

SYRACUSE TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

March 17, 2009

Cassie Cowan, President, called the Regular Meeting of the Syracuse Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Other council members present were Bill Musser, Larry Siegel, and Paul Stoelting. Town Manager Henry DeJulia, Town Attorney Mike Reed, and Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline were also present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Cassie asked for comments from the public on agenda items. There were no comments.

The minutes of the February 17 meeting were presented. Paul moved to approve the corrected version of the minutes; Larry seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Additional Appropriation Ordinance #09-01 was introduced. Julie explained the additional \$85,000.00 appropriation is to pay for the contract the council approved last month with Wightman Petrie. Paul moved to adopt the ordinance; Larry seconded. Larry stated he would like more detail on the invoices from Wightman Petrie as they are billed. Larry also questioned an SRF claim for Wightman Petrie. Julie agreed to provide invoice copies to the council starting next month. Four voted for the motion to adopt Ordinance 09-01; none against. The motion carried.

Pam Kennedy, of Housing Opportunities of Warsaw, advised the improvements presented last month have all been bid out and awarded. She distributed application #3 for the Syracuse III grant. Pam advised this applicant has lost her job, but Pam also noted the applicant has a nest egg. A new roof and electrical work are needed; Pam has budgeted \$12,000.00 for the improvements. Paul moved to accept application #3 for \$12,000.00; Larry seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Ms. Kennedy also distributed a spreadsheet illustrating the status of applications and repairs for all of the grants.

Claims #250 through #363, as well as SRF claim #78, were presented for payment. Larry moved to pay claims #250 through #363; Paul seconded. Paul noted SRF claim #78 is on the docket. Henry advised that claim is for work completed from 1-1-09 through 1-31-09. Larry noted we have been paying for the VFD issue for months. Henry stated he has negotiated costs before, though not on this one. Discussion followed. Paul asked Henry for his thoughts. Henry stated if we pay for something, we expect the problem to be resolved. Larry added Wightman Petrie got in the middle as third party. There were two variables, theirs and the engineers. They were part of the issue. Larry stated we previously mentioned VFD's as a solution to the problems. He feels they wanted to prove they were not the problem. Cassie suggested we act on the motion and discuss the SRF claim with them further; approval of the SRF claim is not part of the motion. Paul asked why this was not brought up by someone earlier. Larry again stated they were not a third party. Mike Reed explained they were not acting as an "independent" party. Paul noted it took six months to decide to do

the VFD's; we spent a lot of time spinning on this issue. Paul stated if there is a conflict, he would like to be made aware of it ahead of time. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Henry DeJulia made several announcements .The legal description of the TIF has been recorded; we need to clarify a couple of areas. We now have an interlocal agreement with the Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission. We were also able to get certain areas approved for outside storage. Henry has a meeting scheduled with Dorinda Heiden-Guss, the Elkhart County Development Director, to investigate marketing for our industrial site. He also announced he met with MACOG; they are working with him on the EDA grant. At this time, they are waiting on information that is needed from Ken Jones for the grant.

Henry advised he met with the Elkhart County Plan Commission; Henry has provided the plan commission with the "area of growth" information they requested. Also at their request, we are working on going from a GPUD (General Plan Urban Development) to a more Detailed Plan Urban Development, a DPUD. Henry noted we are being asked to basically engineer the onsite parcels of the park; we want to have the flexibility to change. Cassie asked about general vs. detailed development. She noted we have to pay for engineering for the detailed plan, and when we do have a developer, we would have to pay for engineering again to meet the developer's needs. She asked why we have to do that. Paul asked why it is needed; Henry stated they are concerned about what might go in there. Mike Reed questioned why we can't sit on it. Henry noted we have to have the zoning approved, as well as approval by the Elkhart County Commissioners and the Kosciusko County Commissioners. Henry added Elkhart County will not approve it unless we provide the DPUD.

