



**Town Council of the Town of North Judson**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**

November 4<sup>th</sup>, 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, Councilmember 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 21<sup>st</sup>, 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 there were a few items that needed to be completed at the park, but they were still on schedule to have the ribbon cutting on Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. He stated that the contractors needed to bring in more mulch around the zipline to level off the pour-in-place and they also wanted to bring in some more wood to put around the tunnel. Leszek confirmed that everything at the park was mostly ready to go, but they were also waiting for NIPSCO to install their meter so that the lights could be tested at the pickleball courts and pavilions. He also explained that Kapp was able to get the new picnic tables installed in the newer pavilion as well. Leszek stated that they were on track to have the grand opening on Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe spoke with WKVI about contacting the Leader to invite them to the opening. He stated that he had also contacted former Park Board members to celebrate this occasion with everyone. Council President Rowe complimented Kapp and her crews paint job with the buildings at the park. Leszek stated that they have received multiple compliments on the painting and the equipment. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe mentioned that he had gotten good feedback regarding the safety of the new trail. He also wanted to bring up the idea of adding a mural somewhere behind the playground and another near the splashpad. The Council agreed to keep that on their radar. Councilmember Lewandowski mentioned that the grass had been coming in nicely around the park. Leszek agreed and explained that all

of the plants were under a one-year warranty so if anything fails to come back in the spring then the contractors will replace them.

### **New Business**

#### **Town Employee Health Benefits Enrollment**

Council President Rowe stated that he had spoken with John Howard earlier in the day and Howard informed him that the United Healthcare quote had not come back yet but he would have it by the next Council meeting. He continued to say that Howard informed him that the person he normally purchases the Insurance from would not have a better plan than what the Town currently offers. Rowe explained that the Town uses the PPO because it has better prices, and it focuses more on specialists for the Town employees. Rowe explained that he believed that they were probably going to stick with their current insurance, but they would have to wait until they all received the emails to review the plans. He went on to say that after the review, they would need to know if the board or employees were wanting to change their coverage. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that if anyone would like to enroll in the Town's insurance then he would be able to help them setup a meeting with John Howard.

#### **American Legal Publishing – Town Supplemental Update**

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated Deputy Clerk Chaja and himself had been communicating with American Legal Publishing in regard to updating the Town's ordinances on their website. He stated that he had noticed that the fee schedule was outdated so he spoke with our representative in order to get all of the information updated. Rowe stated that they should receive the quote to update our code within the next few days. He also mentioned that we usually update the codes every two years, but they were slightly ahead of schedule. Rowe informed everyone that all of the codes from the previous two years had been sent and that the quote would just need to be approved whenever it arrives. He mentioned that he was a fan of the American Legal Publishing since it's been incredibly valuable to search through all of our Town ordinances and it had been helpful to do research for codes in other cities as well.

#### **2025 Fire Protection Services Contracts: Jackson, Rich Grove, & Wayne Townships**

Town Manager Leszek stated that Chief Jackson and himself were going to go around to all of the trustees so that Jackson could make a formal introduction as Fire Chief and start going through some of the contracts. He stated that Jackson had some ideas about potentially starting to save for a new engine for the future. Leszek explained that he had been speaking with Clerk-Treasurer Rowe about contacting Baker Tilly about ways to potentially save money on the fire side and putting that money aside for the new engine. He also informed Jackson that it would be a good idea to go around to all of the trustees to discuss Jackson's plans for the department and his apparatus in order to give the trustees an idea of how they can help. Leszek stated that they are planning to start going around to all of the trustees within the next month to discuss a potential cost increase. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe & Leszek mentioned that they could be more strategic about how they position the contracts in to have them contribute a certain sum while they are still paying off the tanker truck till 2032. Leszek & Council President Rowe appreciated how motivated Jackson is when it comes to trying to find ways to help the Fire Department grow. (CP) Rowe stated that he did not believe 2025 would be the year for the department to purchase a new truck but 2025 could be the year to start planning ways to afford a new truck. Leszek mentioned that Jackson's plan is to start saving and keeping an eye out for grants. Council President Rowe stated that he believed that the Redevelopment Commission fund should not be tied up covering the cost for two firetrucks since there are other needs requiring consideration throughout the Town's funds, properties, and potential projects.

