

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting  
Study Session/Meeting Convened Electronically Only  
Twenty-Ninth Town Council of Highland  
Monday, November 02, 2020**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met *electronically* in a study session on **Monday, November 02, 2020** at 6:31 O'clock P.M., in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.\*

*\*Special note:* This meeting was convened allowing members of the Town Council to participate electronically without being physically present, to be counted in the quorum and able to simultaneously listen and respond to matters taken up in the meeting, all pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Orders 20-04 and 20-09 extended by Executive Order No. 20-44 allowing meetings to be convened pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 for the duration of the Corona Virus COVID 19 emergency. All members of the Town Council who were present on silent roll call participated remotely. The electronic platform also allowed the public to be in the room or observe and participate from on-line access.

The meeting was streamed live on the Town of Highland, Indiana Facebook page and participation was supported by the Zoom on-line communication platform.

**Silent Roll Call:** Councilors Mark Herak, Mark J. Schocke, Thomas Black and Roger Sheeman were present as indicated (electronically). Councilor Zemen was absent owing to responsibilities establishing his polling place. The Clerk-Treasurer, Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings (electronically). A quorum was attained.

**Officials Present:** John P. Reed, Town Attorney; Patrick Vassar, Assistant Chief of Police; and Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Redevelopment Director; Mark Kneseck, Public Works Director; and William Timmer, CFOD, Fire Chief, were also present, all participating electronically;

**Additional Officials Present:** Larry Kondrat and Ed Dabrowski, IT Consultant (Contract) and Board of Waterworks Directors; all in person, were present.

**Guests:** Theresa Badovich of the Idea Factory was also present electronically.

**General Substance of Matters Discussed.**

1. **Discussion:** *Clarifying the Responsible Officer for the pursuit of the CARES FUNDS reimbursements.* The Town Council discussed the status and process regarding the Federal reimbursements for which the town was eligible under the CARES ACTs.

The Clerk-Treasurer reviewed the several sources from the United States Government to which state and local governments were eligible. It was noted that the Town of Highland was eligible for up to \$12,000 from HUD authorized money administered by the Lake County Department of Community Development. It was noted that an application was readied with eligible expenditures that were dated from March 1 of the current year. It was further noted that the eligible period for the County administered money was from March 31. This application will be modified and refiled.

The Clerk-Treasurer further reported that under the CARES ACT, Indiana was given a large sum of money that it further allocated on the basis of population to each city or town in the State. Highland's allocation is \$726,156. Eligible expenditures related to coping with the COVID 19 pandemic or addressing vulnerabilities in the operations of government to viral outbreaks were eligible for

reimbursement, The Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) was tasked with the administration of reviewing applications and processing the reimbursements of the CARES Act money.

The Town Council and the Clerk-Treasurer discussed that the goal is to leave as little of the allocated CARES and HUD money unused. It was noted that the Fire Chief and his secretary (administrative assistant) were compiling the eligible expenditures. It was further noted that the Clerk-Treasurer and the Sr. Chancery/Bursar Clerk were working with the Fire Chief to coordinate an application for the funds. A meeting with the department heads would be soon scheduled to see whether any special assets were being sought such as HVAC replacement for the Lincoln Community Center or special public safety information signs that are portable. Once the meeting was convened and the existing expenses were identified along with the larger assets, it was likely that the balance remaining would be applied to reimbursing the municipality for salaries paid to public safety workers. It was noted that the United States Treasury offered a revised guidance regarding this expenditure and allowing it to be an eligible expense under CARES ACT. IFA has noted this and has indicated that it will process reimbursements for public safety salaries during the period March 1 through December 30.

The Clerk-Treasurer suggested that the point person be the Fire Chief based upon the work that was already in place and the role his office plays during any emergency pursuant to the unadopted but practiced emergency procedures plan.

There was no objection to that approach. The Town Council desired to be kept apprised of the status of the grant process.