Henry noted the engineering agreement approved last month was never signed; the contract is for \$101,105.00. Discussion returned to general versus a detailed PUD. A very lengthy discussion followed about why the DPUD is required when we don't know what we need. Paul asked why they want it when there is no buyer yet. Cassie stated she could understand it for residential where density is important. Larry noted Henry has already argued this with them. Mike Reed stated he understands why it would be needed for a permit, but he questioned why it must be done now. Henry explained this is a requirement by Elkhart County. Questions were raised about what approvals would be needed to construct water and sewer lines. Mike Reed suggested we could wait until we have a user. Henry agreed we could do that, but it would hold up the construction timetable. Larry stated here we are a government finding out how difficult it is as a business to deal with government. Bill agreed the DPUD needs to be done. Cassie signed the contract.

Henry advised he would like to put together a new website for the town. He would like a special section for economic development.

Henry would like the council to consider approving the clearing of two or three four acre sites at the industrial park. We can probably use town manpower; it may mean some overtime. For Forest Park, our people will begin work there as soon as weather permits.

Henry discussed the stimulus dollars. Henry advised that 8,000 projects were submitted through the Ball State website. We may get funded if the money is divided evenly by county; he will be surprised if that happens. We are also looking at an Economic Development Administration grant for the industrial park area, and possibly money through a federal appropriations bill..

Henry requested permission to advertise for bids to demolish the water plant facility and storage tanks. We budgeted \$90,000.00 in water depreciation. Jeremy advised the amount budgeted was to have the tower torn down and the Dolan, Dana, and Vega buildings. Larry asked if any of the buildings are any good; Henry advised Animal Control is not included. Larry asked about the Dana building; Jeremy explained there is no storage. Jeremy advised we also need to remove the building so we can excavate the site to determine what is under it. It was the consensus of the council to solicit bids.

Henry presented a list of infrastructure projects from 2009 to 2014. He also provided some preliminary quotes on sidewalks and paving. He advised it is not necessary to act on this tonight. This list is what the staff came up with; the council can add to it. Henry suggested we wait one year to do the Long Dr. engineering. Cassie asked about Long Dr.; Henry advised it is a major project. Paul asked if the council is supposed to be making choices. Henry explained anything that is dated 2009 he feels we need to do this year; some of the others we can prioritize. Paul stated he is good to go with the list; he would expect to be involved when there are choices to be made.

Larry noted sidewalk quotes were talked about last month. There are ten projects on the list; he asked if we have the money to do all of them. Henry advised if there is a date on the item, he recommends we do it this year. Cassie stated she feels a sidewalk on Front St from Chicago to Medusa would be a waste of money; trucks will just run over the sidewalk. She would like to eliminate that from consideration. She added she feels sidewalks on Pittsburg and Baltimore would be nice. She noted Medusa St from Front St to S.R. 13 includes a parking lot; that should be knocked out of consideration. Cassie asked for clarification on the West Pickwick footbridge. Jeremy explained it crosses the ditch near the recycling bins. Henry noted we have \$54,000.00 budgeted for sidewalks; of that amount, \$17,000.00 is earmarked for Pickwick. Paul asked about cost. Jeremy advised the amounts listed are estimates; we do not have formal quotes. Cassie asked if Brooklyn from Oak to Maple can be done in house; Jeremy said probably. He would like to do Portland St. Cassie advised she would like to do Brooklyn and Portland; Front and Medusa should not be considered at this time. Jeremy noted a sidewalk on Portland St. will connect Main St. to Vega Field. He added we did some water lines on Portland and will

have to do some restoration anyway. If we do the sidewalk now, it will eliminate tearing it up again. Henry said we would also like to set aside \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00 for repairs and leave some available for people who want sidewalks through our sidewalk program. Jeremy stated if he receives some direction from the council, he can get quotes. Tony advised the safety areas are Henry St., Brooklyn, and Pickwick; Jeremy added they would also like to do the last one listed, Portland St. Larry noted his priorities would be #4 on the list(Henry St), #1 E. Pickwick with the grant, #2 Brooklyn St., and last, Portland. Jeremy agreed to get numbers for those areas.