### **Recognition of Guest**

Nothing presented.

### **Department /Representative Reports**

#### **Clerk-Treasurer - Andrew Rowe**

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2682 to Recreation Insites, LLC for Forever Lawn Playground Grass, Freight, Greensoft EWF System, and installation, Invoice 1209, in the amount of \$97,138.50.

P.O. 2683 to Gary and Sons for mowing at Pioneer and Highland cemeteries on October 6<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup>, in the amount of \$4,000.00.

Rowe mentioned that they had ordered three half round mounds for the Town Park and during the ordering process they had chosen a particular color containing 3-4 colors called 'Winter,' but when he was at the park recently, he had noticed that the mounds were bright green. He stated that he had Leszek reach out to the contractors to inform them that the wrong color had been installed and to see if they could rectify the situation. Rowe informed the Council that P.O. 2682 would also be presented at the Redevelopment Committee meeting on Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. He also explained that P.O. 2683 from Gary and Sons covered the last two mowings of the year. Rowe wanted to mention that he was happy with the Gary and Sons contract since the office had little to no complaints about the cemetery this past year.

Council Vice President Brown asked if they should hold off paying P.O. 2682 until the mound issue was resolved. Rowe agreed they could hold off approval until the issue was resolved. Leszek wanted to mention that Gary and Sons had reached out to inquire about the possibility of the Council having a two-year contract instead of a one-year contract. He explained that the company would like to bid on the cemetery mowing for 2025 but there is no guarantee that they will get the contract. He explained that they are currently scheduling jobs for the next year, and it would be easier for them to plan for the cemetery mowing if they had the contract for two years. Attorney Schramm explained that since it was a service contract the Council could adjust it as they see fit.

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

P.O. 2683 to Gary and Sons for mowing at Pioneer and Highland cemeteries on October 6<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup>, in the amount of \$4,000.00.

Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and members present concurred.

Rowe presented a Special Event Permit Application for the Grand Opening of the North Judson – Wayne Township Public Library's StoryWalk at Norwayne Field on Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the Special Event Permit Application for 11/9/2024 submitted by Kelsie Purcell and to waive the fees. Councilmembers Banks seconded the motion and all members present concurred.

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe mentioned that Debbie Wappel stopped by earlier in the day to invite employees of the Town to attend the Live to Lead Starke County Leadership Development Event. He explained that the event will be held at the Heartland Christian Center in North Judson. He stated that Leszek and himself thought it would be a good event for all of the department heads and a few Councilmembers to attend. Council President Rowe stated that the councilmembers could review their schedules and get back with them on who can attend. (CT)Rowe informed the Council that they all were given their save-the-dates for

the Town's annual Christmas party with more details to come. He stated that Lewandowski and Chaja have been working on finalizing the catering and other details. Rowe asked that everyone free their calendars so we could have as much involvement as possible. He stated that all of the documentation for the Police Department's Tahoe and Explorer has been sent to the BMW. Rowe also wanted to get the Town's Attorney Agreement on the radar since that would be coming up shortly.

**School Board – Doug Wilde**

Nothing Presented.

**Building Inspector – Nick Radtke**

Nothing Presented.

**Code Enforcement – Interim Town Marshal Frank Thomas**

Nothing Presented.

**Unsafe Hearing**

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that there will be hearings for the Unsafe Properties that were previously notified at the next Council meeting. He stated that they have some images set aside so that they'll be prepared for their November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Leszek mentioned that they have had two property owners reach out with their plans on how they are going to rectify the problems for which they were cited.

**BZA/Planning Commission**

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that there will be a meeting in the coming weeks to begin working on ways to address issues within their zoning map and code.