**2. Discussion:** *The Clerk-Treasurer reported on the disposition of the recent Bond Refunding.*

The Clerk-Treasurer reported that the refunding bonds of the BABS First Mortgage Bonds of the Lincoln Community Center Building Corporation and the same type of bonds of the Sanitary District were sold through negotiated sales by the underwriter Fifth Third Securities, on Wednesday, October 28. The sale went well. The closing still has to be set. Some of the later maturities were more difficult to move and some were purchased by the underwriter.

The sales achieved more than the baseline desired savings percentage, which was more than three percent, the Government Finance Officers Association recommended minimum to determine whether to proceed to perform a refunding. The greater savings was experienced with the Lincoln Community Center First Mortgage Bonds, in the range of 9.16% to 10.11% savings. The Sanitary District savings was 8.37% to 8.91%. The raw savings for the Lincoln Community Center was a present value of \$557,321.57 and for the Sanitary District is was a present value of \$382,120.59.

**3. Discussion:** *Inquiry Regarding placement of an Executive Proclamation for Child Adoption Day on the Agenda for the Next Meeting.*

Councilor Sheeman discussed the request from Robyn Radford, a Redevelopment Commissioner regarding the Town Council President recognizing the National Adoption Day in November. The Town Council President indicated that he would honor the request.

**4. Discussion:** *Wage and Salary Ordinance and a Discussion of Sustainability.*

The Town Council discussed the sustainability of any planned general wage and salary increase and its dependence on the pending rate reviews that are underway by the Board of Sanitary Commissioners and the Waterworks Board of Directors.

Councilor Herak indicated that the Board of Sanitary Commissioners were reviewing the report and choices presented it from its last meeting with London Witte, performing the rate study. It was further noted that once the Board of Sanitary Commissioners has determined its preference, it will conduct the public hearing and that its action will go to the Town Council for final action either approving or disapproving, without a public hearing.

**5. Discussion:** *Discussion of the Status of the related matter of City of Hammond's waterworks planned wholesale rate increase proposed for its wholesale and retail customers.*

It was noted that Hammond City Council, cancelled its planned public hearing, October 26, 2020, on the proposed rate increase for potable water to its residents and to the wholesale customers, owing to a problem in its legal notice. It was further discussed that the new hearing date was set for Monday, November 16, 2020.

The Town Council and Mr. Kondrat as a member of the Board of Waterworks Directors, discussed its own rate review that is underway. It was noted that review was still in its early stages. It was further noted that the board would need to determine a five year capital plan and also offer input regarding its desired operational plans.

The Clerk-Treasurer explained that the process for the rate modification for the water utility is that the board of directors adopts a recommended rate modification. Then the Town Council introduces an ordinance that captures the recommendations and the it conducts the public hearing. Following the public hearing, the Town Council may adopt as recommended or it may modify the rates lower but not higher.

It was further discussed whether the rate review would necessarily be delayed until the cost of supply rate with Hammond was settled. It was noted that the current rate ordinance has a wholesale tracker provision in its terms, that allows after a 30 day notice to the resident rate payers, to increase the rate to accommodate the source rate increase. This would mean an increase on the existing consumption rate for water of \$1.40 per 1,000 gallons of consumption.

**6. Discussion:** *Review of the Current Website Content Provider.* Based upon a question posed by a journalist, the Town Council noted that while it has received a proposal and presentation from a website developer e-Gov, no decision had been made to move forward on the proposals.

It was noted that it would be desirable to have the existing website content provider, Idea Factory, to have an opportunity to make a presentation regarding the elements it can provide for the website.

The Town Council discussed confirmed with Theresa Badovich, who was present (electronically) from the Idea Factory that a presentation could be ready for the Town Council at its next study session.

There being no further business necessary or desired to be discussed by the Town Council, the *electronically convened* regular study session of the Town Council of **Monday, November 02, 2020**, was adjourned by the Town Council President, at 7:15 O'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO  
Clerk-Treasurer