



Town Council of the Town of North Judson
Regular Meeting Minutes

October 21st, 2024 – 6:30 PM

The North Judson Town Council met in Regular Session at the North Judson Town Hall, 310 Lane Street, North Judson, IN on the above date and time with the following present: Council President Rowe, Council Vice-President Brown, Councilmembers Banks and Lewandowski, Town Manager Leszek and Clerk-Treasurer Rowe present as well.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council President Rowe asked for approval of the agenda. Council Vice President Brown moved to approve the agenda. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all Councilmembers present concurred.

Council President Rowe asked for approval of the Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on October 7th, 2024. Council Vice President Brown moved to approve those Minutes. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all Councilmembers present concurred.

Old Business:

LWCF Park Improvements Project Update & Opening

Town Manager Leszek explained that the contractors had been installing artificial grass on the mounds and that they were also finishing up the poured-in-place in front of the bridge. He stated that Troyer Group, Brown and Brown General Contractors, and the Indian DNR would be doing their substantial completion walkthrough this upcoming Thursday, October 24th. Leszek explained that there is still a punch list of items that would need to be corrected but they are planning to do a walkthrough in order to make sure everything is ready to go. He stated that they are hoping to set a date for the park's ribbon cutting ceremony by next Tuesday, October 29th. Leszek confirmed that everything is on track to be completed by the end of October.

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe confirmed that the tables donated by Mark Rippy have arrived, along with the dedication plaque. He also stated that the Town would like to invite everyone who contributed to the project, as well as the media and local interested parties to the event once a date is established.

Councilmember Lewandowski asked about a part that was found broken at the Town Park on a piece of new equipment. Leszek confirmed that the part was a spinner that held a piece of rope. He explained that Kapp was able to take it apart and put the piece back together to fix it. Leszek also stated that he had spoken with the playground contractors to see if they would be able to get a few extra parts in case something like

this happened again. He also explained that he believes that the broken part might not have been completed tighten and worked its way loose causing the part to fall out.

New Business

2024 Haunting Households Winners Announcement

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe wanted to thank everyone who participated in the Haunting Households. He stated that there had been ten households that participated in the contest which was a good amount for the first Halloween house decorating contest. Rowe announced that the judges had two first place winners selected. The winners of the contest were the residents of 210 Jones Street and 309 Main Street. He explained that he would be purchasing the gift cards and presenting them to the winners later this week. Council President Rowe wanted to thank the judges and all the homes that participated.

Recognition of Guest

Donna Henry was present on behalf of the Mint Festival Committee. Henry stated that the committee had decided to cancel the Holiday Fair due to lack of vendor participation. She stated their next meeting would be held on Thursday, November 14th at the North Judson – Wayne Township Public Library.

Harry J. Tolson was present to discuss his water bill for 207 Bradley Street. Tolson stated he had received a water bill of \$527.15 for one month of usage. He stated that he had spoken with Billing Clerk Lewandowski, who explained to him that his previous bills had to be estimated since a boat trailer had been blocking his water meter. Lewandowski explained that the bill for \$527.15 was a “catch-up” from the months that it had to be estimated. He stated that he could not see anywhere on his previous bills saying that the total was being estimated, which he later found out that the bills do not explain if they estimated or not. Utility Supervisor Kapp explained that there had been a boat overtop of the meter causing her crew not to have any access to the pit to read the meter. She stated that this has been a reoccurring problem since the previous Billing Clerk had been in the office. Billing Clerk Lewandowski stated that the boat had been blocking the meter pit since before she started last November. Lewandowski explained that Tolson had been asked to move his boat several times within the last year and they were finally able to get him to remove the trailer when Kapp had to go replace his meter. Tolson informed the Council that he only received one phone call from Kapp. He also stated that the crew should have been able to read his meter due to the fact that it is an open boat trailer. Kapp informed him that in order to properly read his meter the crew would have to physically get inside his meter pit and that there was no way they could do that with the trailer being over top of the access point. Council President Rowe asked how long the bill had been estimated for. Tolson stated that he was informed by Billing Clerk Lewandowski that the estimation was over a five-month period. Tolson asked if he would be receiving the summer sprinkling credit for watering his lawn and garden. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that the credit had already been applied to his bill and that the bill of \$527.15 is his true billing. Council President Rowe stated that there was nothing else the Council could do since that was the amount of water that was used. Tolson agreed but mentioned that the Town needs to start including information on the bills when the water is being estimated. Billing Clerk Lewandowski stated that she looked into that herself and saw that when a bill is being estimated, there will be a “E” next to the consumption on the billing. Tolson asked what the timeframe was to get his billed paid. Lewandowski informed him that the bill was due on October 12th. Leszek stated that any late fees could be presented for adjustment by the Council at the next meeting.