**Redevelopment Commission**

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated he had Deputy Clerk Chaja type up a list of potential projects for which the Redevelopment Commission could fund and would need to budget for 2025. He mentioned that he would like to get the list of ideas on everyone's radar since they will need to have their budget finalized by the end of the month. Rowe stated that Leszek and himself already made sure the Hill Garage was added to the list of potential projects. He also stated that they could look into dressing up the signage at Highland Cemetery since it needed to be updated and that they could potentially start surveying the roads in the cemetery. Leszek brought up the idea of updating all the picnic tables at the park so that they would be uniform with the new tables.

Council President Rowe suggested that a committee be put together of people who want to help update Highland Cemetery. He explained that there are several members of our community that care for the cemetery and those people could possibly give recommendations on the best ways to expand. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that it would not be a bad idea. He explained that grave expansion probably would not be able to happen till 2026 or 2027, but they would be able to start planning in 2025. Rowe stated that they would be able to go over the list in more detail at their next meeting.

**Park Board – Nick Radtke**

Nothing Presented.

### **Police Department – Interim-Town Marshal Frank Thomas**

Interim-Town Marshal Thomas stated that he had decided to promote Adam Stoll from part-time to full-time. He would be officially starting as a full-time officer on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Thomas explained that they will continue to be training with him and that they will be sending him to the academy the following year. He stated that they will be working a two-week rotation with both Deputy Russell and Deputy Quail; Stoll will be on day shift for a short term after that two-week period. He explained that this would give Stoll more time before starting on the overnight shift. Thomas mentioned that they have gotten the paperwork finalized on the new vehicles so now they are just working on getting equipment set up correctly. He also stated that Deputy Russell put on a first aid class and a room clearing course that they were able to do at the old armory in Town. They got permission from the new owners to use the armory for the course since it currently has no electricity, making the building perfect for night training. Stoll was able to attend Walkerton's Evac Training and Defensive Tactics to get those sessions out of the way.

Interim Town Marshal Thomas presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2680 to DJ Cripe Inc. for Drive Operator Police Station Doors (2), Invoice 4357 and 4403, in the amount of \$1,594.00.

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

P.O. 2680 to DJ Cripe Inc. for Drive Operator Police Station Doors (2), Invoice 4357 and 4403, in the amount of \$1,594.00.

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

Thomas stated that Adam Stoll will be present at the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting in order to be sworn in. He asked the Council if they would be able to get his insurance started right away bypassing the waiting period. Council President Rowe asked what the handbook stated regarding insurance. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe informed him that employees are eligible for insurance after they hit their 90-day period. He stated that the handbook can be altered at the discretion of the Council. Council President Rowe stated that they would be able to look over the handbook and map out an appropriate time for employees to start receiving their benefits.

Council President Rowe wanted to bring up the topic of the Town Marshal position. Thomas stated that he had brought up the idea with Leszek about not having the Town Marshal positioned salaried. Thomas stated that he had been doing some research and he had found several stations with Town Marshal's paid hourly. He mentioned that if the department gets in a situation where they are understaffed again, he would like to be compensated for his overtime. Council President Rowe stated that he would have to do some research before they would be able to make any decisions on the topic.

Interim Town Marshal Thomas wanted to mention that Adam Stoll had offered to go to the Police Academy's 12-week program while the normal Police Academy is 15 to 16 weeks. He explained that the program would not allow the trainee to go work for larger departments and he does not want him to miss the chance to get certified in field sobriety. He stated that they are however looking into all of their options.

### **Fire Department – Fire Chief Todd Jackson**

Nothing Presented.

### **Utility Department – Utility Supervisor Kimberly Kapp**

Utility Supervisor Kapp stated her crew had begun picking up leaves around Town. She stated that they have been busy with painting and other projects around the park. She also mentioned that all Park bathrooms have been winterized, they did some hydrant flushing and they were able to install a new water meter at the armory. She informed the council that their fourth utility worker would be beginning on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. Kapp stated that the fourth person is Kimberly Watson and that she already had her class two certifications and her mosquito license. Kapp asked if the council would go ahead and give Watson the incentives for having those certifications.

