

SYRACUSE TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

April 15, 2014

Town Council President Brian Woody 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, Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline, and Scott Reust, representing Town Attorney Vern Landis, were also present. Council member Kathy Beer was absent.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Brian asked for public comment on agenda items; there were no comments.

The March 18, 2014 minutes were introduced. Paul moved to approve the minutes; Larry seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The minutes were approved.

Claims # 351 through # 463 were presented for payment. Larry moved to approve the claims; Brian seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Brian introduced our rate consultant, Jim Higgins, of London Witte. Mr. Higgins stated he was present to answer any questions from the council or public about the proposed sewer rate ordinance.

Brian opened the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2014-03, An Ordinance Amending the Sewage Rates and Charges. Sharon Fowler asked why the increase is needed. Brian explained the sewer plant is 25 years old, and we have three or four items that need to be repaired right away. We have not had a sewer rate increase since 1992. Sharon asked if there will be different rates for commercial and residential; she was told all bills are based upon volume. Sharon asked if we are going to build a new plant; she was told the plant will be renovated. Brian added we have two clarifiers that need to be replaced; they are \$250,000.00 each. Brian asked if there were any other comments; there were none. Brian closed the public hearing.

Larry asked Mr. Higgins about the outside user rate. It is in our current ordinance, but not in the proposed ordinance. Mr. Higgins explained the current outside rate was specifically tied to the debt. If we continue the outside user rate, it must now be shown the rate is fair and equitable. A higher outside rate is contestable. Since we only have 29 outside users, it was felt it is not worth the risk. Mr. Higgins was asked if this applies to the Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District; he explained their billing is based upon a negotiated contract. Larry questioned if other rates can be negotiated. Mr. Higgins gave an example of a large industrial user who was interested in locating in town; the industry may ask for a special rate. This ordinance does not prohibit negotiation should we want to consider a special rate.

Sharon asked about the \$250,000.00 for the clarifiers and what needs to be done. Brian advised the work is expected to cost \$2.7 million over two to three years.

Paul made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-03; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Jim Gutting, of Barnes and Thornburg, spoke about Ordinance 2014-04. The ordinance authorizes the sewer department to issue BANS (Bond Anticipation Notes) and Bonds for an amount not to exceed \$3,000,000.00. Brian asked about the interest rate. Jim Higgins stated after the ordinance is adopted, they will bid out the BANS. He estimates the interest rate will be less than 2.5% to 2.75%. He suggested we draw funds as needed. Larry asked about local banks; Julie advised three local banks have expressed an interest in financing the bonds. Mr. Gutting added the BANS are only valid for five years.

Larry moved to adopt Ordinance 2014-04 on first reading. Paul seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Paul moved to suspend the rules and adopt the ordinance on second reading tonight. Larry seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Larry moved to adopt Ordinance 2014-04 on second reading. Paul seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The ordinance was adopted.

Police Chief Tony Ciriello discussed Ordinance 2014-05. The ordinance designates certain streets in Oakwood Park as one way; in addition, parking will be allowed only on one side of the street to allow for emergency services and trash pickup. Tony added he discussed the ordinance with JR Parent, owner of the hotel, and Larry Lane, President of the Oakwood Property Owner's Association. Tony stated he made changes to the ordinance as they requested. Paul made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2014-05; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried. Tony announced the ordinance will be published next week; Larry Lane will also notify the Oakwood residents.

Brian opened the Public Hearing for the annexation request from Robert Wicker and Paula Kehr-Wicker of 4572 E Fox Run Dr. He asked for comments on the annexation; Larry asked about water and sewer. Julie explained water is available. The sewer is not available yet, however, it is also not available to many residences in Wawasee Heights. Brian closed the Public Hearing.

Town Manager Henry DeJulia asked the council to approve the fiscal plan he prepared for the annexation. Paul moved to adopt the fiscal plan for services to the annexed territory; Brian seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Brian read the Arbor Day Proclamation declaring April 25th as Arbor Day in the Town of Syracuse. Chad Jonsson, Park Superintendent, advised this is the 13th year the Town of Syracuse has been a Tree City USA; we also received our 10th Growth Award. Brian signed the proclamation.

Brett Konarski, of Jones, Petrie, Rafinski, provided his monthly update on the Industrial Park. He advised Airmarking submitted a signed contract for the pavement striping in the industrial park. There is also a contract for the Long Dr culvert that will be signed. The Long Dr culvert contract has a change order increasing the total contract to \$7,675.00. The increase of just over \$1,100.00 is due to federal wage and compliance requirements. Paul moved to approve change order #1 for the Long Dr culvert contract; Larry seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Brett advised he provided an updated cost estimate for improvements to Front St. Henry stated he would like to discuss this next month. Henry noted this was discussed about four years ago; there are issues, and we need to discuss it again. Jeremy Sponseller, Public Works Director, added we put four band-aids on the water lines this winter.

