

**Enrolled Minutes of the Eighty-Fourth Regular Meeting or Special Meeting  
For the Twenty-Ninth Highland Town Council  
Regular Plenary Business Meeting (Electronic/In person Hybrid)  
Monday, January 23, 2023**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in its regular plenary session on Monday, January 23, 2023 at 6:30 O'clock P.M. in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.

\*This meeting was convened as both an in person and an electronic meeting. Some persons were participating remotely on a Zoom platform that allowed for real time interaction, and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings. People were able to participate in person and remotely. When the agenda item provided for public comment, this was supported as well. Councilor Zemen, Councilor Toya Smith, Councilor Tom Black, Councilor Schocke, Councilor Roger Sheeman all participated in person.

Pursuant to HMC Section 2.05.130(A)(2), the Town Council considered and reviewed the agenda in an informal proceeding in the plenary meeting room before the president called the meeting to order.

The Town Council President Tom Black presided. The Town Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak, was present to memorialize the proceedings. The meeting was opened with Councilor Tom Black reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and offering a prayer.

**Roll Call:** Present on roll call were Councilors Bernie Zemen, Toya Smith, Mark J. Schocke, Thomas Black and Roger Sheeman was remote. Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak was also present. A quorum was attained.

**Additional Officials Present:** Alex Brown, CPRP, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation and Mark Knesek, Public Works Director were remote. John Reed, Attorney with Abrahamson, Reed & Bilse was absent. Attorney Scott Bilse, with Abrahamson, Reed & Bilse, Pete Hojnicky, Metropolitan Police Chief; Ralph Potesta, Detective Commander; Edward Dabrowski, Director of Information Technology; Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director; William R. Timmer, Jr., CFOD, Fire Chief and Kenneth J. Mika, Building Commissioner were present.

*Guests:* Theresa Badovich (remotely) and Robin Carlascio (remotely) of the Idea Factory were also present.

**Minutes of the Previous Meetings:** The minutes of the January 9, 2023 Plenary meeting were approved by general consent.

**Special Orders:**

1. *Service as Town Executive.* Presentation of Plaque of Appreciation to the 71st Town Council President, Bernie Zemen

The Town Council President read aloud an inscription on a plaque acknowledging Councilor Bernie Zemen and his service as 71st town council president.

On behalf of the people of Highland, the Town Council and the Town Clerk-Treasurer present this special expression of appreciation to

**Bernie Zemen**

In recognition of his service to the Town of Highland, Indiana serving as the Sixty-Ninth President of the Highland Town Council , for a term commencing January 10, 2022 through January 9, 2023.

Presented on the 23rd Day of January 2023 in the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, by its Town Council and Clerk-Treasurer.

2.. **Proclamation of Municipal Executive:** January 31, 2023 as Petra R. Ostrowski Day. The Town Council President asked Councilor Schocke to read aloud the enrolled Proclamation. Once read, the Town Council President executed and approved the Proclamation with his signature.

**TOWN of HIGHLAND**  
**PROCLAMATION of the TOWN COUNCIL EXECUTIVE**

A PROCLAMATION in HONOR AND RECOGNITION of PETRA R. OSTROWSKI on the Occasion of her One Hundredth Birthday and Declaring Tuesday, January 31, 2023 to be PRECIOUS CENTENARIAN Day in the TOWN of HIGHLAND

**Whereas**, There is a citizen in the Town of Highland, **Petra R. Ostrowski**, who is an honored resident of the community, and, who, on the thirty-first day of January 2023 will mark the special occasion of her **One Hundredth** anniversary of birth; and

**Whereas**, We commend and acknowledge **Petra R. Ostrowski**, who married Roman L. Ostrowski on January 24, 1942 and is mother to sons Ronald and Robert, daughter Romaine; and

**Whereas**, We commend and acknowledge **Petra R. Ostrowski**, a woman of faith, who loves her Lord and attending Church; and

**Whereas**, We commend and acknowledge **Petra R. Ostrowski**, who flipped tin at a steel mill; helped her husband Roman at their neighborhood grocery store in East Chicago; served as a lunch matron at an elementary school in Gary and helped so many family members; and

