

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Study Session/Meeting Convened Electronically
Twenty-Ninth Town Council of Highland
Monday, April 19, 2021**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met *electronically* in a study session on **Monday, April 19, 2021** at 6:30 O'clock P.M., in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.*

Special note: This meeting was convened allowing members of the Town Council to participate electronically without being physically present, to be counted in the quorum and able to simultaneously listen and respond to matters taken up in the meeting, all pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Orders 20-04 and 20-09, extended by Executive Order No. 21-08 allowing meetings to be convened, pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 for the duration of the Corona Virus COVID 19 Emergency through April 30, 2021. All members of the Town Council participated electronically with the Clerk-Treasurer participating as well. The electronic platform also allowed the public to observe and participate from on-line access.

The meeting was streamed live on the Town of Highland, Indiana Facebook page and participation was supported by the Zoom on-line communication platform.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Bernie Zemen, Mark Herak, Mark J. Schocke, Tom Black and Roger Sheeman were present (electronically) as indicated. The Clerk-Treasurer, Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings (electronically). A quorum was attained.

Officials Present: John P. Reed, Town Attorney; and Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Redevelopment Director, were also present, participating electronically.

Additional Officials Present: Ed Dabrowski, IT Consultant (Contract) and Board of Waterworks Directors, (electronically); and Dean and Kristen Smith of the Community Events Commission were present. (electronically).

Guests: Robin Carlascio of the Idea Factory was also present (electronically).

General Substance of Matters Discussed.

1. **Ad Hoc Discussion:** *Review of the recent on Site Gathering regarding the Prospective Beer Garden at Main Square for the Independence Day Festival.*

The Town Council President inquired regarding the recent on site meeting regarding the siting of the beer garden as a feature of the Independence Day Festival for this summer

The Town Council discussed whether there was a place for children to participate as a family site apart from a place for persons without children to enjoy beer while listening to the live music performances.

It was noted that Our Lady of Grace Church would be conducting its beer garden at the same time. The discussion included a consideration of whether having the Town's beer garden at the same time would be a challenge to its ability to generate revenue. The Town Council discussion suggested that this was unknown.

It was suggested that members of the Community Events Commission should be included in future gatherings related to the matter.

- 2. Discussion:** *Status of computer inventory both new to be installed or placed in service and those that have been removed from service.* The Town Council President noted that the Police Chief had provided a report regarding its inventory of “retired” computers. The discussion included an exploration of what the disposition of the out of service computers and monitors should be.

It was noted that the suggestion to send the retired police department computers to the Gary Police Department was desirable. It was further noted that the Gary Police Chief favors this approach but has had difficulty obtaining feedback from the City Council’s leadership.

The Clerk-Treasurer discussed the provisions regarding disposal of municipal personal property set forth in IC 5-22-22 et seq., generally and how the provision in IC 5-22-22-6, which allows a public or private sale without resort to an auctioneer or bids if any one item is valued at less than \$1,000 and the total value of all assets is valued at less than \$5,000. This provision was discussed in consequence of a suggestion to sell the retired computers and monitors at a kind of “garage sale.”

It was noted that if a transfer to the City Police Department of Gary was desired, then both governing bodies would need to adopt substantially identical resolutions allowing the exchange between the governmental entities. It was noted that the matter would be further explored.

- 3. Discussion:** *Resignation on the TREE BOARD.* Councilor Schocke, as liaison to the Tree Board, reported that there were two resignations and not one. It was noted it would be desirable to have these positions filled with successors soon.

It was noted that the appointment is made by nomination of the Town Council and then appointment by the Town Council President, under Chapter 8.25.

- 4. Discussion:** *NIPSCO Tariff issue.* The Town Council and the Clerk-Treasurer discussed the desirability of participating in the same coalition of municipal governments that had engaged Ted Sommer from London Witte to review the arcane electrical rate tariffs filed several years ago by the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO). It was noted that the group had succeeded in getting a rate for Light emitted diode (LED) assets that was reduced to allow for the lower energy consumption.

