SYRACUSE TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

March 18, 2025 @7:00 P.M.

Town Council President Nathan Scherer called the Regular Meeting of the Syracuse Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Other Council members present were William Musser, Paul Stoelting, Cindy Kaiser, and Town Attorney Jay Rigdon. Absent Council member Larry Siegel and Clerk-Treasurer Virginia Cazier.

Nathan Scherer opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments - Discussion from the floor (agenda items only) 2 minutes per speaker 10 minutes total. Matt Goodnight stated he saw on the claims that Bose McKinney and Evans claim is $37,139.00 and that there was another claim for $28,000 in January. That is around $65,000 of taxpayer money that is going to Bose McKinney and Evans. Hopefully, we will learn about the case with the State Board of Accounts, which is going forward. If there is an update. Since this is taxpayer funds, Matt just wanted to get an update from the Board on the funds being spent.

The Council Minutes - The minutes from February 18th, regular meeting presented for approval. Bill Musser moved to approve the minutes; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

The Town Claims - Claim #'s 0198-0312 for $693,758.06 presented for approval. Cindy Kaiser moved to approve the claims; Paul Stoelting seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Rezoning request-Matt Sandy/Area Plan Commission – A recommendation for rezoning for Glennell Webb along the north side of Pickwick Drive 4.5 acres. Most of it is wetlands and about two acres is usable land. They want to go from Agriculture to Residential. Bill Musser did not have an issue with rezoning that piece of property. Attorney, Steve Snyder, explained more about the rezoning to the Board. Bill Musser made a motion to change from Agriculture to Residential; Paul Stoelting seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

INDOT Blanket Bond-As part of the community crossing matching grant that we were awarded from INDOT, they are now requiring that we do a surety bond of $10,000.00 because part of the project may or may not intrude into INDOT territory. Paul Stoelting made a motion to approve the $10,000 surety bond; Bill Musser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Resolution 2025-03 INDOT Authorizing Signature-Bill Musser authorized the Town Manager to be the authorized signature; Paul Stoelting seconded. All in favor. The motion carried. All in favor. The motion carried.

Public Hearing OCRA Grant-The public hearing for the OCRA Grant was open, Commonwealth and MACOG helping the Town of Syracuse apply for a construction grant Community Development Grant wastewater & drinking water program. Donny Ritsema, senior community development planner for MACOG informed the council that we are required to hold two public hearings at two different stages. MACOG will be working with David to put the application together. Grant proposal is due on Thursday, April 17th. The final application is due on June 20th. The goals and objectives are to protect the resident's health, the environment, to help reduce the utility rate for those with low income, improve infrastructure. Long term sustainability and growth. The Town meets one of the objectives, which is a population that is at least 51% low to moderate income. According to Census data the Town of Syracuse has a population that is 55% low to moderate income. The area this will affect is Huntington Street and the other element is replacing service lines east of the treatment plant, larger mains on Washington Street, High Street, and Mill Street. MACOG will serve as the grant administrators if the town is awarded the grant, they do provide a service fee to help navigate the award process. Project cost break down: $5, 144,100.00, federal funds are available to apply for $700,000.00, local funds $4,444,100.00. The local funds will be coming from the SRF funds. Nathan Scherer made a motion to close the public hearing from MACOG on OCRA Grant. Paul Stoelting made the motion; Cindy Kaiser seconded. The motion carried.

Public Hearing SRF Loan Application-The public hearing for the SRF Loan Application was open, Jeremy Hardy from Commonwealth introduced Amy Mendoza and Baylee Girdham, both with Commonwealth Engineering. The Town of Syracuse has several undersized water mains. Several residents along Kern Road do not have access to public drinking water. There are several lead service lines that are a concern, and the EPA is making it a point to get rid of lead service lines in all communities. Aging infrastructure, many thin-walled galvanized water mains that are embedded with rocks and concrete which causes water main breaks. Low pressure on the north part of the town that we are looking to correct in one of our projects. Recommended projects, upgrading existing water mains and adjacent areas around Huntington Street, 12" transition main from Huntington Street to the water treatment plant this will help with the water pressure, Service lines east of the water treatment plant transferring the service lines to a larger existing water main and decommissioning smaller lead service water mains, and the Kern Road improvements this is taking the 8" existing water main that runs from Kern Road, ends at Duffy Drive and extends it south. This will provide public water

for the homeowners in that section of Kern Road. The project cost and schedule, the cost will be funded in multiple ways, SRF funding and OCRA funding. Huntington Street project and service lines improvement projects west of the water treatment plant, those two projects are the ones we are applying for the OCRA and SRF joint funding. The transition main project and the Kern Road project are going to be SRF funding only. The total cost of the projects, this is only construction cost, total construction cost is $5.06 million. The non-construction cost includes administrator, engineering, design, the total cost is $973,000.00. The portion for SRF funding only is $164,000.00. The total cost for everything is 6,203,400.00. We are currently in the public hearing phase in March 2025. We will be summitting the application of the SRF PER in April but due March 31st. The Town will receive approval of the SRF PER in July and pulmonary design is projected to start May of 2025 and be completed in October of 2025. Once the design is done and the permit is received, looking at April of 2026 and eventually have substantial completion projected in January 2027. There is a public comment period five more days after the hearing, and we have not received any yet. The Fire Chief asked if they considered looping the water main from the subdivision to have a better water flow when you are fighting fires. Jeremy said it is a good idea, good consideration. Bill asked David if we could afford this project. David said he spoke with Jim Higgins and they both agreed that yes, we can afford this. The public hearing was closed. Paul Stoelting made the motion to close the hearing; Cindy seconded. Motion carried. Jeremy Hardy asked for Nathan Scherer, Council President, be the signatory for all paperwork having to do with the project. Paul Stoelting made the motion to have Nathan be the signatory; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. The second Resolution is the PER acceptance. Based on past meetings and the public hearing, the town has approved to be submitted to SRF. Nathan Scherer made a motion to approve PR acceptance. Paul Stoelting made the motion; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. The last request is authorizing Nathan Scherer to sign off on the SRF application for the funding request. Paul Stoelting made the motion; Bill Musser seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. There was an asset management plan certificate, within the next five years, based on that plan there will be improvements of 1.7 million dollars, non-binding. Bill Musser made a motion to sign off on the certificate; Paul Stoelting seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

