

SYRACUSE TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

February 18, 2014

Town Council President Brian Woody called the Regular Meeting of the Syracuse Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Other council members present were Kathy Beer, Bill Musser, and Paul Stoelting. Town Manager Henry DeJulia, Town Attorney Vern Landis, and Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline were also present. Councilman Larry Siegel was absent

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Brian asked for public comment on agenda items; there were no comments.

The minutes of the January 21, 2014 meeting were introduced. Paul moved to approve the minutes; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Claims #127 through #252 were presented for payment. Paul moved to approve the claims; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Brett Konarski, of Jones, Petrie, Rafinsky, gave his monthly report on the industrial park. Brett provided additional information about the sign proposal from Premier Signs. The main lettering for the park will be 10" tall and visible from 300 feet; the remaining lettering for individual businesses will be visible from 100' to 150'. He noted it was suggested the solar panels on S.R. 13 be moved to a different location to eliminate a damage risk. Premier Signs has suggested the solar panel could be installed on a pole about 20' back from the sign. Henry provided input. He stated there are three sign proposals. They are: 1) standard base design at a cost of \$42,709.00, 2) a sailboat design powered by solar panels at a cost of \$53,698.00, and 3) the design from Premier Signs, which would have solar and electric power, at a cost of about \$64,000.00. It was noted the cost of electrical power for signs 1 and 3 would be about \$1,200.00 per year. Henry recommended the council go with the sailboat design; he feels it goes with the community image. Brett noted we also need to consider the cost of replacing the solar batteries for option 2 and 3. The solar batteries would need to be replaced in about 10 years at a cost of \$20,000.00. Henry added we may not own the park in ten years. It was also noted we could convert the sign to electric power at a later date. More discussion followed on sign lettering, sign material, landscaping, and the industrial park address. Henry noted the sign must also be approved by Elkhart County. Paul feels the sailboats are unique: he made a motion to approve the sailboat design. Brian seconded. During discussion, there were concerns raised about the possibility of the lights being buried in snow, and lettering. Brian withdrew his second; council members would like more information next month.

Brett stated he spoke with John Owen, of EDA, earlier today. Mr. Owen will be sending a letter approving EDA funds toward the Long Dr culvert and the additional pavement striping that is required.

TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Henry DeJulia announced we still have a vacancy on the Kosciusko County BZA. He recommended Syracuse resident Jason Traycoff to fill that position. Paul so moved; Kathy seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Henry reported the Kosciusko Leadership Academy met at the Community Center in February.

Henry discussed the legislation to eliminate the personal property tax that is before the state legislators. The legislation is in conference; Henry hopes there will be no decision this year. He stated the big issue is how to get back the dollars that are lost; communities would lose a lot of money. Henry added Indiana has one of the top 8 or 10 lowest taxes in the country.

POLICE

Police Captain Calvin Kline reported there were 335 calls for service in January. There were 18 property damage accidents, 1 personal injury accident, and 11 criminal arrests.

There were no ADA complaints.

PARK

Park Superintendent Chad Jonsson announced an Indoor Yard Sale has been scheduled for March 1 at the Community Center. The 31 booths available have all been reserved.

Chad discussed the property that is currently owned by the Rotary Club. He explained the land is about 6 ½ acres located at the end of Wildwood Dr. Rotary has been approached by a potential buyer, however, Rotary would prefer to sell the property to the Park Foundation. Chad added if the Park Foundation does purchase the property, they would donate it to the town since the Foundation does not want to own property. Chad realizes the timing for this request is not very good since the Park Department still has other projects that need to be completed. He pointed out there are no other properties in town that size that are available for parks. As far as maintenance, it would require about four hours of mowing per month. A possible use for the land might be a nature area. Brian asked if the Park Department has any current plans for the property. Chad answered not right away, maybe in 2019 or 2020. Bob Smith, President of Rotary Charitable Foundation, presented a design that was done at the time Rotary was considering locating the Scout Cabin at that location. It showed the various amenities available such as trees, a pond, and green space. It could also be tied to the trails.