**Whereas**, It is most appropriate that we all recognize the dedication and commitment of persons who attain to the special tenure of one's centenary year, as **Petra R. Ostrowski** has; and

**Whereas**, I wish to note with warmth and esteem one of Highland's residents who has attained to such a notable tenure, and calling attention to the joy, activities and life of one who has lived long and lived well;

**Now, Therefore**, I, Tom Black, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, now hereby proclaim and recognize **Tuesday, January 31, 2023 as Precious Centenarian Day** in the Town of Highland;

**Further**, Because 100 years of life well-lived is a profoundly special moment requiring additional recognition, I further proclaim that day as **Petra R. Ostrowski Day** in the Town of Highland and I do wish her on the one hundredth anniversary of her birth, Happy Birthday, and good health.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my signature and caused the corporate seal of the municipality to be affixed, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January 2023.

TOWN of HIGHLAND, INDIANA  
BY its TOWN COUNCIL PRESIDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Black

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Herak  
Clerk-Treasurer

**3. Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals Docket: Petition for a Use Variance** for property located at 9934 Express Drive, Highland, to allow the petitioner to use a percent of the existing building for the purpose of establishing as a Gymnastic and Cheer Leading Instructional Facility. This is a non-conforming use. The property is currently zoned as I-1/ Light Industrial District. Petitioner: **Bruce Boyer of Boyer Properties, Highland, IN.** *(The petition supports the variance)*

The Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals by a vote of four (4) in favor and zero (0) opposed acted to send a **Favorable Recommendation of the request for a use variance** for the property. The ABZA acted at its meeting of 14 December 2022. The findings of fact were memorialized and approved by the board in written form at its meeting of 25 January 2023. *(90 days ends 25 April 2023).*

*Pursuant to IC 36-7-4-918.6, the Town Council may act to GRANT the requested use variance and approve the use variance or it may REJECT the requested use variance and DENY the use variance. If not acted upon by the Town Council within 90 days after the ABZA makes its recommendation, the action of the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals stands.*

*(A) Opportunity for Comment.* The petitioner, Bruce Boyer was present and began by saying Building Commissioner Ken Mika did a very good job in explaining the situation. This is a little unique situation in that this type of business is typically found in a warehouse type setting, with the high ceilings and large open areas which doesn't lend itself to your normal retail building but rather a warehouse. And warehouses are normally found in light industrial settings. These businesses are found throughout Northwest Indiana in warehouses in light industrial areas. This type of use is not a specifically prohibited use in light industrial areas but it's not specific permitted use either, which is why we went before the BZA seeking a variance. Thank you.

*(B) Action on the Recommendation.* Councilor Sheeman moved to accept the recommendation of the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals and grant the use variance. Councilor Smith seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The use variance was granted.

**Comments from the Public or Visitors: None**

Councilor Black asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none, he closed comments from the public and began reading communications.

**Communications:**

1. January 30, 2023, being the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the month, there will be no Town Council study session.

**Staff Reports:** None were filed.

**Appointments:**

**• Statutory Boards and Commissions**

*Executive Appointments*

1. Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals: (1) appointment to be made by Town Council President. *(Note: Currently held by Susan Murovic.)*

The Town Council President, as municipal executive, said he would delay this appointment until a later date.

2. **Economic Development Commission.** (1) Appointment to be made by the municipal executive, but requiring nomination from the Town Council. Term ends just before February 1<sup>st</sup>. *(Currently the position is vacant)*

- a. Nomination by the Town Council. *(The council would pass a motion to nominate.)*

- b. Appointment by executive. *(If nominee is acceptable, the Town Council President may appoint.)*

The Town Council President, as municipal executive, said he would delay this appointment until a later date.

**Home Rule Boards and Commissions**

3. **Tree Board:** (2) appointments, to be made by the municipal executive, but requiring nomination from the Town Council. *(Positions currently held by James Colias and Ron Jackowski)*

- a. Nomination by the Town Council. *(The council would pass a motion to nominate.)*

Councilor Zemen moved the nomination, seconded by Councilor Schocke of James Colias, 2215 Ridgewood Drive, Highland; Ron Jackowski, 3105 Strong Street; Natalie Stromberg, 9035 Orchard Drive, Highland. Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The persons named were formally nominated.

