

Town of Pines Meeting

November 3, 2021

The regular meeting of the Town of Pines, Town Council, was called to order at 6:30 PM. This meeting was held as an open meeting with restrictions, meeting was shared virtually via ZOOM for residents who are unable to come to the Hall. The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at 6:30 P.M. This will be a regular meeting located at the Town Hall, with restrictions. The COVID-19 Town Hall Meeting Restrictions are still in place until further notice; Masks must be worn in the Hall, Six (6) foot social distancing, and maximum occupancy of 20 people.

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

MINUTES

The Minutes from the October 6, 2021, meeting was reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made to approve the minutes by Janice, seconded by Vicki. Janice voted to accept, Vicki voted to accept, James voted to accept. Carried 3-0.

CLERK TREASURER

Shelby first brings up the contract from Porter County Animal Control from 08/01/2021 to 7/31/2026. This contract is for a rate of \$2,000 per year. This is currently our only option as animal control. Janice makes a motion to accept the new contract, Vicki seconds this. Janice votes yes, Vicki votes Yes, James votes yes. Contract accepted 3-0.

Shelby brings up the American Rescue Plan Funds for COVID Relief. She has applied on behalf of the Town as previously planned by Council to do. As of November 6, 2021, meeting we have received the first 50% of the funding to be used as outlined by the ARPA regulations. Shelby states that we have to have a plan before using the funding. She reminds this can be used as vaccine incentives, premium pay during emergency status, government loss in revenue, or on water/sewer /broadband. We have until December 31, 2024, to use and delegate usage of this money. It was filed so quickly due to recommendation by state to get the most funding for the Town. Shelby brings up again the idea of bringing city water to the rest of the town. James states that we need to reach out to the remaining town residents that do not have city water to see if they want this, as well as reaching out to Michigan City to find out the cost of extending the current water to this.

She also reminds about the ADA needs. Phil states he is waiting to hear back from a few contractors. He is having difficulty finding someone to come do the work.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

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The Fire Department had 25 calls. There were 17 EMS assists, 2 car accidents, 1 animal rescue, 1 downed power line, 1 open burn, 2 canceled while enroute, and 1 incident not found.

Rob states that they had 2 guys riding and patrolling for trick or treat. No one on council or the Fire Department noticed any Porter County officers. Vicki did request they patrolled but is unsure why they did not show up. She will be checking into this.

Mike brings up needs for the Fire Department and is asking Council if there is anything they can help with. They are still applying for grants as they are available, but they are not getting the same type or level of response on these as they normally do. Currently 4 Firefighters need PPE for calls. It is about \$3,000 per person. That is the rate right now, but he expects this to continue to rise. This is a need of about \$12,000 for PPE. The 2nd need the Fire Department has been funding to allow each Firefighter to have 2 sets of gear each. This would aid in their own health and safety as washing gear takes over 24 hours to wash and dry. If they do not have their gear they cannot aid in a fire/call. This cost is about \$2,500 per person. The total need for this is about \$47,500. This would give each Firefighter a second jacket and pair of pants for use.

Janice asks if the Fire Department was eligible for any COVID fund in 2020 or 2021. He stated no they were not as their status. James asks if we can use our COVID relief (ARPA) to help support their needs. Janice and Shelby discuss the guidelines for this as well as the relation of the Town and the Fire Department, as we are not a joint entity the Fire Department is not a part of the Town of Pines, we only hold a contract with them. Janice suggests if we could possibly help them as a premium pay as things had changed due to COVID creating hazardous health issues. Shelby states she will reach out to the representative she spoke to with this. Jan asks Tammy if Pine Township is able to help. Tammy states no they denied her budget for 3 years now. Shelby will find out more information and hope to have answers by the December meeting.

Tammy also makes mention that they will get us the new contract for 2022 for Fire Protection.

James asks about Trunk or Treat possibilities for upcoming Halloween.

STREET DEPARTMENT

Rob started picking leaves up already. The compost site has been addressed. He is waiting to hear from County about anything else with it at this time.

Rob has found a portable generator of an acceptable size for \$869 at Lowes. We are still looking into what is really needed for a stationary generator for the Town Hall to enable the Town of Pines to have an emergency building with power available.

Vicki and Rob are both still working to find someone to deliver gravel for the three alleys that need repair. Janice states her son has had a lot of gravel delivered for personal use at his home. She will find out who delivered this to see if they can assist with our needs. County Sheriff and Flyers will be mailed.

