

CITY OF WEST LAFAYETTE
COMMON COUNCIL
MINUTES
JANUARY 6, 2020

The Common Council of the City of West Lafayette, Indiana, met in the Council Chambers at the Temporary City Hall – Former Happy Hollow Elementary School on January 6, 2020, at the hour of 6:30 p.m.

President Bunder called the meeting to order and presided.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: James Blanco, Peter Bunder, Nick DeBoer, Shannon Kang, Larry Leverenz, Kathy Parker, Gerald Thomas, and Norris Wang.

Absent: David Sanders

Also present: Mayor John Dennis, Corporation Counsel Eric Burns, Clerk Sana Booker, Street Commissioner Ben Anderson, Director of Development Erik Carlson, Facilities Director Tim Clark, Human Resources Director Diane Foster, City Engineer Ed Garrison, City Controller Peter Gray, Police Chief Troy Harris, Fire Chief Tim Heath, WWTU Director David Henderson, Parks Superintendent Kathy Lozano, and Building Commissioner Chad Spitznagle, IT Interim Director Tracey Stanifer-Dewey.

OATH OF OFFICE

Mayor John Dennis administered the Oath of Office to Councilor Norris Wang.

MINUTES

Councilor DeBoer moved for acceptance of the minutes of the December 5, 2019, Pre-Council Meeting, and the December 9, 2019, Common Council Meeting. Councilor Thomas seconded the motion, and the motion passed by voice vote.

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

President Bunder noted that the departmental committees have been updated with the change of Council members. He also stated that the Councilors have in front of them a new packet, which Clerk Booker will explain.

Clerk Booker stated that she had an opportunity to attend a conference in Ohio last summer. While there, she heard a City Clerk talk about a packet that she had prepared for Council members. Clerk Booker felt that we could have that as well. She proposed the idea to First Deputy Clerk Nichole Foster and Deputy Clerk Lindsey McCollum, who took that idea and developed this packet for new Council members. Most of us start without understanding all of the language and definitions. We thought it would be a helpful start to our new Council members, along with our older soldiers here. She stated that she is proud of Ms. McCollum and Ms. Foster for the work they put into this.

The Councilors expressed their appreciation. President Bunder stated that he hopes that next month the Corporation Counsel Burns will take the time to review this material along with other Council rules and regulations.

REPORT OF THE APC REPRESENTATIVES

Councilor Leverenz stated that there will be one big thing on this month's APC agenda, which is the West Lafayette Downtown Plan. If it is not tabled, it will come here in February.

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Recognition for Police K-9 Barry

Police Chief Troy Harris explained that Police K-9 Barry unexpectedly passed away a couple of months ago due to a medical illness. Barry was an 8-year-old Dutch Shepherd. Barry had two handlers while he was with us; the first one was Sergeant Aron Thompson for two years, and then Officer Elizabeth "Libby" Romstadt for his last two years. He stated that their bond was unbreakable. They spend every minute together, on-duty and off. It goes without saying, that this loss is devastating. Just like the men and women standing in this room, Barry was unwavering in his courage, dedication, and loyalty to the citizens of West Lafayette. We wanted to publically recognize Barry's and Officer Romstadt's service to our community by presenting a keepsake box and a plaque to Officer Romstadt. Inside the box is the flag that was flying at the Police Station on the day that Barry passed away, and there is room to keep her memories of Barry with it. Chief Harris read the plaque aloud:

K-9 Barry
June 2015 – November 2019

"K-9 Promise"
My eyes are your eyes,
To watch and protect you and yours.
My ears are your ears,
To hear and detect evil minds in the dark.
My nose is your nose,
To scent the invader of your domain.
And so you may live,
My life is also yours.

In recognition of your faithful service and dedication of the citizens of West Lafayette.

Chief Harris noted that, on a brighter side, today was Officer Romstadt's first day with her new K-9, Agent. They began training today and will be on the street in February.

Officer Romstadt expressed appreciation to whoever had a hand in helping her to become Barry's handler, and to Chief Harris, Deputy Chief VanVactor, and the Police Merit Commission. She confirmed that it is an unbreakable bond. Barry worked with her, came home with her, lived with her, and she vented to him. It is hard to explain the bond between a handler and their K-9. She was with him for about 2.5 years, and in that time, it seemed that all Barry wanted to do was please her, find bad guys, and find drugs. Right before this unfortunate event, Barry did find drugs and bad guys, and then he just collapsed. He gave it his all. He was a great partner, and a faithful friend, and she is honored that she got to be his handler.

2020 Council Schedule

The Councilors discussed changing the date of the December 2020 Pre-Council meeting to Tuesday, December 29, 2020, instead of holding the meeting on New Year's Eve. Councilor Thomas motioned to adopt the proposed 2020 Council Schedule with that amendment. Councilor DeBoer seconded the motion, and the motion passed by voice vote.

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS:

Greater Lafayette Public Transportation Corporation – James Blanco and Jon Fricker
Councilor DeBoer motioned to appointed James Blanco and Jon Fricker to the Greater Lafayette Public Transportation Corporation. Councilor Thomas seconded the motion, and the motion passed by voice vote.

MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS WITH COUNCIL CONSENT:

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) – Felicia Lynch
Councilor DeBoer motioned to approve the appointment of Felicia Lynch to the HPC. Councilor Thomas seconded the motion, and the motion passed by voice vote.

