

CITY OF WEST LAFAYETTE  
COMMON COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
MARCH 1, 2021

The Common Council of the City of West Lafayette, Indiana, met electronically on March 1, 2021, at the hour of 6:30 p.m.

President Bunder called the meeting to order and presided.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

OATH OF OFFICE: Jeffrey P. Brown, Council District 6

Mayor John Dennis administered the Oath of Office to Jeffrey Brown as City Councilor for District 6.

Councilor Brown spoke about how he was a friend and next-door neighbor to Norris Wang. He admired Councilor Wang's commitment to the City, which he saw over the quarter of a century that they were neighbors. It was a sad day when he passed. Councilor Brown felt honored when he was asked to consider holding Councilor Wang's position, and he hopes that he can serve in the spirit that Councilor Wang brought to this community.

ROLL CALL:

Present: James Blanco, Jeff Brown, Peter Bunder, Nick DeBoer, Shannon Kang, Larry Leverenz, Kathy Parker, David Sanders, Gerald Thomas.

Absent: None

Also present: Mayor John Dennis, Corporation Counsel Eric Burns, Clerk Sana Booker, City Controller Peter Gray, and Building Commissioner Chad Spitznagle. Other unnamed department heads who did not speak were available on the conference line.

NOTES

► This meeting was conducted electronically, without the physical attendance of any person, due to the public health emergency (COVID-19 pandemic) and per IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 and State of Indiana Executive Order 20-09, Paragraph 4.

MINUTES

Councilor DeBoer moved for acceptance of the minutes of the February 1, 2021, Common Council Meeting. Councilor Thomas seconded the motion, and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

REPORTS OF CITY DEPARTMENTS ON FILE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

There were no comments.

REPORT OF THE APC REPRESENTATIVES

Councilor Leverenz reported that the new APC Executive Director, David Hittle, started today, and Sallie Fahey will stay to overlap with him through March. Councilor Leverenz confirmed for President Bunder that he will be the President of the APC beginning in January 2022.

Councilor Sanders stated that he was reading about a bill in front of the State legislature that is trying to remove some of the responsibilities of the APC to some of the local city councils. He asked if that is correct or if it is of any concern. Councilor Leverenz, Counsel Burns, and Building Commissioner Spitznagle discussed that they were unsure of the specific bill in question, but they will research and communicate any findings with the Councilors.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: None

FINANCIAL REPORT

Controller Gray reported that we are 17% through the year, and our budget, including encumbrances, is at 16%. If looking at just expenditures, it is at 13%. The department heads are already keeping a good eye on expenses. He noted that the Annual Financial Report has been filed. The Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) asked that the Redevelopment Authority be split out as a separate unit this year, so that report has been filed as well.

LEGAL REPORT

This report is on file.

SPECIAL REPORTS:

Joint Board Report

Councilor DeBoer stated that the next meeting is April 20, 2021.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ordinance No. 17-20 Ordinance No. 17-20 (Amended) Ordinance Requiring The Wearing Of Face Coverings As Necessary To Reduce The Spread Of COVID-19 (Sponsored by Mayor Dennis) [Six-Month Review]

Councilor DeBoer read Ordinance No. 17-20 (Amended) by title only.

Councilor DeBoer moved to take up Ordinance No. 17-20 (Amended) on six-month review on first and only reading, and that the vote be by roll call. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

In response to a question from President Bunder, Counsel Burns explained that, procedurally, we have an ordinance that will stay in effect unless it is changed. The only feature that brings it onto this agenda is that it has a requirement to be reviewed every six months. It is now on the agenda merely to ensure the Council has the ability to do something with it if they want. He offered three options of action for the Council. The first option is to do absolutely nothing, which allows it to stay in effect as-is. The second option is to pass a resolution saying that the Council wants to keep it in effect. The third option, as with any City Code item, is to make amendments to it. He noted that if any changes are made, it would only take one reading to make an amendment.

Mayor Dennis stated that he wants to express gratitude, as we have been through quite a bit since we enacted this Ordinance. We received a lot of grief at the beginning. He appreciates the support of the Council and his staff for standing by his side on this. Although we are getting closer to being able to see the light at the end of the tunnel, we are not there yet. People are fatigued; people are tired of COVID, the rules, restrictions, closures, limited staff, and limited space—everything. He thinks that Dr. Brown and Dr. Sanders can attest that right now is not the time to shake off the importance of wearing masks, keeping distance, and washing hands. As vaccinations roll out, it will help us get through this, but until the time we have the necessary percentage of vaccines inside human beings, we still need to take the appropriate precautions. Mayor Dennis stated that this Ordinance has been a powerful tool for us. Our law enforcement

professionals and firefighters, and even civilians, have been able to go by and make recommendations and get immediate compliance. Now it is something that must be abided by on the books. For us, that does a great thing. The dark side is that a lot of people disagree with it, including some people that we are friends with who might not agree with the logic behind it. He does not know that they oppose to it; he thinks they just disagree with government telling them what to do about personal safety. That is a much bigger argument for a much longer meeting. He reiterated that he appreciates the Council's support, and he complements them for recognizing the necessity of this. More importantly, he truly appreciates the fact that they are all doing this for the right reasons, which is looking out for the community.