Having acknowledged and accepted the nominations, the Town Council President then and reappointed **James Colias**, 2215 Ridgewood Drive, Highland; **Ron Jackowski**, 3105 Strong Street, Highland; and appointed **Natalie Stromberg**, 3817 Jewett Street, Highland.

- b. Appointment by executive. *(If nominee is acceptable, the Town Council President may appoint.)*
- **Tree Board Chairperson.** The Town Council President also appoints the Chairperson to be selected from the membership of the board. (See HMC Section 8.25.030 (C)) *(Currently held by James Colias.)*

The Town Council President indicated that he would delay action on the appointment of a Tree Board Chair until he conferred with the Tree Board members.

### *Legislative Appointments*

1. **Redevelopment Commission** (1) appointment to be made by Town Council. *(Note: currently held by Cyril Huerter)*

Councilor Zemen moved to appoint Tom Black to the Redevelopment Commission. Councilor Schocke seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. With Councilors Zemen, Smith, Schocke, Black and Sheeman voting in the affirmative. The motion passed. Tom Black, 3515 Garfield Avenue was appointed to the Redevelopment Commission.

Regional Statutory Commissions or Boards

Home Rule Commissions

1. **Main Street Board of Directors.** (17) appointments to be made by the Town Council. Term: Two years ending 1 January 2025. *(Note: Currently serving Teri Yovkovich, Rhonda Bloch, Renee Reinhart, Alex Robertson, James Roumbus, Diane Barr-Roumbus, (plus eleven more vacancies)*

Councilor Schocke moved the appointment of the following persons to new two-year terms on the Main Street Board of Directors, seconded by Councilor Sheeman. Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives. The motion passed. The following persons were appointed to the Main Street Board of Directors:

(1) *Rhonda Bloch*, 2815 Jewett Street, Highland; (2) *Renee Reinhart*, 3636-38<sup>th</sup> Street, Highland; (3) *Teri Yovkovich*, 2817 Jewett Street, Highland; (4) *Alex Robertson*, 2712 Condit Avenue, Highland; (5) *James Roumbus*, 2819 Jewett Avenue, Highland; (6) *Diane Barr-Roumbus*, 2819 Jewett Street, Highland;

**2. Community Events Commission** *Multi-year positions: (4) appointments to be made by the Town Council. Term: 4 years. (Note: Currently all positions are vacant)*

*Single year positions: (8) appointments to be made by the Town Council. Term: 1 year. (Note: Currently serving, Allencia L. Ballard, Stan M. Allen, Deborah Trevino, Christopher Clarkson Gonzalez, Linda Carter, Elizabeth Alakel and Jeffrey Pena) Mr. Pena advised that he recently too a new job and will be unable to serve on the Commission but he will continue to help out.*

Councilor Zemen moved to appoint Jack Rowe to the Community Events Commission. Councilor Smith seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. Jack Rowe was appointed to single year term on the Community Events Commission.

Jack Rowe, 2731 Norman Street

**10. Traffic Safety Commission: (5) appointments**, which must be comprised of 1 representative from the **Fire Department**, (1) representative from the **Public Works Department (Agency)**, (1) **member from the Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners**, and (2) **members from the Police Department**. Also note, HMC Chapter 10.45 provides that the Police Chief serves as Chief of the Commission regardless of being a member of the commission. (*Currently serving, William Timmer, CFO, Fire Department Representative; Vacant\* (owing to retirement) Public Works Department (Agency) representative; Steve Jurczak, Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners representative; Commander John Banasiak, Police Department representative; and Chief Peter T. Hojnicky, Police Department representative.*)

Councilor Zemen moved the appointment of the following persons as indicated to the Traffic Safety Commission. Councilor Black seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The following persons were appointed to the Traffic Safety Commission as indicated:

Peter Hojnicky, Police Department representative  
John Banasiak, Police Department representative  
Mark Knesek, Public Works Department representative  
William R. Timmer, Jr., CFOD, Fire Department representative

Steven Jurczak, Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners representative

It was noted that Councilor Tom Black continues to serve as the Town Council representative as his term is co-extensive with his term as Town Councilor.

