

**ANDREWS TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
OF A PUBLIC MEETING HELD JULY 24, 2023**

A public meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Andrews, Indiana convened on July 24, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Andrews Town Hall in accordance with applicable law and pursuant to appropriate notice.

ROLL CALL

Council Members John Harshbarger, Laura Dillon, and Roger Newsome, Jr. were in attendance. Clerk-Treasurer Laury Powell declared a quorum was present and the meeting would continue.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES

Laura Dillon made a motion to approve council minutes for a Regular Session held July 10, 2023. Roger Newsome, Jr. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING – ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FIRE FUND NO. 2243

The public hearing opened at 6:01 p.m. with CT Powell explaining why the additional appropriation of \$12,700.00 is necessary to use the sale proceeds of the old fire truck to make an additional payment on the loan principal for the new fire truck. This amount, alone, exceeds the truck replacement appropriation of \$9,000.00 budgeted for in 2023. Next, Council President Harshbarger read aloud Additional Appropriation Ordinance 2023-5. With no questions from those in attendance, the public hearing closed at 6:05 p.m. when Laura Dillon made a motion to accept Ordinance 2023-5 on its first read. Roger Newsome, Jr. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The second reading and passage of Ordinance 2023-5 will be held at the August 14 meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

2024 Budget: Clerk-Treasurer Laury Powell discussed changes to the 2024 budget with council and department heads, including the incorporation of the Fire Fund under the General Fund as a department, which is how the Town currently handles the Police Fund, and should help simplify the budget process. The reallocation of CEDIT Funds was also discussed now that the FEMA Buyout Project is nearly complete. The DLGF Budget Workshop is scheduled for August 11 at 9:00 a.m.

Powell also relayed information from Eric Woodmansee that the deadline to apply for the next round of CCMG funding is July 28 and that he now advises to wait until first round next year. Council will have time to formulate a plan for street paving and sidewalks.

NEW BUSINESS

Don Keel approached the council asking if they would permit him to use a small area of land, for which there is “no information” and not marked as a right-of-way according to Huntington County GIS records, to increase the dimensions of a garage he is rebuilding after a fire earlier this year. Discussion ensued. John Harshbarger advised Keel to speak with the county auditor and surveyor to possibly learn more about the unidentified parcel, and then take his abstract, and any other gathered information, to an attorney for advice. Laura Dillon added that any legal expenses would be Keel’s full responsibility and stated that involving an attorney now would only protect Keel from any issues arising from a likely sale and survey of Mike Burton’s adjacent property. Council has no issue with what Keel proposed to do.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Department: Town Marshal Austin Bullock reported that his department was awarded a laptop grant through the state, which includes one laptop, one printer package, and one scanner, and is valued at nearly \$3,000.00. Bullock approached the County Commissioners to officially request funding assistance on the new dash and body cameras from Digital-Ally. The Commissioners voted to pay whatever balance remains towards the purchase after the Town pays the first \$10,000.00. Digital-Ally recently quoted Austin a 5% discount since he plans to make full payment in “Year One” instead of the “5-year Annual Subscription Breakdown.”

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After discussion, Laura Dillon motioned to approve and accept the latest Digital-Ally quote totaling \$23,886.64. Roger Newsome seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. Bullock added the Huntington County Sheriff Department needs to upgrade and is looking into a grant to help purchase dash and body cameras from Axon and would like to include the local town's police department needs within their quote and grant application, however this option would be much more expensive for the local police departments than going with Digital-Ally. He will continue to monitor the county level negotiations.

Fire Department: Dean Young said that festival planning is ongoing and that he is happy with the community involvement. The Andrews Community Day is scheduled for August 19th, featuring a parade, several activities, a band, and town-wide yard sales.

Utility Department: Colin Bullock reported that utilities have been repairing bad water lines encountered while installing a second meter behind 72 N Main Street. Colin says that area needs a new main line for which he will seek an estimate on the parts for a future project. Bullock also discussed park plans to create a basketball court from the old tennis court, repurposing half of it for basketball and returning the other half to green space.

Clerk-Treasurer: Laury Powell said that in addition to working with the budget, she will begin the Fire Workers' Comp Audit this week as it is due in mid-August. She asked Dean Young for a current Fire Department Roster, which is a requirement for the audit. Powell also discussed the renewal premium recap for the town's liability insurance. A rate increase of \$4,576.00 resulted from property values being adjusted to account for inflation, to the tune of 1.7 million dollars. She has made further adjustments to the 2024 budget to account for the increase seen this year.

CLAIMS

Laura Dillon made a motion to approve the claims as presented, which was seconded by Roger Newsome, Jr. The Motion was approved 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Melissa Dollarhide, 109 N State Street, asked Council about their knowledge of why the gas station remains closed. After further discussion, John Harshbarger stated that the issue is between the owner Larry Williams, his attorney, and IDEM. He and other council members are not responsible for the situation and residents were advised not to believe everything they hear, and to keep rumors off social media such as Facebook.

Helen Goble, representing the Andrews Lions Club, asked Council if they would provide money for band participation in the Andrews Community Day parade this year. Goble explained the difficulties of attracting bands and fairly compensating for their time and travel expenses, and that the Lions Club plans to pay bands up front after the parade. She asked that the Town reimburse the Lions Club for that expense. In the past, the Town contributed approximately \$250.00 towards band prize money. Laura Dillon motioned to provide money for band participants, in the form of a reimbursement to the Lions Club for such parade expense. Roger Newsome, Jr. seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. Goble will contact Clerk-Treasurer Powell afterwards with the number of bands and the amount of money required for reimbursement.

Michelle Combs, 668 N Market Street, appeared before Council to request an adjustment to her utility account balance after a water leak late last year, immediately followed by a medical condition that required her to leave her home and live with caretakers in Huntington where she still resides today. After much discussion, council members agreed to write off all charges after November 18, 2022, leaving Ms. Combs an unpaid balance of \$71.58 due on her utility account.

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In addition, council members agreed to dismiss the court case recently filed to recover the prior balance of \$742.80 and pay any filing fees associated with the case. Powell will follow up on this decision with Client Services and then contact Ms. Combs on the matter.

Cathy Johnson, 215 S Main Street, asked if anyone knew if Norfolk Southern Railroad plans to repair the Snowden Street crossing, as it is in terrible condition. From prior contact with the railroad, Harshbarger said NS prefers to close it, not wishing to maintain the crossing, citing safety reasons. It was mentioned that residents may want to call the toll-free 800 phone number posted at the crossing and file a complaint regarding its condition.


Neal Snyder, 55 N Main Street, brought up the recent brush pile closure and when it will reopen. Utility Superintendent Bullock explained the circumstances causing the closure and said it will be open on a limited basis and emphasized the service is for town residents only and is limited to clean wood, brush, and yard trimmings. Nothing painted, stained, treated, or with nails and screws can be dumped at the brush pile.

With no further business, Roger Newsome, Jr. made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 p.m., which was seconded by Laura Dillon.

Approved this 14th day of August 2023.

APPROVED BY  as
JOHN HARSHBARGER COUNCIL PRESIDENT

APPROVED BY  as
LAURA A DILLON COUNCIL MEMBER

APPROVED BY  as
ROGER NEWSOME, JR. COUNCIL MEMBER

ATTEST BY  as
LAURY L POWELL CLERK-TREASURER