

Town Council Meeting
Monday, January 22, 2024
6:00 P.M.

Edinburgh Town Council met in a regular session on Monday, January 22, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. at the Town Hall, 107 South Holland Street, Edinburgh, Indiana.

President Ryan Piercefield called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members answering roll call: Councilman Mike Bryant, Councilwoman Debbie Buck, Councilwoman Miriam Rooks, Councilwoman Sherri Sweet, and Council President Ryan Piercefield. Also present were Clerk Treasurer Rhonda Barrett, Town Manager Kevin McGinnis and Town Attorney Dustin Huddleston.

Minutes – Council meeting minutes of December 28, 2023, Town Attorney Dustin Huddleston said that as there were only two members of this board in attendance at that meeting, that only those two members can vote.

Councilwoman Rooks made a motion to approve the December 28, 2023 minutes. Councilwoman Buck seconded. Motion carried.

Council meeting minutes of January 8, 2024, and Executive meeting minutes of January 13, 2024.

Councilwoman Buck made a motion to approve the January 8, 2024 & Executive meeting January 13, 2024. Councilwoman Rooks seconded. Motion carried.

Claims – The council received a copy of the claim docket in their council packet. The total for the docket was \$1,342,156.48. Those claims have been signed and were presented to the council for approval.

Councilwoman Rooks made a motion to approve the claims as submitted. Councilwoman Sweet seconded. Motion carried.

Plaque Presentation to Robertson Paving – Council President Ryan Piercefield presented a plaque to Eric & Reese from Robertson Paving in appreciation for their assistance with an excavator on Friday, January 12, 2024, in helping get a large fire out at the Commercial property located at 111 North Holland Street.

Resolution 2024-2 Authorization for Execution of INDOT Agreements – Town Attorney Dustin Huddleston said in the past INDOT has asked for a resolution authorizing the Town Manager and/or the Street Department Superintendent to execute documents on the Community Crossing Grants. INDOT has other opportunities available, and they are requesting a blanket authorization for the Town Manager and/or the Street Department Superintendent to execute INDOT agreements.

Councilwoman Rooks made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-2. Councilwoman Buck seconded. Motion carried.

Fire Chief Employment Agreement – Town Attorney Dustin Huddleston presented the employment agreement for Justin Lollar as Fire Chief effective January 22, 2024. He will be starting today as part time until April 12, 2024, and will become full time on April 12, 2024. The part time pay will be \$30 per hour, then the salary will be prorated of \$70,000 per year.

Council President Ryan Piercefield thanked Chuck Ridpath for filling in as interim Fire Chief, and for staying on as part time Deputy Chief once Justin Lollar becomes full time.

Councilwoman Buck made a motion to approve the Fire Chief Employment Agreement for Justin Lollar. Councilwoman Rooks seconded. Motion carried.

Ordinance 2024-1 Amending Fee Schedule (2nd Reading) – Clerk Treasurer Rhonda Barrett said in the packet was an updated copy of the fee schedule with one adjustment since the first reading to the cost of a Bucket Truck use.

Councilwoman Rooks asked why that was split if it was because of different trucks? Electric Superintendent Steve Clark advised that the previous rate was based on different heights of the bucket truck, but the height does not make a difference and the rate should be the same for all the bucket trucks.

Councilwoman Rooks made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-1 Amending the Fee Schedule. Councilwoman Sweet seconded. Motion carried.

Public Official Bond Approval - Clerk Treasurer Rhonda Barrett said the council should have received in their packet a copy of the Clerk Treasurer Bond, that needs Council approval and signature. Council President Ryan Piercefield said that we would need two motions, one to approve and one for him to be able to sign on behalf of the council.

Councilwoman Buck made a motion to approve the Public Official Bond for Clerk Treasurer Rhonda Barrett. Councilwoman Rooks seconded. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Buck made a motion for Council President Piercefield to sign. Councilwoman Rooks seconded. Motion carried.