The Town Council President, as municipal executive, said he would delay these appointments until a later date.

**General Orders and Unfinished Business: None**

**New Business:**

1. **Resolution No. 2023-02: A Resolution Authorizing Temporary Interfund Loan or Transfer Pursuant to IC 36-1-8-4 of the Indiana Code and Section 3.20.040 of the Highland Municipal Code for the Corporation Bond and Interest Fund, the Park District Bond and Interest Fund, the Sanitary District Bond and Interest Fund and the Waterworks District Bond & Interest Fund.**

Councilor Schocke moved the passage and adoption of Resolution No. 2023-02. Councilor Sheeman seconded. Upon a roll call vote of the elected officials, there were five (5) affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. Resolution 2023-02 was adopted pending the signature of the municipal executive

**TOWN of HIGHLAND  
RESOLUTION NO. 2023-02**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TEMPORARY INTERFUND LOAN or TRANSFER PURSUANT to IC 36-1-8-4 OF THE INDIANA CODE AND SECTION 3.20.040 OF THE HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE FOR, THE CORPORATION BOND AND INTEREST FUND, THE PARK DISTRICT BOND AND INTEREST FUND, THE SANITARY DISTRICT BOND AND INTEREST FUND AND THE WATERWORKS DISTRICT BOND & INTEREST FUND.**

**Whereas,** The Clerk-Treasurer has advised the Town Council that cash balances in the **Corporation Bond and Interest Fund, Park District Bond and Interest Fund, Sanitary District Bond & Interest Fund** are not sufficient to meet their regular expenses prior to the receipt of the semi-annual distribution of ad-valorem revenues so it has become necessary to temporarily borrow money to enhance the debt service funds;

**Whereas,** The Clerk-Treasurer has further advised that there is sufficient money on deposit to the credit of the **Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund** and the **Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund** that can be temporarily transferred, pursuant to IC 36-1-8-4 and HMC Section 3,20.040;

Now, Therefore Be it Resolved by the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana as follows:

Section 1. That the amount of \$383,000.00 be borrowed for the Sanitary District Bond and Interest Exempt Fund with the amount of \$383,000.00 to be loaned by the Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund, as authorized by HMC Section 3.20.040 and IC 36-1-8-4;

Section 2. That said loan in the amount \$383,000.00 be repaid to the Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund of the Town of Highland upon receipt of sufficient tax or other monies in the Fund with such loan to be repaid no later than December 31, 2023, subject to IC 36-1-8-4(b).

Section 3. That the amount of \$436,600.00 be borrowed for the Park District Bond & Interest Non-Exempt Fund with the amount of \$436,600.00 to be loaned by the Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund;

Section 4. That said loan in the amount of \$436,600.00 be repaid to the Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund of the Town of Highland upon receipt of sufficient tax or other monies in the Park District Bond & Interest Fund with such loan to be repaid no later than December 31, 2023, subject to IC 36-1-8-4(b).

Section 5. That the amount of \$216,000.00 be borrowed for the Corporation Bond & Interest Fund with the amount of \$216,000.00 to be loaned by the Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund;

Section 6. That said loan in the amount of \$216,000.00 be repaid to the Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund of the Town of Highland upon receipt of sufficient tax or other monies in the Corporation Bond & Interest Fund with such loan to be repaid no later than December 31, 2023, subject to IC 36-1-8-4(b);

Section 7. That the amount of \$170,000.00 be borrowed for the Waterworks District Bond & Interest Fund with the amount of \$170,000.00 to be loaned by the Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund, by HMC Section 3.20.040 and IC 36-1-8-4;

Section 8. That said loan in the amount of \$170,000.00 be repaid to the Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund of the Town of Highland upon receipt of sufficient tax or other monies in the **Waterworks District Bond & Interest Fund** with such loan to be repaid no later than December 31, 2023, subject to IC 36-1-8-4(b);



**Section 9.** That for the temporary loans made by the Town of Highland to the Sanitary District Bond and Interest Fund, the Park District Bond and Interest Fund and the Corporation Bond & Interest Fund for the purposes of HMC Section 3.20.040(B)(1), this resolution shall serve as evidence of the obligation and that under Section 3.20.040(B)(4) no interest will attain.

