

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JASPER, INDIANA
December 20, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Jasper, Indiana, was held on Wednesday, December 20, 2023, in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 610 Main Street, Jasper, Indiana.

Call to Order. Presiding Officer Mayor Dean Vonderheide called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call. Clerk Treasurer Kiersten Knies called the roll.

	<u>In Person</u>	<u>Video</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Mayor Dean Vonderheide	X		
Council members:			
John Schroeder	X		
Chad Lueken	X		
David Hurst	X		
Paul Lorey	X		
Kevin Manley	X		
Nancy Eckerle	X		
Philip Mundy	X		
City Attorney Renee Kabrick	X		
Clerk-Treasurer Kiersten Knies	X		

Knies announced that in order to have a quorum for the meeting, a majority of the council members must be in attendance. All of the council members were in attendance at the beginning of the meeting, which is a majority; therefore, there was a quorum for the meeting.

Moment of Personal Reflection. Mayor Vonderheide asked that all present take a moment for personal reflection.

Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Vonderheide invited all those present to join him in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes. The minutes from Regular Council Meeting November 21, 2023, were distributed to and examined by the Council. A motion was made by Council member Chad Lueken and seconded by Council member Kevin Manley to approve the minutes from November 21, 2023, without corrections. Motion carried 7-0.

Gas and Water Department Presentation. Tim Doersam on behalf of Gas and Water gave a quick overview of what the departments have done over the past year. In the Water Distribution and Filtration Department they have installed over a total of 3,330 feet of new water main. The projects that this was used on were Phase II of Main Street and also the much-needed University Drive. They installed about one hundred feet of pipe at Common Drive by Liberty Credit Union and also about 380 feet between 13th and 14th Streets on Dewey Streets. They installed 1,721 advanced metering systems and 1,357 meters were installed or repaired through the city this year. Water is about 39% complete and Gas is about 47% complete for the AMI Installation. There is still quite a way to go on this project but expect to complete the project this year. The Water Filtration Department has produced and sent out over 598 million gallons of water that was treated in the plant. There were 1,730 drinking water samples and 2,305 pool samples that went through the micro lab this year. Those numbers have steadily gone up over the years as other labs have shut down. In the Gas Department, 686 Smart Points were installed for the AMI system and 731 meters were installed, replaced, or repaired. Eighteen new gas services were installed and a total of 6,595 of new gas main was installed with the majority of that in the Grassland Hills area to upgrade the system to take care of last year's issue. Nine hundred feet of old steel gas main throughout the city was decommissioned and rerouted to make the city safer.

Utility Department Presentation. Ashley Kiefer, Officer Manager from the Utility Business Officer presented an update as well. The AMI project is continuing. They are mass installing all services with the AMI program. They are installing the entire AMI project in house, so it does take

a little longer than if there was a dedicated team. Electric meters started shipping at the beginning of 2023, although they are still experiencing some issues with electric meters shipping, especially the larger sized meters. They are supposed to get a shipment of those by the end of this month. There are no issues with the water and gas meters right now. Electric is installing the meters as fast as they are receiving them. They are keeping a small supply back for new developments and then of course for repairs that are needed. They have three crews that can be running at the same time so those are flying up really fast. They have about 9,904 AMI endpoints in the system today out of approximately 19,600 in the total system. Overall, this puts the project at about 50.5% complete. Electric is about 63%, water 39% complete and gas is 47% complete. The electric meter disconnection and reconnection due to nonpayment of utility bills has gotten much easier throughout this project. Electric meters can be disconnected and reconnected remotely from a computer or a smart phone. Most disconnects now are preformed remotely each much which is reducing the need of rolling trucks and employees. They will be looking at reducing the \$50.00 reconnect fee in 2024 since they no longer require sending out trucks and employees. However, that is a delicate balance as they do not want to reduce the fee too far down that it increases the amount of disconnects. Data collection for the AMI project occurs at the north and south water towers and it communicated wirelessly via Verizon into the cloud and then the business office pulls the reads that are required that way into the software from the cloud and uploaded into the utility billing software to generate those bills. They are still working out two different meter reading systems. The old one, the automated reading system and then the new AMI system. It's a balance act that requires constant communication and cooperation between all departments to work out of all those systems. There are some significant staffing changes in the department. Both billing clerks retired this year at that time Michelle Zehr was promoted from Business Office Assistant and Jamie Eichmiller was hired as a Business Office Assistant and then promoted to Billing Clerk. Both of those employees are new in their roles and trying to learn as fast as possible. Amanda Steckler was hired as the new Business Office Assistant, and they are in the process of replacing Customer Service Clerk Mary Huff who will be retiring at the end of March. They would like to hire someone as soon as possible to have the 60 days overlap with Mary to learn as much as possible while she is still here. Each utility operates as a separate business, bill differently penalizes differently, different laws, different rules for each particular one so it's a lot of knowledge and experience that they are trying to replace as quickly as possible. Kiefer additionally gave an update on the success of accepting credit cards and online bill payments to the utility office. They are now approaching the third year. Numbers are still improving and hover in the 16-18% of all payments are made online vs 12% last year. That number continues to rise, which takes the burden off of the customer service clerks having to take those payments as well. Anywhere between \$150,000 to over \$200,000 is collected that way each particular month. This has driven the number of late notices down some and it has reduced the number of disconnects some however it has not eliminated them completely.