The Town Council and the Clerk-Treasurer noted that NIPSCO had recently filed for Transmission, Distribution, Storage Improvement Charge (TDSIC) tracker mechanism. It was noted that it would be desirable to engage Mr. Sommer of London Witte to review and represent the municipality’s interest in the proceedings. The extracted missive originally sent as an electronic mail message was included in the packet for discussion. It is below.

•LONDON WITTE GROUP LLC •

Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2021

To: Bob Volkmann; Dustin Anderson; James Bennett; Michael Griffin; Mike Troxell; Richard C. MBA Anderson - Town of Winfield ; Stephen J. Guntz; Thomas DeGiulio; William Allen

Subject: NIPSCO-Stakeholder Discussion on New Electric TDSIC Plan

Hello all:

NIPSCO is starting up a new Transmission, Distribution, Storage Improvement Charge (TDSIC) tracker mechanism. In 2019 HEA 1470 Clarifications were passed to SEA 560 that simplified the process of implementing a TDSIC tracker. A TDSIC plan must be approved by the IURC, and can be in place for no longer than 7 years; A base rate case must be filed to incorporate the rate allocations and rate design associated with the rate increases. The utility can reflect 80% of the investments allowed with an increase of no more than 2%/year in rates through a tracker. The 20% of the unrecovered investment is carried by NIPSCO until they can be rolled into a base rate case.

As the Indiana Municipal Utility Group your municipality helped to shape which of those costs were recovered, and through which customer class increases would be recovered.

At the beginning of the last TDSIC we were focused on installing LED streetlights, and keeping the cost of those streetlights way down. I checked the tariffs and your lighting costs for the LED's change-outs by NIPSCO still reflect a rate significantly lower than others in rate class 850.

NIPSCO has just asked that our group be at the table for an April 26th meeting for opening discussions on what they will file in May. I would like to be at that table representing this group. If someone is not there to represent the interests of this group costs **will** find their way to your bills.

If this were before the Pandemic, I would suggest we meet at the Group of 16+ or some other venue. Although I've had my two shots plus 2 weeks, I am certain some of you are not comfortable meeting so that I can further explain the details.

If anyone indicates that they valued what we did last time, and will support our efforts again, I will be at the April 26th meeting indicating said support. I will report what happens at the meeting.

Ted Sommer

Ted Sommer, CPA

LWG CPAs & Advisors

p: (317) 634-4747 ext. 222 f: (317) 632-2727
a: 1776 North Meridian Street, Suite 500,
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202
w: LWGcpa.com
e: Ted.Sommer@LWGcpa.com

5. **Ad Hoc Discussion:** *Need for Fabricated brackets to support Heroes Banners on Main Square Poles.* Councilor Herak noted that brackets to be used with the existing light poles at Main Square are no longer manufactured. It was further noted that without the brackets, it would not be possible to support the Heroes Banners that were very popular. It was still further noted that a vendor had been identified that could fabricate the brackets to support the banners for the poles.

Councilor Herak reported that 120 brackets were needed at a unit price of \$189 each for a total cost of \$22,680. Councilor Herak expressed the hope that the costs could be borne the works board rather than the parks and recreation department.

The discussion included whether a user charge should be enacted to support the costs of the brackets. It was noted that an amendment to the municipal code was enacted but that no user charges were included in a way that could be executed as written. User charges were discussed without a consensus emerging regarding implementing them.

6. **Ad Hoc Discussion:** *Discuss the responsible contact person for the Climate Fellow Cohort with NIRPC. Highland must have a staff person identified to supply the services.* Councilor Schocke reported that he received an electronic mail today from Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) seeking to identify the contact person for this program.

The Town Council President indicated that he believed that he had communicated the person and completed the survey as requested. He asked Councilor Schocke to forward to him the NIRPC electronic mail and he would follow-up on the matter.

There being no further business necessary or desired to be discussed by the Town Council, the *electronically convened* regular study session of the Town Council of **Monday, April 19, 2021**, was adjourned by the Town Council President at 7:10 O'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO
Clerk-Treasurer