

Town of Pines Meeting

February 3, 2021

The regular meeting of the Town of Pines, Town Council, was called to order at 6:30 PM. This meeting was held virtually via ZOOM. Until further notice the Town Meetings will be held virtually. The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 3, 2021. This will be held virtually.

James led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were James Prast, Janice Lowe, Vicki Kuzio, Philip Orlando, and Shelby Mashburn.

Officers must be appointed for the year of 2021.

Janice nominates James Prast to remain as Council President. No other volunteers or nominations. Voted 3-0.

Vicki nominates Janice Lowe to remain as Council Vice President. No other volunteers or nominations. Voted 3-0.

MINUTES

The Minutes from the December 28, 2020 meeting were reviewed with no corrections. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Janice, seconded by Vicki. Carried 3-0.

CLERK TREASURER

The Clerk Treasurer checks the status of the official's new emails. They all state that they are working well. The BZA had requested an email as has been set up for each Town Official, James states that after speaking to the lawyer earlier in the day, this is not needed. The lawyer requests that any comments or requests made to the Board of Zoning Appeals be sent to the Clerk Treasurers Office. This information is then to be sent to the BZA, so it can be properly addressed at their next meeting. This will be added to the Town's Website as a contact request for the BZA.

Shelby asks Council about their preferences on Upgrading the town's current Microsoft plan to be able to include software for up to 6 devices, which would cover each current computer the Town has, instead of only the Clerks main computer. Currently the Town pays \$69.99 per year for Microsoft, with the upgrade we would pay \$99.99 per year. Council agrees that this will be a useful tool for everyone. Janice makes a motion to accept the change in program and price, Vicki seconds. Carried 3-0.

Shelby has spoken to Loukia about the website lately. Shelby has offered to take over the website from Loukia, as she is quite busy and works voluntarily with our site. Loukia agreed to this. Shelby has designed an updated version of the website for the Town of Pines off Loukia's original site. This new site will be able to use the domain that we have purchased for our emails "townofpines.net". Shelby also hopes to make this site very user friendly and full of information for everyone to use. A mock site has been designed, not published. It is presented to Council for approval or opinions. Shelby Requests

approval of the website and of a \$6 a month charge for the site cost so it has the proper domain. Janice makes a motion to accept the new website and cost, Vicki seconds. Carried 3-0.

Currently the Town does not have a way to pay for anything besides Office Depot Credit, Check, or Being billed to be paid later. Janice and Shelby ask if it is possible for the Town to find out about getting a debit or credit card for purchases. This would be for the purpose of any purchases or subscriptions needed that they require a Card for purchase. This has been the case with some services the Town is now using with their updates. Janice and Shelby will find out more information about what is allowed and is not. Once more information is obtained this will be shared at the next meeting.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Rob is not in attendance but has asked Kent to share that in 2020 the Fire Department had 250 Calls. This was more than normal.

So far this year they have had 28 Calls. It has been a busy start so far.

James asks how they are on radios. Kent says they are set currently on radios. He will talk to the Chief about wording for updating the donation section of the webpage. Once that is updated, Shelby will update the page.

STREET DEPARTMENT

Vicki gives a report for the street department. She states that Rob has been very busy with plowing and giving additional assistance when requested with snow removal.

James brings up an issue with the street on Connecticut. An ambulance was called and not able to get appropriate access. He brings up the need to pave the road further down for the property to have proper emergency access. He will discuss this area with Rob and wants to find out if it would be able to be added into our yearly street paving.

James also extends an extra thank you to Rob for his hard work with his plowing. He has been out at late hours plowing.

Janice states that Matt did resubmit the apps for CCMG for the Reseal, Cracking, and a repaving for the Spring. They were rejected in error. Once more is known it will be shared.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Irene Burnett at 1589 Maine Ave had a building permit for a pergola in back of her house.

Richard Olson at 1576 Colorado Street had an electrical inspection. There was a broken seal on the meter. NIPSCO needed inspection before doing any work for him.

Amy Sisco at 4212 Pine Street had an electrical inspection for a new meter, due to ice storm damages.

Newmann update at 3900 W Dunes Hwy. The lawyer has all the paperwork, he recommends that the Town do a title search. The Town will send a notice to everyone title search comes back to. Janice makes a motion for pay for title work, Vicki Seconds. Carried 3-0.