Ordinance No. 2023-36

An Ordinance Establishing User Fees and Policies for the Department of Storm Water Management, Concerning Construction Site Storm Water Runoff, Requiring Permits for the Drainage of Storm Water to the City of Jasper Drainage Structures, and Other Matters Related Thereto

A motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by Paul Lorey to read the ordinance by title only on the second reading. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2023-36 by title only.

This matter was opened for public hearing. There being no one from the public present, a motion was made by Paule Lorey and seconded Phil Mundy to close the public hearing. Motion carried 7-0.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Chad Lueken to approve Ordinance No. 2023-36 on the second reading. Council member Paul Lorey points out that this shows a modest increase from \$3.96 to \$5.00 for storm water fees. Council member John Schroeder notes that the increase is related to the rising cost to repair storm water and the city has to keep making progress in updating old systems. Atty Kabrick noted that moving forward they will analyze the rate on a regular basis. It has been ten years since the last storm water analysis. Mayor Vonderheide noted that all other utilities do an analysis every three to five years. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by John Schroeder to read the ordinance by title only on the third and final reading. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2023-36 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Paul Lorey to pass and adopt Ordinance No 2023-36 on the third and final reading. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2023-37

An Ordinance Amending the Unified Development Ordinance for the City of Jasper, Indiana, and its Jurisdictional Area

A motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Kevin Manley to consider Ordinance No. 2023-37 for one reading only procedure. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Chad Lueken to read the ordinance by title only. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2023-37 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by Kevin Manley to pass and adopt Ordinance No. 2023-37. Director of Community Development and Planning Josh Gunselman noted this is to clean up language inconsistencies within the UDO and additionally allows for post and panel signage. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2023-40

An Ordinance to Rezone Certain Property Within Jurisdictional Limits of the Planning Commission

A motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Phil Mundy to consider Ordinance No. 2023-40 for one reading only procedure. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Nancy Eckerle to read the ordinance by title only. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2023-40 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by John Schroeder to pass and adopt Ordinance No. 2023-40. Jim Morely, Jr. Project Engineer advised council that the property has been used as commercial for years though not zoned commercial and the intent is to turn the property into a drive through only coffee shop seeking to rezone the property making it officially commercial property even though it has been used commercially. Council member Paul Lorey advised that this came through the plan commission meeting, BZA first and then plan commission with favorable recommendations coming to the meeting tonight for consideration. Council member Nancy Eckerle pointed out the green spaces and questioned the small amount of parking which is for employees only. Council member Kevin Manley asked if there had been any comments from the neighbors. Attorney Kabrick advised that the neighbor to the south send a letter opposing the use of it as a drive through coffee shop because of the staking of the vehicles in the drive. The concern was having those cars staked up along the property line to their home. Mayor Vonderheide questioned the number of access points. Mr. Morely indicated that it is the same number of access points, and they were working with INDOT. They will work through the water run off so as not increase this for the neighbors. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2023-41

An Ordinance Vacating a Platted Public Utility and Drainage Easement (Phil A. Ruhe and Kristen L. Ruhe)