Vick states that a slide has been ordered from Willy Goat, but it is still delayed from the original delivery and installation estimation. It is now estimated to be arriving in late November/early December.

BUILDING AND ZONING

2958 W Dunes Highway, Joes Bar and Grill is under new Ownership. It is now non-Smoking as of November 1, 2021. They have a permit for multiple updates such as roof, siding and paving.

Jim at 1541 Ardendale has a permit for a new AC unit.

Sam at 1552 Colorado Street has a permit for remodeling the Skreby home.

Michael at 1691 California Ave has a permit for home remodel.

Phil asks of Council to go forward with sending Municode all of the ordinances and codebook so that they can start working on these to give us a better outlook of what we do and do not have before continuing to try and amend the Code Book. Janice makes a motion to send Municode the information we currently have, Vicki Seconds. Janice votes yes, Vicki votes yes, James votes yes. Carried 3-0.

Due to this the next Code Book workshop is canceled until further notice. This was scheduled for November 10, 2021, at 5:00 PM. This will be rescheduled once we have a better understanding of where our current code book stands.

The Board explains how Municode will be aiding us in the refinement and streamlining of our code book. They will help us to look at the legal aspects and in relation to the state and county regulations to be followed. They will also enable us to have an online codebook for ease of access.

OLD BUSINESS

James mentions that our fall paving has been completed on the 2 roads in town for the year. We did not get to do the crack and seal due to costs this year. James met with Matt from Abormache regarding Railroad Ave. Matt worked with Porter County for assistance on the project, they were able to come through and grade this area for us. In the spring we are looking to work with the County to chip and seal the road to allow proper access for mail and residents. The goal is to eventually pave the road as well once the other issues are fixed with this area and drainage issues. James has also reached out to Browns regarding the washout caused by their property.

Council discusses possible companies that may be able to help with the alley repairs. Healy's was suggested to check with as well.

NEW BUSINESS

James mentions that we have been contacted by a representative from DISH Network regarding adding their services to one of our cell towers. We are waiting for further information on what this would entail from them still.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Patino at 1706 Maine Ave brings up that she had received a permit from Alan Murray for their fencing. They have requested a permit to complete this fencing as a large amount of time has passed. They have been denied as their current fence is on Town Easement. She wants to know what is to be done to finish this or why Alan approved a permit, but it will not be approved now. James explains how easements of the Town works and explains that this needs to be open for access due to water, sewage,

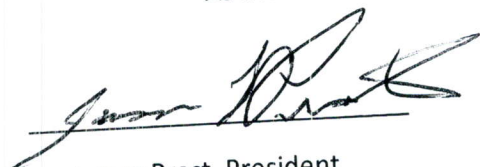
and electrical needs that are done on public property of the Town. Easements should not contain a permanent structure, as the town is not responsible for any permanent features added by homeowners, but they will be removed if needed for access by services and utility. They are informed that they can get a permit for a building that clears the easement, but if not, they will need to go to the BZA for this. As of currently the Town has allowed their current fence to remain, but they have not currently made any decisions to make the Patinos remove this fencing. James also mentions that the fencing they have is taller than the height set by Porter County. He advises that if they think they are correct in their building ways, that they have their property surveyed by the county at the homeowner's cost. Mary also states a complaint of someone else being able to build their new garage out in front of their house, but Mary was told she had to build hers farther back. She and her husband also state the reasons they feel that they need to keep their container for storage. James states that from here forth anything they need needs to be addressed by Phil and brought in front of council. If they are unable to advise Council will refer them to the BZA.

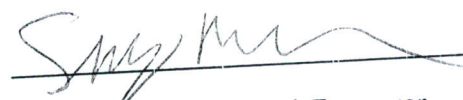
Mary brings up a second issue of tires being dumped on their property. She states that they have cleaned up the woods and pulled out tires that were thrown back there. She asks why no one is picking these up. The Patinos are told they are responsible for these as they were on their property. That is the responsibility of the homeowner to be responsible to remove and clean up any trash or debris left on their property even if it was not put there by them. Shelby provided Mary with a printout of information from Porter County regarding these types of pickups or drop offs. Phil suggests they could also reach out to RJ on 20 and ask if they would take the tires for them. Mary tried to state again that the Town should be responsible for these and is told again that they as the property owners need to dispose of these.

CLAIMS

Janice makes a motion to pay the claims, Vicki seconds the motion. Janice votes yes, Vicki Votes yes, James votes yes. Carried 3-0.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 P.M


James Prast, President


Shelby Mashburn, Clerk Treasurer