ENGINEER – COMMONWEALTH

Jeremy Hardy stated the report was sent out to the Council last week.

TOWN MANAGER

David Wilkinson asked if there were any questions in his report. Council president asked if there was a reason the way finding signs were denied from the convention and visitors bureau grant. The comment they made was that the way finding signs was less beautification and more town business. Since we were turned down for the grant, the signs total up to $22,000, we can still purchase those through EDIT funds. Bill Musser made the motion to use EDIT funds to purchase the signs; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Cindy Kaiser asked when do you think you will have someone hired for the code enforcer. We made an offer to a gentleman yesterday. He will start next week.

Part of the Comprehensive Plan includes improvements to the Town and signage. Conversations throughout the town on new welcome to signs, the one we have on the south side of town is very nice and has been there a while. There have been comments stating we need something grander coming into town. We do not have anything north of the town. There is a lot of interest in going big, an idea is an arch over S.R. 13. There is one in Wabash they installed several years ago that looks very nice. David asked the Council if they were interested in doing this and how much they are willing to spend. The Council asked how much this would cost. The signage in Wabash cost $250,000. David suggested trying to find some grants and other funding. Nathan Scherer is in favor of looking to see where we would be placing the signs before we spend any money on a design. The council feels they do not have enough information to vote on anything yet.

POLICE

Jim Layne, Police Chief, asked if there were any questions in his report. Jim contacted Great Lakes ADA center, they oversee six states, Indiana being one of them. Looking into getting one of their certifications for the ADA.

PARK

Chad Jonsson, Park Superintendent, between last month and this month they had the garage sale and the princess party. Coming up is the first softball tournament of the year in April. There are twenty teams signed up to play.

We have five schedules throughout the year, and we might have two more. Bill Musser asked if there was a charge for that. The Park Department works with the local youth league, they provide the people to run it, and we will get a little bit of money back to help cover the maintenance cost, water bill and trash.

Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, April 12th at 10 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 11 a.m. Dividing the kids per age group has helped a lot.

We were awarded Tree City USA for the 24th time and were also given a growth award.

April 25th is the Arbor Day Celebration with the third graders at Schrock field.

We are planting eight trees on the south side of Schrock field and 7 or 8 additional trees throughout the town.

Only have one application for lifeguard.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mark Aurich, Public Works Director, asked if there were any questions in his report. We need a new non-potable water system. We have a system now that has aged and currently recycling about hundred thousand gallons of treated water rather than using town water, has not weathered well. Gasvoda was the only supplier that meets our specifications. Mark requested not to exceed $115,000 for the non-potable water system at the wastewater plant, this will allow us to reuse our treated effluent for purposes around the facility. Bill Musser made a motion to purchase the non-potable water system not to exceed $115,000; Paul Stoelting seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

The second request is for a new dehumidifying system for the wastewater treatment plant to accept the bid from Havel for $199,206. $149,206 will come from the EDIT funds and $50,000 will come from water depreciation. Paul Stoelting made the motion; Bill Musser seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

The south water tower needs maintenance done. Received a proposal from Dickson Engineering for $40,800 this includes re-inspection, bidding, job inspection, reports and closing out the job. This will come out of depreciation. Estimated cleaning is about $200,000 and that would go out for public bid. Paul Stoelting made a motion for $40,800; Bill Musser seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

FIRE TERRITORY

Mickey Scott, Fire Chief, asked if there were any questions in his report. Asking for approval to purchase a new fire training box for $7,592 from Hammerhead Enterprises and will also need a 4" concrete pad from Thompson Concrete for $3,400. Bill Musser made a motion for the two purchases at the price of $10,992; Paul Stoelting seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Took our 2001 Aerial fire truck in January to Fire Services Incorporated to be refurbished. To refurbish the truck, it would cost $1.37 million. A new truck would cost a little over two million dollars, you would be set for twenty plus years. The truck is down right now. The value of the current truck is about $300,000.

CLERK TREASURER

The Clerk-Treasurer was not at the meeting.

TOWN ATTORNEY

Jay Rigdon, Town Attorney, nothing to report.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Amy Roe, Kosciusko County Community coordinator, there is a $5 million grant that has been established for small communities. The applications will be open later in the spring, around April. Each community can do $500,000 maximum, it will be dollar to dollar match.

Brent Randall, new executive director of the Syracuse-Wawasee Chamber of Commerce, came to introduce himself to the council.

DISCUSSION FROM THE COUNCIL

Nothing.

OLD BUSINESS

Nothing.

NEW BUSINESS

Nothing.

Paul Stoelting moved to adjourn the Town of Syracuse Council Meeting; Bill Musser seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.

ATTEST: _____
Virginia Cazier, Clerk-Treasurer

_____ President
Nathan Scherer, Council President