This matter was opened for public hearing. Brad Eckerle of Brosmer Land Surveying explained the requested vacation. There being no further comment from the public, a motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded Nancy Eckerle to close the public hearing. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Chad Lueken and seconded by Paul Lorey to consider Ordinance No. 2023-41 for one reading only procedure. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Nancy Eckerle to read the ordinance by title only. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2023-41 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Kevin Manley to pass and adopt Ordinance No. 2023-41 with the corrected title. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2023-39

An Ordinance Affixing Salaries and Wages for the Utility Employees of the City of Jasper, Indiana for the Year 2024 (Amends Ordinance No. 2023-30)

A motion was made by John Schroeder and seconded by Phil Mundy to consider Ordinance No. 2023-39 for one reading only procedure. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by Chad Lueken to read the ordinance by title only. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2023-39 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Paul Lorey to pass and adopt Ordinance No. 2023-39. Attorney Kabrick advised that this is just an ordinance correction to fix an error in longevity pay. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2023-38

An Ordinance Affixing Salaries and Wages for the Civil City Employees of the City of Jasper, Indiana for the Year 2024 (Amends Ordinance No. 2023-29)

A motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Kevin Manley to consider Ordinance No. 2023-38 for one reading only procedure. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Paul Lorey to read the ordinance by title only. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2023-38 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by Phil Mundy to pass and adopt Ordinance No. 2023-38. Motion carried 7-0.

Resolution No. 2023-10

A Resolution to Adopt and Approve an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with the Government of Dubois County for Extension of 15th Street and Construction of a Bridge over Crooked Creek

A motion was made by Paul Lorey and seconded by Kevin Manley to read the resolution by title only on the first and only reading. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Resolution No. 2023-10 by title only.

Thereafter a motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Chad Lueken to pass and adopt Resolution No. 2023-10 on the first and only reading. This has to do with the 15th Street extension and the fact that we have been working hand in hand with the county and planning for a couple of years on this. They have come together and said this is the county's contribution towards that which is the bridgework, and the city will be responsible for the road work. Attorney Kabrick noted that we have engaged the engineering firm and started that process. This allows the Mayor and the Clerk Treasurer to execute the agreement. Motion carried 7-0.

Board Appointments. A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by John Schroeder to approve the council board appointments as follows: Julie Dutchess to BZA; John Schroeder, Phil Mundy to RDC; Jay Hamlin to Jasper Community Arts; Paul Lorey to Plan Commission; Kevin Manley to Dubois County Solid Waste Board; Brian Hostetter to USB. Board member Nancy Eckerle pointed out that the working group consisting of Chad Lueken, Phil Mundy, and Renee Kabrick to have some discussion on some kind of form and a vetting process for board appointments. Motion carried 7-0.

Invitation. Mayor Vonderheide invited the council and public to attend Quality of Place: Serious Business in Today's Race for People and the Jobs that Follow Them with Dr. Michael Hicks from Ball State University at the Astra on January 11, 2024, at 6:30 pm.

HELP Grant Update. Clerk Treasurer Kiersten Knies gave the council an update on the Help Grant and its administration. Region 15 is the plan administration for the Owner-Occupied Rehab program and the Childcare program. The fee for administration was originally \$70,000.00. There is a cap on administration at 2.5% out of HELP Grant Funds. Region 15 has agreed to reduce their fee to \$60,000.00. \$30,000.00 will be paid by HELP Grant funds and Dubois County and the City of Jasper agreed to split the remainder of the fee with \$15,000.00 being paid out of the County's ARPA's funds and \$15,000.00 being paid out of the City's ARPA funds.

Legislative Breakfast. Council member Nancy Eckerle advised that through the Chamber of Commerce there are two legislative breakfasts set with state legislators on Saturday January 20, 2024, and March 2, 2024, from 9:00 am -10:30. The events are open to the public.

Service to the City. The council thanked Dave Hurst for his time on the Common Council and his service to the city for the past eight years. Council member Hurst noted that it has been quite a trip, and he has enjoyed his time on the council.

Oath of Office. Mayor Vonderheide noted that for all elected officials there is an Oath of Office Ceremony set for December 27, 2023, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at the council chambers.

Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Council member Dave Hurst and seconded by Kevin Manley to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 7-0 and the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

The minutes were hereby approved ____ with ____ without corrections or clarification this 17th day of January 2024.

Mayor Dean Vonderheide, Presiding Officer

Attest: _____
Kiersten Knies, Clerk-Treasurer