Paul made a motion to accept the donation of the land upon purchase by the Park Foundation; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS

Jeremy Sponseller, Public Works Director, asked council members if they had any questions. Brian asked if London Witte has the numbers from the engineers. Jeremy answered yes. Jeremy explained he approached two engineering firms for preliminary numbers about what might be needed at the sewer plant; the amount is fairly substantial. Brian asked if we need engineering before we proceed. Jeremy stated it may be possible to hire a contractor to replace one piece of equipment without engineering. He stressed this is not an expansion of the plant; we are only rebuilding it. In order to do that, engineering would need to be done. Jeremy added there would be specifications for engineering; things such as a roof, we could do ourselves. Brian asked if we would need engineering for the clarifiers. Jeremy explained Strand has suggested new technology; engineering would be needed for that. Brian expressed concern about the clarifiers. Jeremy stated one of the clarifiers is offline; if there is too much melting, we may have to bring it back online even though it is in poor condition. The other clarifier is probably in similar condition. Jeremy stated we have a 25 year old plant; major items could fail at any time. He explained the options and scenarios London Witte is considering.

Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline advised London Witte has suggested the council could have a work session to go over the rates needed and the options for funding the sewer plant improvements. Bill stated he would prefer to appoint a committee to meet with London Witte and report back to the council. Paul agreed. He suggested Jeremy, Julie, Henry, and Brian could meet and make a recommendation to the council. Brian is okay with that; he would also like to see punch list of immediate needs. Paul asked about preliminary engineering. Jeremy advised Strand quoted \$27,500.00, and he is waiting for a response from Triad.

CLERK

Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline reported we were not able to read the meters in January or February due to the snow; we have estimated the bills for two months. She suggested the council consider getting a radio read meter system. Customers do not like estimated bills, especially if the bill is high when we get an actual reading. Brian asked if we could break it into two bills if it is high. Julie stated the council has always instructed us to work with customers and accept payment arrangements. Julie added a leak is often detected in 30 days; when we estimate, it may not be found for 90 days. From a customer service standpoint, she would really like the council to consider the radio read system. Jeremy added he has a way of funding this system; he will report next month.

Julie provided information on the expenses we have incurred due to the weather this year. As of February 9, the street department has logged 386.25 hours of overtime at a cost of \$10,346.38. The cost for diesel fuel in January 2014 was \$5,189.57; in January 2013 we spent \$851.72. She noted the street department spent \$15,441.93 for all of 2013.

TOWN ATTORNEY

Town Attorney Vern Landis had nothing to report.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

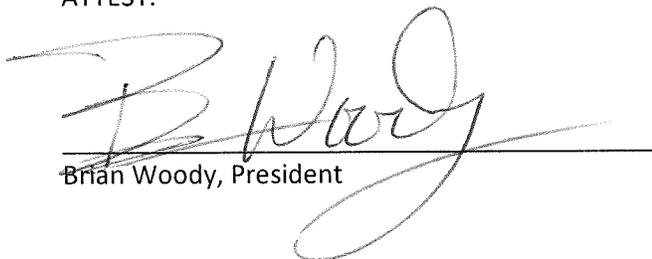
NEW BUSINESS

Brian stated we need to appoint a member to the Fire Territory Board. The Township Advisors have recommended Steve Snyder; both the Town and Township must agree on the appointee. Bill moved to accept Steve Snyder as a member of the Fire Territory Board; Paul seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Brian advised that during a recent power outage, the fire department repeater did not work for several hours. Mickey was instructed to look at the cost for a generator. Darr Electric quoted \$4,000.00 to install a generator. The generator would be paid from the Fire Territory Equipment Replacement Fund, and it requires town council approval. Brian moved to approve the purchase; Kathy seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Paul moved to adjourn the meeting; Bill seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. The Syracuse Town Council adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

ATTEST:


Brian Woody, President


Julie Kline, Clerk Treasurer