

SYRACUSE TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

May 19, 2009

Cassie Cowan, President, called the Regular Meeting of the Syracuse Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Other council members present were Bill Musser, Larry Siegel, Paul Stoelting, and Brian Woody. Town Manager Henry DeJulia, Town Attorney Mike Reed, and Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline were also present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Cassie asked for comments from the public on agenda items. There were no comments.

The minutes of the April 21st meeting were presented. Brian moved to approve the minutes of the April 21st Regular meeting; Paul seconded. Four voted for the motion; Bill abstained since he was absent. The motion carried. Brian moved to approve the minutes of the April 24th Special meeting; Paul seconded. Three voted for the motion; Bill and Larry abstained since they were absent. The motion carried.

Claims #498 through #608 were presented for payment. Paul moved to approve the claims; Brian seconded. Larry asked if the claim for Bob's Services was for work completed. Jeremy advised yes; the Vega Field wells are down and top soil has been put back, the Dolan wellhouse is down, as well as most of the old fire station. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Ordinance 09-03, "An Ordinance to Establish TIF Funds" was introduced. Brian moved to approve Ordinance 09-03; Larry seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Ordinance 09-04, "Additional Appropriation Ordinance" was introduced. Paul made a motion to adopt Ordinance 09-04; Larry seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Cassie advised that she and Julie met with a representative of the U.S. Census to discuss setting up a Complete Count Committee in the Town of Syracuse. Cassie stated she was told that for every person who is not counted in the census, there is a loss of \$400.00 per year, or \$4,000.00 until the next census. The purpose of the Complete Count Committee to get the word out to get everyone counted. Cassie stressed that all census information is totally private and is not shared with any other agency, even law enforcement. Larry stated in the past, census people knocked on doors. Cassie advised that will only happen if a census form is not returned. The duties of the Complete Count Committee were discussed. After discussion, Paul moved to have Cassie sign the Census Proclamation; Bill seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Pam Kennedy, of Housing Opportunities of Warsaw, spoke to the council about the Owner Occupied Rehab program. She advised Housing Opportunities of Warsaw will be partnering with Lake City Bank for Neighborhood Impact Program (NIP) funds.

These funds can be combined as matching funds with our Owner Occupied Rehab program and will enable us to make more extensive repairs on these homes. Pam presented applicant #4 for the Syracuse III grant; NIP funds will be used for some of the repairs on this home. Brian made a motion to approve applicant #4 for the Syracuse III grant; Bill seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Pam announced the state inspection for the Syracuse II grant was completed last week and we passed the inspection for the work done on the houses.

TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Henry DeJulia updated the council on economic development. Last Thursday, the Elkhart County Planning Commission approved the DPUD. The DPUD will go to the Elkhart County Commissioners at their second meeting in June. Yesterday, the Elkhart County Commissioners approved our Comprehensive Plan amendment for the area.

Henry advised he submitted a final draft of our EDA grant application to MACOG for their review. After their analysis, the application will be sent to the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Our request is for \$850,000.00. Cassie asked how long it takes to receive an answer; Henry advised about six months. Brian asked if we can complete the work before we get an answer on the grant; Henry advised we may not get reimbursed if we do that. Cassie asked about letting bids; Henry advised we could probably do that. Henry added he is meeting with a representative tomorrow and will see if he can get an answer.

Henry reported the Flood Control Device Committee met. Lawson Fisher conducted a study and provided various scenarios for repairing the dam. Henry added Lawson Fisher is also checking the area that flooded last year, and they are also doing some soil borings. Larry asked who will be paying for the borings. Henry stated he is not sure of the cost; we may be able to pay from the money all the agencies have agreed to contribute and monies from the Harkless grant. Henry was asked which agencies are participating; he advised the Town of Syracuse, Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation, Wawasee Property Owner's Association, and Syracuse Lake Association. Cassie advised we are waiting for a quote on the cost to do the borings.

Henry brought up a couple of concerns that were received from citizens. There were some problems with a wall by the north water tower; that has been repaired. We also received a request to eliminate parking in front of homes; he is working with Tony on this.

Henry discussed the town website and presented examples of how he would like our website to look. The council agreed with his suggestions.

Henry advised he would like to apply for stimulus dollars to do road paving and milling. The improvements would be done on E. Chicago St. and then proceed on Harkless Dr. up to Palm Dr. The estimated cost of the work is \$93,000.00 and would be a

100% grant. One of the criteria for applying for the stimulus dollars is that the project has to be "stamped" by an engineer. The cost to have an engineer do that is \$1,200.00. The area to be improved is an urban interceptor; this area is one of the few projects we qualify for. Brian would like to wait until we have more information. Discussion followed. Henry noted the projects are awarded on a "first come/first serve" basis. Paul moved to allow Henry to apply for the grant and spend up to \$1,200.00 for the required engineer's stamp; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; Brian abstained. The motion carried.