Human Relations Commission – Melissa Flint

Councilor DeBoer motioned to approve the appointment of Melissa Flint to the Human Relations Commission. Councilor Thomas seconded the motion, and the motion passed by voice vote.

FINANCIAL REPORT

There was no report.

LEGAL REPORT

This report is on file.

SPECIAL REPORTS:

Joint Board Report

Councilor DeBoer stated that the first Joint Board meeting of 2020 is on January 21st. He will try to come back with an overview for our new Councilors of what that Board will be doing for the next four years. He presumes it will probably be to continue to pay bills.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ordinance No. 33-19 An Ordinance Providing For Temporary Loans (2020) (Sponsored by City Controller) [No. of Readings 2 of 2]

Councilor DeBoer read Ordinance No. 33-19 by title only.

Councilor DeBoer moved for passage of Ordinance No. 33-19 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:

<u>Councilperson</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Blanco	Aye
Bunder	Aye
DeBoer	Aye
Kang	Aye
Leverenz	Aye
Parker	Aye
Sanders	Absent
Thomas	Aye
Wang	Aye

Clerk Booker stated that the vote was 8 AYES and 0 NAYS.

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, JANUARY 6, 2020, CONTINUED

President Bunder announced that Ordinance No. 33-19 passed on second and final reading.

Ordinance No. 34-19 An Ordinance To Approve Blanket Bond Coverage For 2020 (Prepared by Clerk Sana Booker) [No. of Readings 2 of 2]

Councilor DeBoer read Ordinance No. 34-19 by title only.

Councilor DeBoer moved for passage of Ordinance No. 34-19 on second and final reading, and that the vote be by roll call. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

Clerk Booker explained that this is done each year to cover any City employees who handles money. The coverage is in the amount of \$750,000.00.

There was no further discussion.

Clerk Booker called the roll call vote:

<u>Councilperson</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Blanco	Aye
Bunder	Aye
DeBoer	Aye
Kang	Aye
Leverenz	Aye
Parker	Aye
Sanders	Absent
Thomas	Aye
Wang	Aye

Clerk Booker stated that the vote was 8 AYES and 0 NAYS.

President Bunder announced that Ordinance No. 34-19 passed on second and final reading.

NEW BUSINESS: None

REPORT BY THE MAYOR

Mayor Dennis confirmed for President Bunder that he will have a State of the City address at the February meeting. The documentation that encompasses the activity of all of the departments will be on file, and he will say a few words at the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

► President Bunder noted for the Council members that they have a change in pay dates. Instead of being paid at the end of each month, it will occur on the same day as when other City employees receive their second monthly pay.

► President Bunder stated that it is his intention to have a conversation about Council member responsibilities and the role of our subcommittees in the life of the Council. He would like to discuss the structure of those subcommittees and how we might better use the Pre-Council time. He also wants to discuss compensation for the Council members, as we make about half of what everyone else who does this job makes.

► Councilor Leverenz expressed appreciation to Mayor Dennis and Street Commissioner Anderson for the installation of new State Championship signs on our *Welcome to West Lafayette* posts. He is pleased that we have included Harrison High School in the signs on the north end.

Mayor Dennis stated that it is surprising at how many phone calls he has gotten about needing those signs, and he recognized the work of Street Commissioner Anderson and the Department's new sign equipment. The signs will be easy to modify to add new items.

Councilor Leverenz stated that he knows of someone who has already been out to take pictures to send to her kids, and they appreciate it.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

► Zachary Baiel (124 Connolly Street) stated that one item that might breathe some new life into those committees would be to meaningfully engage the public in those committees. People are always hungry for meaningful ways to be involved, and this would allow them to collaborate with their elected leaders on issues that would go before the Council. He stated that January 31st is the annual New Chauncey Soup & Dance. He stated that he has his annual plea for transparency and accountability. Those are two democratic values that the West Lafayette citizenry hold in high regard. This was confirmed through thousands of conversations he had with community members over the past year. One tool that the City has to preserve the past and protect the future, along with ensuring good governance, is around the proactive disclosure of its financial information. The taxpayers have already invested hundreds of thousands of dollars for the City to utilize the Tyler Technologies financial programs. One of the original selling points to the community for the adoption of the system was that it would allow for digital access to the public's finances. The public has heard a wide variety of excuses as to why we are not adopting or implementing this transparency portal. However, it seems that nothing has changed since that time. He knows that some of the newly elected and re-elected Councilors campaigned and championed for transparency and accountability, and this portal would not only help the general public, but everyone within City government, as well by providing near-real-time access to the public's financial information. Good governance is not about setting up roadblocks of bureaucracy, nor is it about being the gatekeeper of information. Good governance is about making sure the public understands the why and the how behind decisions and following the money is a great way to begin this process. The public deserves to have the financial information proactively available online so they can effectively educate themselves on their city, how it spends their money, where each department's financial priorities are, and to organize for change if and when necessary. The City Council being the fiscal body of the City, he asked how the constituents lobby their Councilors and the three At-Large members for budgetary changes or adjustments when it is incredibly difficult, if not near impossible, to reconstitute the financial history from month-to-month and year-to-year. He asked that we make 2020 the year that we finally live up to the promises we made back in 2013 and 2016. He asked the Council to pass a resolution to implement this much needed transparency portal.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business at this time, Councilor DeBoer moved for adjournment, and President Bunder adjourned the meeting the time being 7:00 p.m.