redevelopment Commission – Will meet June 12.

MEDCOR – Did not meet.

Solid Waste – Minutes included in packet.

Storm Water Board – Town Manager Penrod stated that the Stormwater Board met and approved of stormwater plan for the Fellowship of Churches thrift shop expansion on North Market Street.

Public Works – Street Superintendent Craig Walters reported that spring clean up is done but still picking up lots of brush. Wabash County Solid Waste Tox-away Day will be June 22. Wastewater Superintendent Shannon Carter reported that a void near a manhole in the alley by Mr. Dave's restaurant will be repaired by Todd Knecht in the next week. A raw sewage pump needs replaced at the plant. Carter feels the department is hemorrhaging money right now. Water Superintendent Ryan Shock reported that 300 service line records have been completed in the last month for the lead service line inventory. The brine tank pump quit working. Klutz Well Drilling supplied a temporary replacement until a new pump arrives.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Penrod reported that Guant and Son Asphalt is back in town to do concrete work. The first block of Market Street will be closed down starting June 17. This will be a full depth mill and complete restoration so it will be closed for a few weeks.

Imagine One 85 downtown planning grant steering committee met in May. This is a \$40,000 planning grant for downtown improvements. The goal is to have plans ready when funding becomes available.

The countywide opioid funding group met in May to discuss productive ways to spend the money coming to the county from drug company opioid settlements. The current plan is to pool the money in the county to make the most impact.

Mike Kleinpeter, Kleinpeter Consulting, is working on an income survey to help with applying for funding water infrastructure projects. Kleinpeter is seeking approval from OCRA to complete an income survey based on our current median household income status. Once OCRA responds, Kleinpeter will move forward with the income survey process.

Penrod reported that Ben Vineyard resigned as the arborist for the Tree Commission. The commission will meet to make a plan for how to continue to maintain the tree inventory. Penrod thanked Vineyard for the work he has done with the Tree Commission.

Penrod noted that 3 requests for parking lot and alley closures have been approved. June 14 the parking lot next to the American Legion will be closed for a motorcycle show. July 4 the First Brethren Church will close the allies adjacent to the parking lot for the annual block party. July 27 various intersections will be temporarily closed for the Junior Achievement fundraiser and fun run.

CLERK-TREASURER'S REPORT

1. Financial Reports – Approved subject to audit.
2. Claims - The Town claim docket totaling \$1,049,044.48 and the Public Works docket totaling \$172,791.35 were submitted for payment. Motion to pay our obligations: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

The next council meeting is scheduled for July 3.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.

TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN OF N. MANCHESTER

Jim Smith, President

Laura Rager, Vice-President

Allen Miracle

Gary Montel

Chalmer Tobias

ATTEST

Carrie Mugford, Clerk-Treasurer