Council Vice President Brown made the motion to approve to pay for the certifications for Kimberly Watson. Councilmember Lewandowski seconded the motion, and all members present concurred. Kapp stated that Watson's starting pay would be \$19.75 hourly.

Utility Supervisor Kapp presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2676 to Flow Technics for Piranha 520 pump for Oakwood lift station, Invoice INV000011207, in the amount of \$2,900.00

P.O. 2677 to Shaffner Tire Service for 265/70R 17 tires for 2015 Ford F-250 and motor fee (4), Invoice 0037925, in the amount of \$1,161.00.

P.O. 2678 to Republic Services for Sludge Dumpster removal (2), Invoice 0717-001642213, in the amount of \$2,109.60.

P.O. 2679 to USA Bluebook for Flow Rake Rag Catcher, Invoice INV00522545, in the amount of \$624.95.

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

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P.O. 2679 to USA Bluebook for Flow Rake Rag Catcher, Invoice INV00522545, in the amount of \$624.95.

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

Council President Rowe asked if Kapp gotten quotes for a new leaf blower. Kapp stated that she had gotten quotes from Northern Tool for about \$2,100.00. Rowe asked if there was room in the budget to possibly the Utility Department the new leaf blower. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that they could possibly use the Park Fund, but he would have to look at the funds to see what is available.

### **Town Manager – Joe Leszek**

Town Manager Joe Leszek stated that REMC will be at Norwayne Field on November 19<sup>th</sup> where they will be changing out all of the GFCI receptacles and enclosures. He stated that REMC would be donating their labor to get all of the outlets fixed at Norwayne Field. Leszek explained that they had to purchase the GFCI enclosures from ACE Hardware, but REMC would be donating \$500.00 to go towards the cost. He also mentioned that NIPSCO would be installing the 400 amp service at Norwayne as well. Then H&T Electrical would be donating their time to trench so that NIPSCO would be able to install the 400 amp service. Leszek wanted to thank REMC, NIPSCO and H&T Electrical for all their help in fixing the electrical issues at Norwayne Field. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe mentioned that they had lost their local contact with NIPSCO. He

explained that they have not been able to get lights at the Pickleball Courts since they have been unable to get ahold of someone at NIPSCO since August.

Town Manager Leszek presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2681 to North Judson ACE Hardware for GFCI 20 amp (8) and Weatherproof CVR Covers (24), Invoice 4396/2, in the amount of \$626.11

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

P.O. 2681 to North Judson ACE Hardware for GFCI 20 amp (8) and Weatherproof CVR Covers (24), Invoice 4396/2, in the amount of \$626.11

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

#### **Legal Updates – Town Attorney Justin Schramm**

Schramm stated he was impressed with the amount of people who responded to the unsafe letters. He explained that you usually do not hear anything back from the owners after the Town sends out the letters so having two out of six people respond back was very impressive.

#### **Additional Business Deemed Necessary by the Council:**

Council President Rowe stated that he was going to ask about the Christmas lights, but Kapp informed him that her crew would be starting to put them up later in the week. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe mentioned that Deputy Clerk Chaja had been doing a great job working with Park Board member Alicia Collins. The two of them had been working on scheduling trees to be decorated at Norwayne Field. Council Vice President asked if there was a date for Tree Lighting. Deputy Chaja stated that the Lighting will take place on Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> with the parade starting at 5:45 PM with the Lighting to follow.

Council President Rowe also wanted to bring up the topic of starting the meetings earlier so that way everyone would have more time to be with their families in the evenings. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe explained that they could have one morning meeting and one evening meeting but that could affect Attorney Schramm's ability to attend. He mentioned that they could explore their options to see what works the best for everyone.

#### **Payment of Claims:**

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to pay Payment of Claims in the amount of \$322,790.77. 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 7:50 P.M.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Rowe, Council President

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrew J. Rowe, Clerk-Treasurer

Next regular scheduled meeting – Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 6:30 P.M.