Water Treatment Plant Pay Application #20 - Clerk Treasurer Rhonda Barrett presented Water Treatment Plant Pay Application #20 in the amount of \$228,391.98, upon approval it will be submitted to the SRF for approval and payment.

Councilwoman Sweet asked how much is still due on the construction after this payment. Town Manager Kevin McGinnis said it was \$639,000.

Councilwoman Buck made a motion to approve Water Treatment Plant Pay Application #20. Councilwoman Rooks seconded. Motion carried.

Parks & Recreation BOT – Parks Superintendent Daniel Teter said at the last meeting the council gave him the opportunity to do a presentation based on the reasons why we would like to acquire the property for the future growth of the parks department. He said that he and Clerk Treasurer Barrett looked at some properties in the area that had sold recently for price comparison. The selling price seems like it could be high but would need to be appraised to determine that. He said that he feels like the size of the property and the adjoining location to the current Parks property adds value to it for the Town. With future plans for new housing growth the property is needed to have space available for future growth of the Parks and the services they provide. He said that he was asked about other funding opportunities such as grants, and he said there are no grants available to purchase land. Once the land is acquired there are opportunities to find funding to help with goals for the property. He asked that the Council would approve the BOT with GM Development.

Attorney Dustin Huddleston suggested that the Council allow him to prepare the agreement for the BOT with GM Development as he did with the last BOT project.

Councilwoman Buck made a motion to allow Attorney Huddleston to prepare the BOT agreement with GM Development. Councilwoman Sweet seconded. Motion carried. Roll Call vote as follows:

Mike Bryant – Aye

Sherri Sweet – Aye

Debbie Buck – Aye

Miriam Rooks – Nay

Ryan Piercefield – Aye

Electric Rate Increase Discussion – Electric Superintendent Steve Clark said that in December 2023 he had talked with the council about electric rate increases and would like to present some of that information to the new council members, so they understand why it is needed. In the packet was a copy of his power point presentation. He covered how billing is done on two different methods which include Kilowatt Hours which is basically how much energy is consumed, and the second method is Demand which is based on over a time frame how much is consumed.

All residential is based on Kilowatt hours. The Demand is for large industrial and similar customers, due to their heavy use on the power system. Only a portion of the rate increase will affect the residential customers. Coincident peak is measured in 30-minute intervals over the month what the maximum demand is and that is what they are billed on. We purchase our power from IMPA and that is how we are billed by them. The IMPA bill is broken down into total amount of energy used, demand charge is the entire town's coincident peak, the 30-minute interval highest peak for the entire town is what we pay on. IMPA implements a tracker that changes every quarter that is based on assumptions. Every quarter IMPA looks at their expenses and adjusts the tracker accordingly. We use the tracker received from IMPA and change

that every quarter on customers' utility bills. We bill our residential customers on kilowatt usage only. Industrial and larger commercial customers are billed on kilowatt consumption and demand based on their peak. In the Electric Rate Ordinance Codes 1, 2, and 3 are all kilowatt usage, Codes 4, 5, and 6 industrial rates are based on voltage they buy, the more they use, the lower the rate based on engineer's study.

We are a not-for-profit utility, all revenue generated is used for expenses to fund projects such as system and line maintenance, new substations, equipment. We have had increased costs from IMPA, typically rate studies are done every 3-5 years. The last one we had done was in 2019, since that time, the amount that we are paying to IMPA has greatly increased. The 2019 rates that we are billing are out of date and we are not capturing the revenue that we need.

Baker Tilly will be coming to discuss a bond for the upcoming projects. The list of upcoming projects includes items such as the new Substation, State Road 252 line relocation, and other items that total \$19,000,000.00, which will need to be bonded or financed to cover. From 2019 until now, the demand has gone up 11.83%, with kilowatt hours going up 71.78%. The proposed rates will impact each billing code differently. The residential increase would be approximately 10%. Baker Tilly did a study based on our income, expenses, and upcoming projects and their suggestion was around a 13% increase for all customers. Alpha Engineering suggested a 10% increase for residential and a higher increase for industrial and commercial customers.