**Duly Adopted** by the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, this 23<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023. Having been passed by a vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

**TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of  
HIGHLAND, INDIANA**

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Tom Black, President (IC 36-5-2-10)

Attest:

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Mark Herak  
**Clerk-Treasurer** (IC 33-42-4-1;IC 36-5-6-5)

2. Approval and instruction. Action to approve and instruct the Town Council President to affix his signature to the Financial Commitment Letters dated January 24, 2023, to Mrs. Kathy Eaton-McKalip, Director of LPA/MPO & Grant Administration for the Community Crossings Matching Grant Fund.

Councilor Schocke moved to approve the letters of Financial Commitment dated January 24, 2023 and to authorize the Town Council President to affix his signature to them. Councilor Smith seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The letters was approved and the signature was authorized.

**TOWN OF HIGHLAND**  
Highland Municipal Building • 3333 Ridge Road • Highland, Indiana 46322  
Main Office: (219) 838-1080 • Utility Billing: (219) 972-7589 • Fax: (219) 972-5097



January 24, 2023

Mrs. Kathy Eaton-McKalip  
Director of LPA/MPO & Grant Administration  
100 N. Senate Ave.  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

RE: Community Crossings Matching Grant Fund – Financial Commitment Letter  
January 2023 Call – Application #12571  
Town of Highland

Dear Mrs. Eaton-McKalip,

This letter confirms the Town of Highland's financial commitment for our January 2023 Community Crossings Application #12571. We plan to utilize funding from approved source(s) in order to provide the 50% local match for awarded projects. We expect our aggregate local cost share for the 9 projects included in Application #12571 to be \$274,438.00. We have the local funding available to provide the required 50% match for each of our projects that are awarded.

Sincerely,

Tom Black  
Town Council President

Town Council

Bernie Zemen  
Ward One

Toya Smith  
Ward Two

Mark Schacke  
Ward Three

Tom Black  
Ward Four

Roger Sheeman  
Ward Five

Mark Knesek  
Public Works Director

John Reed  
Attorney

Clerk-Treasurer  
Mark Herak

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January 24, 2023

Mrs. Kathy Eaton-McKalip  
Director of LPA/MPO & Grant Administration  
100 N. Senate Ave.  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

RE: Community Crossings Matching Grant Fund – Financial Commitment Letter  
January 2023 Call – Application #12454  
Town of Highland

Dear Mrs. Eaton-McKalip,

This letter confirms the Town of Highland's financial commitment for our January 2023 Community Crossings Application #12454. We plan to utilize funding from approved source(s) in order to provide the 50% local match for awarded projects. We expect our aggregate local cost share for the 2 projects included in Application #12454 to be \$385,356.00. We have the local funding available to provide the required 50% match for each of our projects that are awarded.

Sincerely,

Tom Black  
Town Council President

Town Council

Bernie Zemen  
Ward One

Toya Smith  
Ward Two

Mark Schocke  
Ward Three

Tom Black  
Ward Four

Roger Sheeman  
Ward Five

Mark Knesek  
Public Works Director

John Reed  
Attorney

Clerk-Treasurer  
Mark Herak

3. Authorize the proper officer to publish legal notice of a public hearing. Public hearing to considering additional appropriations in the amount of \$50,200.00 in the Redevelopment Capital Fund and \$40,000 in the Municipal Cumulative Street Fund to be held on February 13, 2023, at 6:30 P.M. O'clock in the Municipal Building, 3333 Road Highland.

Councilor Zemen moved to authorize the publication of a legal notice of a public hearing to consider proposed additional appropriations in the Capital Redevelopment fund in the amount of \$50,200.00 and Municipal Cumulative Street Fund in the Amount of \$40,000. Councilor Sheeman seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The publication

and hearing were approved. The meeting will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of February. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30.