POLICE

Police Chief Tony Ciriello explained an urban interceptor is a road that is used to travel to and from other neighboring towns.

Tony discussed the calls received by the police department for last month. He noted the officers had quite a few training hours; they are trying to get the mandated training completed before the busy summer season starts. One of the cases handled last month was a meth lab. Tony informed the council that 27 meth labs have been disabled in the county so far this year; last year there were only 18 for the total year.

Tony brought up the bomb threat that was received at the high school last week. The police department is working on a couple of leads. Many agencies worked together to search the school, as well as all the students before they entered the building. Tony named many agencies that assisted; everything worked like clockwork.

Tony reported a bike auction was held a couple of weeks ago; about 42 bikes were auctioned off. The Memorial Day Parade is scheduled for Monday, May 25th at 1:30 p.m.

Tony discussed an issue that was brought to his attention by a resident. He explained we have an ordinance on the books that allows front yard parking if there is an improved space, which would be asphalt, concrete, or gravel. We have received a complaint that it looks bad. Tony explained there are a lot of places in town where an improved area in the front yard is the only place to park. It was suggested we may want to look into changing the ordinance. Tony gave examples of where it could create a hardship. Tony would like to study the issue over the summer.

PARK

Park Superintendent Chad Jonsson reported on three park department events. The annual Art in the Park is scheduled for June 20th and 21st; it will take place at Lakeside Park from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The beach will be open this Saturday if the water test results are okay. Also, last Saturday was the first Farmer's and Artisan Market; fourteen vendors pre-registered and twelve of them showed up. The market will continue every Saturday until the middle of October.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Superintendent Jeremy Sponseller made several announcements. The new polymer machine will be installed this Thursday. The Dana water tower is tentatively scheduled to be taken down next week. We are still waiting on NIPSCO before we can start some of the projects. Public works personnel are clearing along the WACF property on Pickwick so the contractor can install the new sidewalk. Larry asked when that sidewalk is scheduled to be complete. Jeremy advised 60 days; he added the contractor has been waiting for us to clear out the area. NIPSCO is the hold up on the removal of old water plant on Dolan; we are trying to get the storm siren moved to a new service before it is removed from the water plant. A pole on Henry St also needs to be moved before we can install the sidewalk. Larry asked Jeremy to check an area on Northshore Dr where a street cut had been made. He also asked Jeremy to check the sidewalk by the Turtle Bay entrance; Jeremy will see if the work can be done in house.

Bill brought up flooding that occurred at the library on Saturday. Henry advised he just talked to someone from the library today; Henry and Jeremy will look at it.

CLERK

Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline thanked the garden club for planting the flowers at the town hall again this year. She also thanked the fire department for their assistance in getting smoke detectors installed in the homes that are participating in the Owner Occupied Rehab Program.

TOWN ATTORNEY

Town Attorney Mike Reed had nothing further to report.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Susan Myrick asked why we were required to be involved in the zoning north of our property at U.S. 6 and S.R. 13. Henry advised it is part of the "sphere of influence", so Elkhart County is requiring it.

Tammy Cotton, Executive Director of the Syracuse Wawasee Chamber of Commerce, thanked the council for the extra money for the banners. She reminded everyone the annual chamber golf outing is June 17. There will also be a networking lunch next Wednesday at BrookPointe.

OLD BUSINESS

Larry asked if any progress has been made on consolidating signs. Henry advised they believe some can be consolidated. Tony explained they must check the Municipal Traffic Code book to verify what can be done. Tony added there is not a lot that can be done with the signs that are located on a state highway. He advised they should know by next meeting where they can consolidate signs.

Brian discussed the Cumulative Fire Fund balance, which was tabled last month. Mike Reed and Julie were asked what we can do. Julie advised we can transfer the money to the Fire Territory, or we can declare the fund dormant and transfer the funds to the General Fund or the Rainy Day Fund. Larry provided another option; several years ago new storm sirens were installed in the township, but we still have the old siren here in town. He would like to look into purchasing a new storm siren in town with the funds. It would be a benefit to the residents of the town, as well as the Fire Department. Cassie advised we have \$26,704.00 in Cum Fire; when we established the fund, we told the taxpayers we were going to use the money for fire. She added the Fire Department spent \$60,000.00 in 2008 to make the change to Central Dispatch that the town was pushing for. If we would have had to pay ½, that \$26,000.00 would be gone. Larry noted they have \$500,000.00 in their cum fund budget this year, in the past it was about \$90,000.00. Brian stated he is in agreement with turning over the \$26,000.00 to the Fire Territory. Brian added he is massively displeased with spending \$500,000.00 for fire cum, when for the past 15 years, \$97,000.00 was enough.

Larry made a motion to table a decision again while we investigate getting a new storm siren; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; Cassie voted against. The motion carried.

Brian moved to adjourn the meeting; Bill seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

The Syracuse Town Council adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

Cassandra Cowan, President

Julie Kline, Clerk Treasurer