Larry asked when the roads are going to be accepted by Elkhart County. Brett stated the striping has to be completed and construction as-builts must be submitted to Elkhart County before this can be done.

TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Henry DeJulia presented a summary of the tax abatement forms (CF-1's) we received from the businesses that were approved for tax abatement. He went over the numbers for Polywood and P.W. Realty. Paul made a motion to approve the personal property CF-1 from Polywood and the real property CF-1 from P.W. Realty. Brian seconded. Bill questioned the number of additional employees; Henry noted the improvements are not quite done. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Henry went over the information on the CF-1's for Syracuse Properties and Jasper Plastics. Bill questioned the number of employees. Henry explained the number of employees on the SB-1 included AIA Countertops, which has been sold. Paul made a motion to approve the real property CF-1 from Syracuse Properties and the CF-1 personal property from Jasper Plastics. Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Henry presented the tax abatement forms for Technical Services. Henry pointed out Technical Services estimated 12 new employee. There are actually 15, however, the salaries are less than indicated on the SB-1. Paul moved to approve the CF-1's for real and personal property for Precision Automotive d/b/a Technical Services. Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Patrick Industries' tax abatement forms were presented; Henry noted Patrick Industries purchased the industry that was formerly AIA Countertops. Paul moved to approve the CF-1's for real and personal property for Patrick Industries. Larry seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

POLICE

Police Chief Tony Ciriello announced there were 353 calls for service in March. There were six property damage accidents and one personal injury accident. There were 16 criminal arrests made; 12 of the arrests were felonies.

Tony announced the Police Department hired Jason Longmire as the new officer; Jason started last week. Tony will introduce Jason Longmire at the May meeting.

Tony advised he has been appointed to the advisory board for the Indiana State University School of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

PARK

Park Superintendent Chad Jonsson reported the Easter Egg Hunts last weekend went well. Upcoming Park events include a Youth Safety Day on May 3, the Farmer's and Artisan Market at Crossen Mill Park opening on May 10, the Cruise In uptown on May 16, and the Car Show at the Community Center on May 17.

PUBLIC WORKS

Jeremy Sponseller, Public Works Director, announced Triad was chosen to complete the PER. Triad has completed an application for SRF; this application will place us on a Project Priority List (PPL) and acknowledges the project may consider SRF funding. Larry questioned why we did not have this information sooner. Jeremy advised he could have waited until next month, but that would delay the project. This application does not commit us to anything. Council members had no problem with Henry signing the SRF application.

Jeremy reported we are hoping the Harkless bridge will be completed this week; once it is complete, it will be galvanized and delivered. The street department will be building the board walk, but they are going to wait to construct the boardwalk until the bridge is in to make sure everything lines up.

Jeremy presented a purchase request. He advised our current skid loader is 13 years old and is showing it's age. He would like to trade it in on a new unit. He presented two quotes. One quote is for a slightly used unit; a new unit is only \$1705.00 more. Discussion followed on new vs. used. Paul made a motion to approve the purchase from Moore Farm Stores for \$43,205.00; delivery is to be in 60 days. Larry seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The purchase was approved.

CLERK

Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline announced the freeze warning was cancelled on March 31. For customers who notified the clerk's office that they were allowing their water to drip, an adjustment will be made on the next bill.

TOWN ATTORNEY

Attorney Scott Reust discussed the elimination of the personal property tax. If the personal property tax is eliminated, there will no longer be tax abatements on personal property since there will not be a tax to abate. Discussion followed on the impact on town revenue. Tony noted a summer study committee has been appointed to look into this.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Rick Pharis of Triad suggested looking into capacity fees for our sewer rates; new industries and developments could be charged a capacity fee.

Sharon Fowler would like us to enforce town codes to clean up debris; she also objected to the parked cars and equipment at what was the molasses plant. Tony advised all of the equipment is in working condition and therefore is not a violation of town ordinances.

Cub Scouts were present at the meeting; one of them asked about the wastewater improvements. Brian explained the plant is 25 years old. There are four specific items that are starting to fail; if we don't upgrade, we will not be able to meet our permit requirements.

OLD BUSINESS

Bill announced the construction at Fire Station #1 is progressing well. The target completion is in June.

NEW BUSINESS

Larry would like us to purchase a new clock for the council room.

Bill suggested Tony talk to the residents of Harkless Dr to let them know what is going on with the new bridge and sidewalk.

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

The Syracuse Town Council adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

ATTEST:



Brian Woody, President



Julie Kline, Clerk Treasurer