

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
VALPARAISO, INDIANA
September 10, 2018**

The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met on Monday September 10, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall. Mayor Costas called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Clerk-Treasurer Swihart called roll. Present were Councilmembers Murphy, Douglas, Hoffman, Reed, Hudson, Cotton and Porter.

MINUTES

Councilmember Hudson moved to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2018 meeting. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion.

Upon voice vote the motion to approve the August 27, 2018 minutes passed with a 7 -0 vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 8, 2018

**A RESOLUTION GRANTING APPROVAL FOR A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT
REIMBURSEMENT GRANT FOR GRACE CHAPEL INC. OF VALPARAISO
(157 LAFAYETTE STREET)**

Councilmember Hudson moved that Resolution No. 8, 2018 be read a first time and considered for passage. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Swihart read Resolution No. 8, 2018. Councilmember Hudson moved to adopt Resolution No. 8, 2018. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion.

Tyler Kent addressed the Council. This project has an estimated cost of \$150,000 and the total eligible expense for the project is \$25,000. The current balance of the Fund is \$27,304. The Plan Commission voted favorably to send this request to the Council for approval.

The Plan Commission discussed if a tax-exempt property should be eligible for a façade grant. This project falls within the recommendations of the Hyatt Palma report. It enhances the aesthetics of the City. Other tax-exempt properties have received a façade grant in the past.

Councilmember Douglas asked for confirmation that this money comes from CEDIT.

Councilmember Porter questioned eligibility. Tyler replied this is an improvement for the City. It is very visible, and improvements help the whole area. This building has been a foundation for the City since the 1930s. There is no indebtedness on the building.

Councilmember Hudson stated the Plan Commission heard this request quite some time ago. Why is it just now coming to the Council? Tyler explained he was working with a previous applicant to see if they were going through with their project. They have decided they are not which leaves the funds available for tonight's request.

Councilmember Cotton asked about the size of the congregation. It is 65 families which equates to about 170 people. The project will be one third debt and two thirds from funds on hand.

Councilmember Reed stated hypothetically any other church-based entity could come in and not pay taxes but request and be granted a façade grant.

Councilmember Douglas stated the requirements for a façade grant are "for the purposes of controlling and preventing blight and deterioration and encouraging private investment within the District". This project meets the definition requirements set up to receive a grant.

Councilmember Porter asked about the improvements on the building. A representative of the Church explained they have already spent \$200,000 in improvements. The building is used Sundays and several days throughout the week for meetings.

Councilmember Cotton asked if the congregation is made up of local people. He was told two thirds have a Valpo address and one third are in other parts of Porter County. Councilmember Cotton asked about the longevity of staying in this building. They have discussed looking for a

new building and moving. They like the location of their present building and intend to stay there.

Upon roll call vote the motion to adopt Resolution No. 8, 2018 passed with a 4-3 vote. Councilmembers Reed, Cotton and Porter voted no.

ORDINANCE NO. 16, 2018

2019 SALARY ORDINANCE

Councilmember Hudson moved that Ordinance No. 16, 2018 be read a first time and considered on first reading. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Swihart read Ordinance No. 16, 2018. Councilmember Hudson moved to carry Ordinance No. 16, 2018 to the September 24, 2018 meeting. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion.

Mayor Costas explained the decision was made to adjust the salaries of employees and elected officials this year, so it would not become a campaign issue next year. They did a salary comparison study. This was done to make sure the City is comparable to other municipalities.

Bill Oeding addressed the Council. He explained the Oliver System that was used in this study. Job descriptions were prepared for each job in the City. This was done with participation by the employee and their supervisor. The benefit package for 2019 will remain the same. Where raises are needed to bring salaries up to the Mid-range, it will be done over two years. The salary ranges are based on a Midwest economy. Most of the employees were close to the Mid-range. Police and Fire were not given a range because they both have a contract with the City.

Councilmember Porter asked and was told the comparisons were made with similar cities in Indiana. Sharon Swihart explained the company used has worked in Indiana. This is important because Indiana is under a Restrictive Levy. This company was very sharp and knew what they were doing.

Councilmember Hoffman asked how the raises will be implemented over two years. Sharon Swihart explained how she calculated the increase. Basically, it comes down to once she knew the difference, she took one half this year and one half next year.

Bill Oeding explained it has been twenty years since elected officials received a raise. Their raise was all done this year, so it is not an issue in next year's election.

Councilmember Douglas asked if there is any consideration given for performance in determining wages. Bill Oeding explained this is not performance based. It is longevity based. Sharon Swihart suggested that down the road a performance-based study should be done. Bill Oeding added that in government performance-based is hard to do.

Councilmember Cotton asked if Market range is where the City is with wages. Bill Oeding explained Market range is entry level salary for an employee. Mid-range is where they would like to get to within two years. Also, on page 6 second paragraph the vote from last year was carried over by mistake. That will be fixed.

Councilmember Hudson questioned the salaries that came in where they are overpaid. Bill explained they will not receive a raise this year. It will be looked at again next year. Also, the health savings account is working well. For the Police Department, there is no reason to incentivize extra pay for school until the ten approved school mark is reached.

Councilmember Reed asked about turnover of employees within the last few years. Bill Oeding replied there is not an overwhelming number of turnover.

Upon voice vote the motion to carry Ordinance No. 16, 2018 to the September 24, 2018 meeting passed with a 7-0 vote.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Douglas reported the RDC meets Thursday.

Councilmember Porter reported the Sunrise Kiwanis will have the Magical Music Ribbon Cutting on September 11th at Foundation Meadows Park – Butterfly Playground.

AUDIENCE

Walt Breitinger – 608 Academy. He does not see the Redevelopment Commission members on the budget. He was advised this is a volunteer job.

Kevin Cornett – Northview. Thanks for taking the salary increases on this year to avoid an election year. Also, he feels approving the Grace Chapel façade grant is a slippery slope.

Bill Finik – 1006 Oakbrook Court. He has requested the City look into trains blowing their horn in the City limits before. Griffith has yellow signs saying, “No Train Horn”. Bill Oeding explained there is more to the process than just passing an Ordinance. He has been working with the Canadian National line to see what it would take to make this happen. Sharon Swihart advised the Council passed an Ordinance a number of years ago. The trains still blow their horns.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

/s/ Sharon Swihart, Clerk-Treasurer