Alex at 2832 Second Place is applying for Board of Zoning Appeals to rezone his property to agriculture. Phil is talking to BZA members about scheduling meeting for Thursday March 4th.

OLD BUSINESS

James introduces David Walker from UNISON. James explains that MD7, who does the work with the Cell Tower on Birch Street, has presented the Town of Pines with 3 offers. The first offer would bring our rent down by about \$400 dollars a month. The second offer is for them to buy us out for about \$189,000 dollars. The third offer is David's to take rights of the tower for a 20-year contract. After the 20 years the rights would come back to the Town of Pines. David then explains why there are changes in the offers that are presented between MD7 and UNISON. He explains that recent mergers with Sprint and T-Mobile are causing some of these changes. UNISON offers approximately \$174,000 for 20-Year control on Birch Street. Currently the Town Earns \$2851 per Month for both Towers. Loukia, a resident, asks council to table this so Town Members can have input on this matter. Janice state that she personally would like to see things stay as they are. That is how things are budgeted for currently. Vicki agrees with Jan, that this should be left as is for the time being. Janice motions to leave the Cell Tower Contracts as is per attorneys' recommendation, Vicki seconds. Carried 3-0.

The drywell put in on Second Place. This bill needs paid. NIPSCO states that they will reimburse the Town after the Bill is paid. Reith Riley states that they will fix the divide in the spring. Janice makes a motion to pay the bill the Reith Riley, Vicki Seconds. Carried 3-0. James asks Shelby to pay the bill so we can forward this to NIPSCO. A copy of the record of NIPSCO's claim to reimburse the town by the Clerk Treasurer before payment is made as well as a payment timeline due to this years budget allotments and bill cost.

When the Town Council closed the hall to Council meetings due to COVID-19, it was only closed to Council Meetings. At this time the BZA is requesting use of the Hall for a meeting to be held. The Council needs to vote on guidelines for both the BZA and Council (once Council deems in person meetings to return) to follow in accordance with COVID-19, for the health and safety of our Officials and Residents. James has set up suggestive seating for the BZA. He has spaced the seats the recommended spacing of 6 feet apart. There is only room with these accommodations for ELEVEN (11) residents. This sets the MAXIMUM CAPACITY of the meeting to TWENTY (20) physical people in the building. Any public comments to be made to the BZA can be submitted VIA the website or by emailing the Clerk Treasurer, Shelby up to 3 days PRIOR to the meeting to be submitted to the Board. Meetings are to require a MAXIUM CAPACITY (total number of people in the building) to TWENTY (20), Masks are REQUIRED to be worn, and social distancing of 6 feet is to be respected.

It is requested to review getting emails set up for the BZA members. This needs more research and more information. There are some conflict concerns from the lawyer. Shelby will look into more information about this matter. It is also requested that another form of notices be offered besides the website, Facebook, or the flyer postings that are posted in the INFO box and on the hall doors. James states that we will look into another way to better inform our residents.

Town Officials are still working on improving our Code Book and Ordinances for ease of access for people to reference. We hope to have this up to date soon.

Blind hill signs have been ordered. We cannot put up guardrails due to liability issues. Vicki spoke to an engineer with the highway services. He suggested the Town install rubble mat or reflective tubing for better visibility.

We have received our CAREs ACT Refunding. This is to be appropriately placed into the right fund, Shelby and Janice will work on this. If there is another grant opportunity like this, the Town would like to try to get some other equipment that would greatly benefit our council and residents.

The Newspapers that we use are The HeraldDispatch, and the Northwest Indiana Times.

NEW BUSINESS

Clerks office is preparing to start Annual Report soon.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Loukia and Kent Verhage 1709 Birch Street. Loukia states that when the cell tower went in no one in the neighborhood was consulted. She appreciates the Council not changing anything at this time. Kent adds that with his math, it is not a fund wise choice by the math if the town were to sell the tower completely. They are appreciative of Council considering residents' opinions.

The Verhage's also ask about the repair of the Pines Park sign. Vicki states that once the weather is better Rob is going to be fixing it.

CLAIMS

Vicki makes a motion to pay the claims, Janice seconds the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M

James Prast, President

Shelby Mashburn, Clerk Treasurer