TOWN OF HIGHLAND  
NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS OF PROPOSED  
ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

Notice is hereby given the taxpayers of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, that the Town Council of said Municipality in said Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, at 6:30 p.m. on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023, will consider the following additional appropriations in excess of the budget for the current year in the following funds:

Municipal Cumulative Street Fund

Acct. 4431-0000-44010 Sidewalk Replacement	\$ 40,000.00
Total 400 Series:	<u>\$ 40,000.00</u>

Redevelopment Capital Fund

Acct. 4406-0000-42001 Redevelopment Capital Wayfinding Signs	\$ 36,700.00
	\$ 13,500.00
Acct. 4406-0000-31019 Landscape Services	
Total 400 Series:	<u>\$ 50,200.00</u>

**TOTAL for the FUND: \$ 50,200.00**

Funds to support these additional appropriations in the **Municipal Cumulative Street Fund** and in the **Redevelopment Capital Fund** shall be supported by miscellaneous revenue, unreserved unobligated fund balance on deposit to the credit of the fund.

Taxpayers appearing at such meeting shall have a right to be heard thereon. Taxpayers are asked to contact the Office of the Clerk-Treasurer at (219) 838-1080 to provide an email address to allow the Zoom platform information to be provided as the meeting is still being conducted as an Electronic/In Person Hybrid. You may also write to the Office of the Clerk Treasurer if you have concerns. The additional appropriations, as finally made, will be filed with the Department of Local Government Finance, for its review. The Department of Local Government Finance shall make a written determination of the sufficiency of funds within fifteen days of receipt of a certified copy of the action taken.

TOWN COUNCIL of HIGHLAND  
Tom Black, President

By: Mark Herak  
Clerk-Treasurer

4. Councilor Sheeman moved to amend the agenda approving an order for a new 95% energy efficient, American made furnace for the south Fire Station from Siemer Heating and Cooling of Schererville and authorizing the Highland Fire Chief to sign such purchase order in the amount of \$21,497.00. Councilor Schocke seconded the motion to amend the agenda. Upon a roll call vote, a unanimous vote being necessary to amend the agenda, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed to amend the agenda.

Councilor Sheeman moved to accept the bid from Siemer Heating and Cooling of Schererville for a new 95% energy efficient, American made furnace for the south Fire Station in the amount of \$21,497 and to authorize the Highland Fire Chief to sign such purchase order. Upon a roll call vote, a two-thirds vote being necessary, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed.

**Comments from the Town Council:**

*(Good of the order)*

- **Councilor Bernie Zemen:** *Liaison to the Board of Water Works Directors • Liaison and Plan Commission Member • Liaison to the Tree Board • Liaison to the Highland Neighbors for Sustainability.*

Councilor Zemen began by saying the Water Board will meet this Thursday at 6:30, here in the Town Hall. He will be attending a Sustainability Meeting, tomorrow at 6:30 at the Green Witch. The Plan Commission met last Wednesday but the only business was the reorganization of officers. Doug Turich will be replacing Joe Grzymiski as the Plan Commission's representative to the BZA

**Councilor Toya Smith:** *• Sanitary Board Liaison • Public Works Liaison • Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals Liaison • Liaison to the Building and Inspections.*

Councilor Smith began by acknowledging Ken Mika, Building Commissioner who said the BZA will be meeting this Wednesday. There is one item on their docket and it is a use variance for the property commonly known as the tri-state bus depot. He said the address is 8144 Indianapolis Blvd. They are proposing a mixed use, with a portion of the property proposed as retail and a portion as climate control personal storage. The personal storage is not a permitted use in that zoning. He said he met with an architect who represents Macy's, who are planning on putting in a smaller

footprint retail store in Highland Grove. It will be the spot previously occupied by Marshall's.

She then acknowledged Public Works Director Mark Knesek who there is a 90% chance of snow on Wednesday, with the percentage dropping down to 60% on Thursday. They are projecting a cumulation of about 3 inches on Wednesday. He said they have plenty of salt stock piled so Public Works will be ready. He reminded everyone and asked for their cooperation that if the snow accumulation is greater than 2, please don't park your cars in the street so the plow drivers can do their job of clearing the street.