Based on a sample monthly billing of 22 of our Industrial customers in 2023, if we use the demand and energy charges that we are paying for 2024, we could potentially lose \$90,000 per month on those same 22 customers. The biggest reason for this loss is the demand charges. Currently customers are paying approximately \$12 per kilowatt hour, and we are paying IMPA approximately \$24 per kilowatt hour. The proposed rates have every customer paying their adequate portion.

Councilman Mike Bryant asked why rate increases are not done on a yearly basis. Electric Superintendent Clark said historically it is done every 3 – 5 years, and at one time it was 10 years between rate increases. Superintendent Clark said that we are looking at going for a smaller bond and then in a couple of years looking at the rates again and do another bond.

Councilwoman Buck asked Superintendent Clark if the council needs to do anything tonight. He said that tonight was more of an educational presentation for the new council members.

First Amendment to Construction Agreement Between the Town of Edinburgh and Ecosystems Connections Institute, LLC – Town Manager Kevin McGinnis said when Ecosystems signed the agreement, they went to their insurance provider and found out that they aren't going to be able to satisfy some of the requirements in the agreement. Town Manager McGinnis, Town Attorney Huddleston, and Ecosystems have been working with the insurance provider, to come to an agreeable amount of money for the insurance coverage cap limits. Ecosystems has signed the addendum to the agreement prepared by Attorney Huddleston. The addendum is being presented to the council for approval.

Councilwoman Rooks made a motion to approve the Amendment to Construction Agreement with Ecosystems. Councilwoman Buck seconded. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Rooks made a motion to approve Council President Piercefield to sign the Amendment to Construction Agreement with Ecosystems. Councilwoman Buck seconded. Motion carried.

Raising Chickens – Council President Piercefield updated the new council members on an incident from 2023 where a couple of people were wanting to be allowed to raise chickens in Town. An ordinance was passed in 2015 which does not allow chickens in town due to health and nuisance reasons. One of the parties who wants to keep the chickens for personal reasons has attained a lawyer to challenge that ordinance. Further evaluation of the current ordinance by the council needs to be taken under advisement with the new council members. Town Manager McGinnis said he would be willing to talk with either of the new council members to give them more information.

Other Business

Councilwoman Buck congratulated Justin Lollar and thanked Chuck Ridpath for his work as interim.

Councilwoman Rooks congratulated Justin Lollar and thanked Chuck Ridpath and also for their work during the fire, as well as the other Town Departments that helped out that night.

President Piercefield thanked Justin & Chuck as well as Steve Clark, Dalton Hudson, Bill Jones, Jake Sizemore, Robertsons Paving, Chief Little, and all the outpour from the community during the night of the fire.

Clerk Treasurer Rhonda Barrett congratulated Justin Lollar and thanked Chuck Ridpath for all of his work as interim.

Departmental Comments

Police Chief Doyne Little can't say enough about what the town does, Dominoes offered food. Doyne thanked Chuck for all his work in the past year. Doyne thanked Justin Hyer, the police chaplain and also a police reserve was at the fire immediately to offer assistance.

Electric Superintendent Steve Clark wanted to give an update on a 252-project utility coordination meeting he attended at the end of last week. The plan is all utilities to go underground, AT & T is not going underground, and they will have to build their own infrastructure. The plans are not finalized yet as they did not include the street lighting, there may be more conversation later. Council President Piercefield said the Council will have Attorney Huddleston look into this.

Wastewater Superintendent Bob Jessie said they are having some issues with the old Vac Truck, and it is getting repairs again. Council President Piercefield said that he had conversation with Water Superintendent Bill Jones about going to a Hydrovac truck, as we currently have a combo truck.