Tolson wanted to discuss a storage bin that he has on his 512 Main Street property. He wanted to go before the Council and ask permission to put the bin on the corner of his property to create a welcome sign for the new section of the trail. He stated that he would like to get in contact with the school’s Art teacher in order

to have the students paint the bin to reflect the school's mascot, the fighting Blue Jays. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe asked if Tolson had a timeframe for when this project could be done. Tolson explained that he would be able to set up the bin in his yard, but it would not be able to be painted till next spring. Interim Town Marshal Thomas wanted to bring up the issue that the school might not want the kids on ladders in order to paint the bin due to safety concerns. Thomas informed Tolson that he would need to get in contact with the school before he placed it anywhere. Tolson asked who he would need to get ahold of at the school. The Council was able to introduce him to Superintendent Kelly Shepherd who was present on behalf of NJSP Schools and the School Board. Council President Rowe stated that they would be able to reconvene the topic at the next meeting on Monday, November 4th.

Department /Representative Reports

Clerk-Treasurer - Andrew Rowe

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe presented the following Customer Adjustment Requests:

- Account No. 3140010: Utility Customer accidentally paid on the wrong account. The customer paid on an account for their old residence located at 201 Garden Street. They're requesting a credit of \$72.85 that would then need to be transferred over to be credited to their new account at 310 Vine Street.
- Account No. 6740001: Utility Customer desired to submit a grievance before the Town Council concerning his utility billing charges, but the meeting was after the October 2024 due date. They're requesting an adjustment of \$41.42 to remove the late charges.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the following Customer Adjustment Requests:

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- Account No. 6740001: Utility Customer desired to submit a grievance before the Town Council concerning his utility billing charges, but the meeting was after the October 2024 due date. They're requesting an adjustment of \$41.42 to remove the late charges.

Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Rowe presented a Special Event Permit Application for a Meet and Greet – Political Candidates at Norwayne Field on Saturday, October 26th, 2024. Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the Special Event Permit Application for 10/26/2024 submitted by Thomas Schouten and to waive the fees. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion and all members present concurred.

Rowe presented the following Purchase Orders for the Council Approval:

P.O. 2675 to Fibar for DNR-LWCF Town Park Improvements Project - PIP (Poured In Place Surfacing) 4339.00 sq. ft., Invoice INV-00003875, in the amount of \$121,448.61.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the following Purchase Orders:

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Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Rowe informed the Council that they will be seeing yearly renewals for Town employee health in the coming weeks and, after that's set for next year, property liability insurance renewal will be on the agenda over the next couple of meetings. He will be informing the Council as soon as he receives updates from John Howard and First Choice Insurance.

School Board – Doug Wilde

Superintendent Kelly Shepherd was present to give an update on the local North Judson – San Pierre Schools. Shepherd stated that he was present to answer any questions that might be asked since the Council's representative Doug Wilde was unable to attend. Interim-Town Marshal Thomas stated that he had met with Resource Officer Chris Kisela regarding the school developing their own police department. He explained that the school was planning to adopt the creation of their own police department at the October 22nd School Board meeting. Thomas stated that the development of the school's police department will have a minimal impact on the North Judson Police Department. He also explained that while the department isn't necessary, it is becoming more common practice with the surrounding communities. The schools will be able to handle criminal offences on school grounds without having to require assistance from local authorities. Thomas stated that the new department will be completely independent from the Police Department and will be developing their own badge but both departments will still work together to protect all our citizens. He also informed the Council that Kisela will no longer be required to work under the NJPD, but he is still required to keep up with all of his mandated training as a normal officer would. Kisela would also be responsible for his department's training and record keeping. Thomas stated that Kisela asked if the Town would be willing to donate his current firearms that the NJPD had been providing since the start of the School Resource Officer program. Thomas stated that the firearms are roughly valued at \$700. He stated that the firearms have been used for the school's protection for many years and would not pose any hardship on his department by donating them to the school. He recommended that the Town donate the firearms requested to help the school facilitate the development of their own police department, and if approved by the Council then they would only need to fill out the transfer of ownership paperwork regarding the firearms.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the donation of the firearms provided for the NJSP School Resource Officer to the school's police department. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Building Inspector – Nick Radtke

Nothing Presented.

Code Enforcement – Interim Town Marshal Frank Thomas

Interim Town Marshal Thomas stated that they had sent out some unsafe building letters that Attorney Schramm was able to draft for them. He mentioned that they were able to get more un-plated cars removed from several properties in town. Thomas explained that five cars had been removed from 304 Main Street by the people who are trying to clean up the house, which has now gone on the market.

Unsafe Hearing

Town Manager Leszek stated that they were able to send out unsafe letters for some of the trouble properties with ordinance violations. He explained that the gentleman on High Street had requested a meeting and that they wanted to ask Attorney Schramm what the next step would be so that they could follow the proper procedural. Schramm asked if this was the property that they had sent a demolition order since that one automatically gets a public hearing. Schramm informed them that he set the hearing for the next council meeting and that he would recommend hosting the requested meeting on the same evening. Schramm stated that the rest of the letters were pre-suit notice stating what the property owners would need to do.