**Councilor Mark Schocke:** • *Park and Recreation Board Liaison* • *Council of Community Events Commission Liaison* • *Liaison to Main Street Bureau* .

Councilor Schocke acknowledge Park Superintendent, Alex Brown who said this Sunday at the Lincoln Center is the annual special event for kids with special needs indoor carnival. Its something he's been participating in for 20-years. Its in cooperation with other area park departments all around Lake and Porter County. Each department takes a turn hosting a special event for kids with special needs. Weather permitting, the contractor should begin setting all of the poles on the bike trail this week for the solar project. This project has been 2-years in the works but all the permits have been obtained and the project is proceeding. This Friday, the request for proposal on the 2 new playground equipment are due. The new playground equipment will be installed this summer. Once he has the proposals, he plans on taking the various designs to local schools and meet with the parents to pick out the design. He hopes to have the Park Board approve the designs at its February meeting.

Councilor Schocke commented on how successful the recent blood drive was at Lincoln Center. From the reports he read, they exceeded their best total by 100 units of blood. This was the great American blood drive sponsored by the American Red Cross and ABC 7.

- **Councilor Roger Sheeman:** *Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners Liaison* • *Fire Department, Liaison* • *Chamber of Commerce Liaison* • *Information Communications and Technology Department Liaison*.

Councilor Sheeman began by acknowledging Pete Hojnicki, Metropolitan Police Chief who said they are beginning the hiring process again. If anyone knows any great candidates please send them their way. They will be taking applications between now and the middle of February. They are taking both certified and non-certified applicants. They are doing the testing a little different, in that the testing will be conducted on both Friday night and Saturday morning to accommodate the work schedules of the applicants. He felt Highland was the only department doing testing that way

He then acknowledged Bill Timmer, Fire Chief who advised that the 2 furnaces at south station need to be replaced. With the cold spell coming and snow predicated, he was asking for authorizing to purchase the new furnace. He received quotes from various dealers with prices ranging from \$14,000 to \$22,000 He liked a 95% energy efficient furnace from Siemer Heating and Cooling out of Schererville. With the next plenary meeting not until the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, he was asking the Council to allow him to proceed and then ratify it at the Council's February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting or to amend the agenda for tonight's meeting. He talked with the Clerk-Treasurer who advised either method was acceptable. Councilor Sheeman said at the end of his comments he would move to amend the agenda. He then commented on the predicted snow for Wednesday, with more snow coming on Saturday and Sunday. He exclaimed that winter is here and we back to normal January. He asked the residents to be considerate of the snow plow drivers and keep you're your cars off the streets when the snow accumulation is greater than 2 inches. It's always difficult getting around with snow on the ground but image driving a snowplow truck. He acknowledged an email and call from the Highland Rotary Club, an organization he's been a guest speaker at several times a year, to say they had an anonymous donor offer to pay for the installation of a baby box at the Central Fire Station. The baby box is designed to aid mothers who feel they can no longer care for their baby and rather than neglecting the baby, the mother or a family can bring the baby to the fire station and place the baby in the baby box with no questions asked. Once the baby is placed in the baby box, an alarm goes off alerting the fire department of a baby being placed in the box and the fire department responds immediately. He cited an example from Crown Point where within 2 weeks of being installed, it was put into use. He said it requires an ordinance which he has circulated to the Council and Attorney Reed. He reminded the Council that this wasn't going to happen overnight.

Councilor Schocke said he just had a conversation with one of the Highland School Board members on that exact same topic and they were planning on meeting later this week to discuss. He was advised to reach out to a state rep by the name of Randy Frye. He was told that Randy is a big proponent of the baby box. Councilor Schocke said he was told that there exist a \$10,000 grant for projects such as this.

Chief Timmer said he knows State Rep Randy Fry personally, who is a retired Indianapolis Fire Fighter and as a matter of fact, State Rep Fry was at the Highland Fire Station not too long ago. State Rep Fry is the Chairman Public Safety Committee. He said he is compiling a list of extrication tools he plans on purchasing later in the month. The nice thing, they will all be battery powered. He concluded by thanking Joe Grzynski for his service to the community and the Highland Fire Department, who after 20 plus years of service to the Highland Fire Department decided to retire.