Water Superintendent Bill Jones said he submitted the Lead and Copper Inventory to EPA which makes us eligible to apply for up to a \$100,000 grant which could go towards the purchase of a new vac truck. The new water treatment plant had an online last Thursday morning has been going good until yesterday when they had an issue with a chlorine line. They were able to reset it and it is working good, they are going to convert over to a second well. He is giving Councilwoman Sweet a tour of the new plant tomorrow and invited any other members that would want to arrange a time with him for a tour. He said that he is going to be resigning from the Library Board, and the Council would need to appoint someone to take his place. He said they had a couple of main breaks, but they have been fixed.

Planning Director Julie Young said the Planning Commission is passing along the subdivision control ordinance, at the end of the week the council will be receiving that certification, and the council will receive information on the next agenda.

Parks Director Daniel Teter said basketball is ongoing, baseball signups are going on right now, they are taking father/daughter dance registrations, taking applications for spring/summer help, fun planning for this years Holiday of Lights, and Solar Eclipse planning.

Sarabeth Drybread attended the Johnson County Tourism Bureau meeting and asked for a \$25, 000 grant to bring an ice-skating rink downtown during December 2024 and it was granted. Parks Director Daniel Teter said that Sarabeth had actually asked for less, but through her discussion there they were so impressed that they gave us more. The event was not going to be as long as it is, that we will be having the 12 days of Christmas downtown with ice skating.

Justin Lollar said he is excited to be here, he started here 32 years ago, glad to have the opportunity to come back to where he started. He thanked Chuck for the phenomenal job that he has done as Interim and is excited that Chuck is staying on board.

Chuck Ridpath said the donation fund has approximately \$9,000 and they would like to purchase an ice machine for \$1599, and a water fountain for \$1129. He appreciates the council working with the fire department, thankful for the ladder truck purchase a few years ago. He expressed thanks to all the other departments for their help during the fire, as well as Robertson's Paving. At the exact time as the fire there was a car wreck in front of CVS so it took about 8 minutes to get on scene of fire. Amity Fire happened to be in the area in a rescue vehicle doing drivers training headed south and turned around to help out. Justin and his crew from Franklin came down and helped, former members showed up to help.

Public Comments

Ron Hazelgrove was here on behalf of the Lions Club and would like the Town to support the Fall Festival again this year.

Council President Piercefield asked how much is usually given? Mr. Hazelgrove said \$3000.

Councilwoman Rooks made motion to approve the annual donation of \$3000 to the Lions Club. Councilwoman Buck seconded. Motion carried.

Sherry Tatlock, 514 High School Drive asked when will the chicken issue be resolved.

Council President Piercefield said that we are taking it under advisement right now, we need time to get the new board members up to date on what has been going on.

Sherry Tatlock said that her neighbor and Brad initially went house to house asking neighbors if they cared if they had chickens and wanted them to sign a petition and she did not have Jason with her.

Council President Piercefield said as of right now the ordinance is still in force, nothing has changed.

Sherry Tatlock said she lives behind the chickens and is worried about feces to her small dog and how her grandkids had to help catch the chickens when they came into her yard.

Council President Piercefield reiterated again that nothing has changed with the ordinance that the council is taking it under advisement to get the new council members updated on the situation.

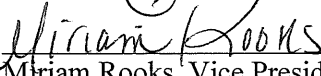
Adjourn

Being no further business or comments, Councilwoman Buck made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Rooks seconded. Motion carried.

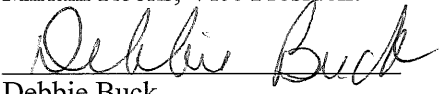
EDINBURGH TOWN COUNCIL



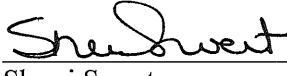
Ryan Piercefield, President



Miriam Rooks, Vice President



Debbie Buck



Sherri Sweet



Mike Bryant

ATTEST:



Rhonda Barrett, Clerk-Treasurer