BZA/Planning Commission

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe noted that the Planning Commission would be scheduling a meeting later on in the week to discuss changes zoning ordinances. He stated that the Commission met to discuss several matters that ultimately came down to there being a need and desire to update some of the ordinances. Rowe asked if the Council would have to go about doing that. Schramm asked if someone wanted to make a change to the current zoning ordinance to which Rowe replied that the Commission wanted to know what it would take to update portions of the current zoning ordinance. Schramm stated that it does not matter who initiates the change, but the Town Council will have the final say whether the ordinance will be changed or not. Schramm stated that there will need to be public hearing, notice for which having been published, and they must hear feedback from the Town. He also explained that the Planning Commission would have to make a recommendation to the Town Council within sixty days of the certification so that the Council can decide if they want to adopt the proposal or not. Rowe asked if the Planning Commission would be the one to undertake getting the Town's map rezoned. He stated that the current zoning map was almost thirty years old.

Redevelopment Commission

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that they will be discussing the 2025 budget over the next few weeks. He scheduled the next Redevelopment Commission meeting for Monday, November 18th, 2024.

Park Board – Nick Radtke

Nothing Presented.

Police Department – Interim Town Marshal Frank Thomas

Interim Town Marshal Thomas stated that their new part-time officer, Adam Stoll, had been well received by everyone. He informed the Council that Stoll was currently starting his fourth week training alongside the other deputies. Thomas also mentioned that both garage doors at the Police Department had been replaced but both door openers quit working not long after the installation. They currently have one garage bay together and in working condition. Thomas stated that the second opener would be installed the following day.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Todd Jackson

Fire Chief Todd Jackson wanted to be put on the record that he had been present at two Council meetings in a row. He informed everyone that early voting would be at the Firehouse on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The voting would be from 12:00 PM to 6 PM on Thursday and Friday. Then Saturday's hours would be from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that they would get that information on the Town's Facebook page. Todd mentioned that the department had their annual chili and soup cook off with Joe Leszek coming in first place with his chili. Council President Rowe asked how their fundraiser went the past Saturday. Todd stated that this is one of the easiest fundraisers their department hosts. He explained that they send out letters to the community and they send money back to the department. He stated that they used the money to replace gear that the firefighters have to wear. He mentioned that a full set of gear costs about \$7,000 per person.

Utility Department – Utility Supervisor Kimberly Kapp

Utility Supervisor Kapp stated they have been pulling the pumps multiple times at the Oak Lift Station. She explained that one of their pumps had gotten worn out, so they had to replace it with another. Kapp stated that the crew had been painting at the park and cleaning up the overgrowth around the dog park. She mentioned that they had an interview last Friday for the fourth utility position. Kapp informed the Council

that they did extend the offer out, but they are currently waiting for all of their background checks to come back before they can start.

Kapp presented the following Purchase Orders for the Council Approval:

P.O. 2671 to Republic for removal of two sludge dumpsters, Invoice 0717-001637978, in the amount of \$4,148.72.

P.O. 2672 to Healey's Home Center for Park Pavilion Repairs, Invoice 278595, in the amount of \$699.88.

P.O. 2673 to Alexander Chemical for 150lb Chlorine and 150lb Sulfur Dioxide, Invoice 84817, in the amount of \$4,292.11.

P.O. 2674 to USA Bluebook for Plant Pro Bod Incubator, Invoice INV00509378, in the amount of \$6,400.00.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the following Purchase Orders:

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Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Town Manager – Joe Leszek

Town Manager Leszek stated that HWC has ordered some of the equipment for the video system in the Town Hall for the Council meetings. He also stated that they are still working on the Town's website which should be ready in the next few weeks. Leszek mentioned that he should be getting installation dates very soon. Leszek had also been working with INDOT on getting all of their quarterly reports for all the current projects that they have been working on. Leszek stated that he had been working with REMC on fixing all of the electrical issues at Norwayne Field. He is currently waiting for REMC to set up a date to update all the GFI outlets at the park. Leszek explained that the Town will be buying all of the parts at first but would then be reimbursed \$500.00 by REMC for the materials. He also wanted to mention that they would need to start thinking of street names for the road between the Police Department and Norwayne Field. If they were able to name the road then they would be able to add it to the Town's Road inventory. Leszek explained that if it was added to the inventory then the road would be eligible for CCMG and could potentially be paved in 2027. Rowe stated that they could come up with a few names and put them to the public to vote on.

Legal Updates – Town Attorney Justin Schramm

Schramm stated that he appreciated Thomas and Leszek for serving the unsafe property letters. He stated that he just needed to draft the letters and those two handled the rest. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe asked if the unsafe hearings needed to be held before the next meeting. Schramm stated that he set up the hearings to be at the November 18th meeting.

Additional Business Deemed Necessary by the Council:

Council President Rowe asked when the crew was planning on putting the Christmas lights up. Kapp stated that they are planning on putting up the lights after Halloween but they will not light them up till after Thanksgiving.

Payment of Claims:

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to pay Payment of Claims in the amount of \$109,550.80. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to adjourn, Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Meeting adjourned at 7:21 P.M.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Rowe", written over a horizontal line.

John Rowe, Council President

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew J. Rowe", written over a horizontal line.

Andrew J. Rowe, Clerk-Treasurer

Next regular scheduled meeting – Monday, November 4th, 2024, at 6:30 P.M.