Councilor Sanders stated that it is important to have this six-month review because we need to think about the fact that we are hoping to get out of this, and it should be brought to our attention on a regular basis. However, it is certainly not the time to change this Ordinance in any way. People need to understand that the vaccine and public health measures work together to suppress the pandemic. You cannot just have one without the other to actually emerge. People are concerned about the vaccine and whether it will continue to protect us against things called *variance*. This is something he has discussed in his work quite often, including in 2014 discussions about the Ebola virus and why it was necessary to invest resources to try to stop it in Africa. If the virus is allowed to continue to evolve, it is likely to become more transmissible. We have some evidence of that already with the variance, but we are more concerned about a variance with a different immune profile that the vaccine would not protect against. Therefore, we must do both things. We need to get as many people as possible vaccinated. Councilor Sanders noted that he is scheduled for the vaccine soon, but that does not mean he will change his approach to public health and protecting others. The continuance of the mask mandate is an important component of protecting everyone involved.

Hearing no discussion of changes to the Ordinance, Councilor DeBoer moved to withdraw his prior motion, and Councilor Thomas seconded. Since no action was taken on Ordinance No. 17-20 (Amended), it stands in effect as-is.

Ordinance No. 01-21 An Ordinance Providing For Temporary Loans (NRO to Wellness Center) (Prepared by Controller) [No. of Readings 2 of 2]

Councilor DeBoer read Ordinance No. 01-21 by title only.

Councilor DeBoer moved for passage of Ordinance No. 01-21 on second and final reading, and that the vote be by roll call. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

There was no discussion.

Clerk Booker called the roll call vote:

<b>Councilperson</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Blanco	Aye
Brown	Aye
Bunder	Aye
DeBoer	Aye
Kang	Aye
Leverenz	Aye
Parker	Aye

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 1, 2021, CONTINUED

<b>Councilperson</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Sanders	Aye
Thomas	Aye

Clerk Booker stated that the vote was 9 AYES and 0 NAYS.

President Bunder announced that Ordinance No. 01-21 passed on second and final reading.

Ordinance No. 02-21 An Ordinance To Establish The Cumulative Capital Development Fund And Readopt West Lafayette City Code Provisions Concerning The Fund (Submitted by Controller) [No. of Readings 2 of 2] **PUBLIC HEARING**

Councilor DeBoer read Ordinance No. 02-21 by title only.

Councilor DeBoer moved for passage of Ordinance No. 02-21 on second and final reading, and that the vote be by roll call. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

Controller Gray noted that this is similar to previous years.

Councilor DeBoer moved to open a public hearing on Ordinance No. 02-21. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

There were no comments from the public.

Councilor DeBoer moved to close the public hearing on Ordinance No. 02-21. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

There was no further discussion.

Clerk Booker called the roll call vote:

<b>Councilperson</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Blanco	Aye
Brown	Aye
Bunder	Aye
DeBoer	Aye
Kang	Aye
Leverenz	Aye
Parker	Aye
Sanders	Aye
Thomas	Aye

Clerk Booker stated that the vote was 9 AYES and 0 NAYS.

President Bunder announced that Ordinance No. 02-21 passed on second and final reading.

NEW BUSINESS: None

REPORT BY THE MAYOR

There was no report.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no comments from the Council.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

► Emails that were received to the Clerk email address prior to the meeting are made a part of these minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business at this time, Councilor Thomas moved for adjournment, and President Bunder adjourned the meeting the time being 6:55 p.m.

**From:** [Hayley Steidinger](#)  
**To:** [WL Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on 04/05/21 council meeting  
**Date:** Monday, April 5, 2021 8:55:46 PM

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## External

Hello,

I attended this evening's city council meeting and wanted to voice my opinion on in-person versus virtual meetings. 2020 was the first time I ever "attended" a city council meeting and likely would not have if I had to go to city hall on a weeknight. Thanks to meetings going virtual my household has been able to sit in on city and county council and commissioner meetings and it has been enlightening to be more involved in our local government. I am glad to hear that the councilors want to go back to meeting in person, however I would urge that they keep a virtual option open for the public.

Thank you,  
Hayley Steidinger  
2319 Temple Ct E, West Lafayette, IN 47906