



## ***Common Council Meeting – Minutes for December 4, 2023***

**Council Members in Attendance:** Ben Leavitt, Dana Hollar, Dustin Geyer, Kelbi Veenstra

**Also Present: Mayor:** Phil Jenkins, **City Attorney:** Brian Hoffer, **Clerk-Treasurer** Jeff Knight, **Guests:** 7 (6 IP, 1 OL), and two members of the press (IP) were in attendance.

- Call to Order: Mayor Jenkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Council Member Leavitt offered the opening prayer.
- Roll Call: Council members listed above were in attendance in person.
- Approval of Minutes from the November 20, 2023, Council meeting: Council Member Hollar motioned to approve the minutes. Council Member Leavitt seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.
- There were no petitions or comments by citizens and no reports from committees, boards, or commissions.
- Unfinished Business: 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading of Ordinance 1627 – 2024 Salary Ordinance: Mayor Jenkins presented the ordinance on third reading. Council Member Geyer asked if the City salaries are compared to other municipalities. Mayor Jenkins said yes, the City tries to keep track of what surrounding communities are paying in order to see if any adjustments need to be made. Council Member Geyer confirmed that the salaries for the City were not out of line one way or the other. Mayor Jenkins responded that they were no out of line either way especially in Elkhart county and that it is a balancing act. Council Member Leavitt noted the presentation of the salaries is much cleaner now than at previous times. With no further questions or comments, Council Member Geyer motioned to approve Ordinance 1627 – 2024 Salary Ordinance on third reading. Council Member Hollar seconded. Ordinance 1627 – 2024 Salary Ordinance was approved unanimously by roll call vote (4-0).
- New Business:
  - Approve 2024 Council Meeting Schedule: Mayor Jenkins presented the schedule. Council Member Hollar motioned to approve the schedule. Council Member Veenstra seconded. The 2024 Council Meeting Schedule was approved unanimously by voice vote.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Ordinance 1628 – Establishment of Redevelopment Authority: Mayor Jenkins presented the request. This request pertains to the building of the new fire station. Mayor Jenkins noted the process is in the early stages and the City is working with three Design/Build teams to come up with a schematic design. As they are working on that from the design perspective, the City is also planning for the financial aspect of the project. Part of that is looking at how to structure the bond for the fire station. Mayor Jenkins and CT Knight have had conversation with the City's bond council (Ice Miller) and financial consultant (Baker Tilly) regarding the structuring and it is the intent of the City to utilize TIF and Public Safety LIT dollars towards initial downpayment and future debt service. In order for the City to do that, Ice Miller has recommended the City establish a Redevelopment Authority (RDA). Mayor Jenkins then referred the council members to the Ordinance that deals with the specific details. The RDA is a separate entity established in order to lease the public improvements back to the City's Redevelopment Commission. The RDA will consist of three members. City Attorney Hoffer discussed the differences between the proposed leasing method of funding a project and the GO bond method that is based on assessed values. Council Member Leavitt questioned how the membership of the RDA would be determined. Mayor Jenkins said it

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would be appointed but that no particular appointees have been determined at this time. The appointees will be from outside of the Council. Along those lines, Council Member Geyer asked if this RDA would be made up of individuals who had the “bandwidth” that can handle all of the details on behalf of the City. Mayor Jenkins said yes. They are the arm that will do all of the research, summarize their findings, and then make a recommendation to the Council and to Redevelopment. Attorney Hoffer said establishing this RDA will allow the City another method of financing that it would not otherwise have. Council Member Geyer inquired about the associated costs. Attorney Hoffer noted that there would not be any additional costs other than those incurred by the bond council and financial consultants. Council Member Leavitt asked if this was an entity that would be able to be used for future projects. Attorney Hoffer said yes and that this was an entity without any end. Council Member Hollar asked if there is any financial burden from this entity making decisions outside of Council. Mayor Jenkins said there is no additional liability. They are working on the City’s behalf. Mayor Jenkins suggested the possibility of having Ms. Heather James (Ice Miller) attend the next Council meeting via videoconference. Council Member Geyer asked if the City knew the cost that will be charged by bond council and the consultants. Mayor Jenkins said it was not determined yet due to the variability of the fire station’s cost and how much cash the City elects to put into the project. With no further questions or comments, Council Member Geyer motioned to approve Ordinance 1628 – Establishment of a Redevelopment Authority. Council Member Leavitt seconded. The ordinance was approved unanimously by voice vote on first reading.

- Express Interest in Appraisals for City Hall and Emergency Services Building: Mayor Jenkins presented the request. Attorney Hoffer said these appraisals will be utilized in establishing the collateral for the lease. Council Member Geyer asked if more than one appraisal will be obtained. Mayor Jenkins said the City will obtain two appraisals. The appraisals will be to establish values for City Hall and the EMS building. Council Member Geyer asked if it would only be those two buildings. Mayor Jenkins replied yes, at this time. The City can use buildings as well as infrastructure (examples are Woodview Drive or Miriam Ave.). CT Knight believes the cost of the appraisals will be between \$1,500 and \$3,000. With no further questions or comments, Council Member Hollar motioned to approve the expression of interest in obtaining appraisals for City Hall and the EMS Building. Council Member Leavitt seconded. The expression of interest in appraisals for City Hall and the EMS building was approved unanimously by voice vote.
- Approval of Accounts Payable Vouchers: 2023 APV’s Totaling \$297,796.75: CT Knight told the Council that these vouchers contain everyday business expenses including \$35,000 for Borden Waste services. Council Member Geyer asked about the nature of the reimbursement of credit card collections. CT Knight said that these are funds which are collected into the City account for water and wastewater payments and distributed to the utility departments internally. Council Member Leavitt motioned to approve the APV’s. Council Member Veenstra seconded. The APV’s were approved unanimously by voice vote.
- Reports by City Officers: Mayor Jenkins recognized Utility Superintendent Gerber. Council Member Geyer thanked Superintendent Gerber for his service. Other members of the Council concurred.



- Adjournment: With no further business to be discussed, Council Member Leavitt motioned to adjourn the meeting and Council Member Hollar seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm by unanimous voice vote.

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Phil Jenkins, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Knight, Clerk of the Council