POLICE

Police Chief Tony Ciriello discussed the calls received by the police department last month and gave information on the criminal arrests.

Tony announced that Long Dr. will be closed on April 4 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the annual Easter Egg Hunt.

Tony updated the council on legislative action from the Kernan Shepard report. The house voted down the amendments; the only part that is still alive is nepotism in township government and oversight. At this time, the county government restructuring is dead. The legislation requiring electronic recording of all statements from suspects died in the Senate, however, the Indiana State Supreme Court is considering adding that to the evidentiary rules and is accepting public comments.

The administrative offices for the police department have moved to the former assessor's office; Tony invited everyone to visit after the meeting.

Tony presented a purchase request. He would like to purchase audio visual equipment from Benson Communications for \$987.40. In addition, he would like to purchase a three year agreement for \$30.00 per month that includes the cost of installation, training, and maintenance of the equipment. Paul moved to approve the purchase of the equipment for \$987.40 and the training, installation, and maintenance for \$30.00 per month for three years; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

For the Jake Brakes, the signs have been ordered. Tony advised he has been notified that INDOT will not allow the Jake Brakes signs on S.R. 13, but we can post them on our streets. Our area legislators are working with INDOT to allow municipalities to do this. We may have to do a sign that says "Notice – Noise Ordinance Strictly Enforced" if we can't do the Jake Brakes signs. He added truckers generally know what this means.

PARK

Park Superintendent Chad Jonsson announced a Daddy/Daughter dance was held a couple of weeks ago; there were 220 participants.

The Arbor Day celebration is scheduled for April 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on Syracuse Webster Road near the high school. On April 4th, the VFW is

sponsoring an Easter Egg Hunt at 11:00 a.m. at Lakeside Park. A new event will start this summer. A Farmer's/Artisan Market will be held on Saturdays at Crosson Park. Chad is working with the Chamber and Creative Fish on this program.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Superintendent Jeremy Sponseller presented a purchase request for meter reading guns. Last year we bought new hand held computers for reading water meters; the guns that were purchased at that time did not work with some of the meters we have in service. We have been working for six or seven months and using our old meter guns, however, the old guns do not work anymore. We were able to repair one of them for now. EJP has offered to give us a credit of \$1,983.00 toward the purchase of new guns; the normal price of each gun is \$2,150.00. With the credit from EJP, we can purchase two new guns for \$2,297.00. We will keep the one old gun as a backup. Larry moved to approve the purchase of the guns from EJP for \$2,297.00 with delivery by the end of the month. Paul seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

CLERK

Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline advised we have been informed our EDIT distribution will be higher this year. Checks will be received monthly instead of ½ in May and ½ in November. Last year's EDIT revenue was \$197,444.00; this year we will be receiving \$251,375.00. Yesterday, we received our "1782" notice for the 2009 budget; all budgets were approved. Julie explained our assessed value dropped due to the new homestead credits, and we will receive less property tax revenue from our cumulative funds. Due to the drop in the property tax levy of the cum funds, we are now at \$21,916.00 under maximum levy. Cassie asked about the suggestion from the DLGF that we increase our cum fund rates. Julie explained we may want to look into raising the rate for Cumulative Park; at the current tax rate, the Park Department will not be able to make the lease payment in a few years. Cassie asked if the council had any objection to Julie responding to the 1782 notice that no changes are needed; council members had no problem with that.

TOWN ATTORNEY

Town Attorney Mike Reed had nothing further to report.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

None.

OLD BUSINESS

Larry asked if we know when NIPSCO will be providing the trees. Jeremy advised LaPorte Nursery contacted him today about setting up a time to deliver the trees. He added 10 trees are for S.R. 13 and 3 are for individuals who need to replace trees.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Paul moved to adjourn the meeting. Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

The Syracuse Town Council adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

ATTEST:

Cassandra Cowan, President

Julie Kline, Clerk Treasurer