He then acknowledged Ed Dabrowski, IT Director, who said he has been working this past month renegotiating a Comcast contract. He said the Town was able to triple their internet speed and cut prices by 10%. This is something he does every 2-years and saves the Town roughly \$7,000 annually. He said he's been working with Assistant Public Works Director Kim Webb on reducing the Verizon bill. He's projected another savings of around \$7,000.

- **Town Council President Tom Black:** *Town Executive (I.C. 36-1-2-5-(4); I.C. 36-5-2-2; I.C. 36-5-2-7); • Board of Trustees of the Police Pension Fund, Chair (By Law) • Budget Committee Chairman • Redevelopment Commission Liaison and Member • Member of the Lake County Solid Waste Management District Board • Member of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIPRC) • Shared Ethics Representative.*

Councilor Black began by acknowledging Redevelopment Director, Maria Becerra who began by welcoming Town Council President Tom Black as a voting member of the Redevelopment Commission. She said she and Susan met with the Highland Neighbors for Sustainability on the 10<sup>th</sup> of this month and she thought it was a very productive meeting and she is looking forward to working with them. The meeting pertained to mainly structure and who will be the main contact person they will be working with. She said there is another meeting tomorrow at the Green Witch starting at 6:30. Neither she nor Susan will be in attendance as they have a Redevelopment Commission meeting at the same time. She thanked the Council for advertising for the additional appropriations for the wayfinding signs and the trimming of the trees by the depot and on Indianapolis Blvd. Once the money is approved, they will begin both projects. She said she and Susan will be meeting with Ken Mika tomorrow to discuss the façade improvement project for the new tattoo parlor. She said the Commission is working on their 2023 goals in terms of new developments and businesses, improving the website. She concluded by saying the Commission is working on an initiative about providing incentives to town employees, starting with the police, who buy a home in Highland. Incentives such as helping with closing costs and a down payment.

That concluded comments from the Council and President Black then turned it over to comments from visitor's or residents, reminding them to limit it to 2 minutes.

**Comments from Visitors or Residents: None**

Councilor Black asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none, he closed comments from the public and brought it back to the Council. He then entered a motion to pay claims.

**Payment of Accounts Payable Vouchers.** There being no further comments from visitors or residents, Councilor Zemen moved to allow the vendors accounts payable vouchers as filed on the pending accounts payable docket, covering the period **January 11, 2023 through January 24, 2023.** Councilor Schocke seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five (5) affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The accounts payable vouchers for the vendor docket were allowed, payments allowed in advance were ratified, the payroll dockets listed were ratified and for all remaining invoices, the Clerk-Treasurer was authorized to make payment.



**Vendors Accounts Payable Docket:**

**General Fund, \$330,814.07; MVH Fund, \$44,314.53; LR&S Fund, \$11,418.12; LAW Enforcement Continuing Education, Training and Supply Fund, \$2,465.67; Information and Communications Technology Fund, \$12,282.70; Traffic Violations, \$3,000.00; MCCD, \$1,567.92; Community Crossing Grant, \$1,163.82; Total: \$407,026.83.**

**PAYROLL DOCKET FOR PAYDAY OF JANUARY 13, 2023 BY FUND:**

**TOTAL PAYROLL BY FUND: \$325,121.49.**

**PAYROLL DOCKET FOR PAYDAY OF JANUARY 13, 2023:**

**OFFICE OF CLERK-TREASURER, \$14,924.98 BUILDING AND INSPECTION DEPARTMENT, \$9,482.39; METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT, \$132,272.38; PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (AGENCY), \$76,782.14; FIRE DEPARTMENT, \$4,856.07 AND INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT, \$3,857.93; TOTAL PAYROLL: \$242,175.89.**

**Adjournment of Plenary Meeting.** There being no further business on the agenda, the Town Council President declared the regular plenary meeting of the Town Council of Monday, January 23, 2023, adjourned at 7:21 O'clock p.m.

Mark Herak  
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved by the Town Council at its meeting of February 13, 2023.