

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
VALPARAISO, INDIANA
January 8, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met on Monday January 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall. Mayor Costas called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Present were Councilmembers Reed, Cotton, Domer, Anderson, Hunt, and Kapitan. Councilmember Pupillo was absent.

REORGANIZATION

Mayor Costas passed the gavel to Councilmember Cotton to run the Reorganization meeting.

MOTION: Councilmember Domer moved to nominate Councilmember Cotton as President of the Council. Councilmember Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed with a 6-0 voice vote.

Council Liaison

Traffic and Safety	Councilmember Kapitan
Plan Commission	Councilmember Kapitan
Fire Territory	Councilmember Reed
Park and Recreation	Councilmember Reed
RDC	Councilmember Domer
Public Works	Councilmember Domer
RDC	Councilmember Cotton
Code Enforcement & Engineering	Councilmember Cotton
School Board	Councilmember Hunt
Investigations and Reconciliation	Councilmember Hunt
Utilities	Councilmember Anderson
Public Safety	Councilmember Pupillo
Civilian Appointments	
Fire Territory – 2 year term	Mark McCall
BZA	Hannah Trueblood
Recommendation to the Mayor	
VEDC	Alison Quackenbush

Councilmember Hunt reminded Councilmember Cotton that a Vice President nomination of Ellen Kapitan should be included in this motion.

MOTION: Councilmember Hunt moved to nominate the slate of Council Liaisons, Civilian Appointments, recommendation to the Mayor and Vice President of the Council as presented. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Councilmember Cotton passed the gavel back to Mayor Costas.

MINUTES

MOTION: Mayor Costas asked for all those in favor of approving the minutes from the December 11, 2023 meeting to say Aye. The request passed with a 6-0 voice vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 1, 2024

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO, INDIANA, TO REPEAL RESOLUTION NO. 12-2016

Councilmember Cotton moved that Resolution No. 1, 2024 be read and considered for passage.

Councilmember Kapitan seconded the motion. Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Cook read Resolution No. 1, 2024.

Motion: Mayor Costas asked for a vote on hearing this Resolution. All those in favor of hearing Resolution No, 1, 2024 say Aye. Opposed same sign. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Councilmember Cotton – This Resolution has been vetted. It is a matter of taking care of business.

Councilmember Reed – In 2016 the Council needed additional guidelines as to how items showed up on the Agenda. She voted in favor of Resolution No 12-2016. She did not totally agree that the Mayor could unilaterally decline an Agenda item. She did see the reasoning that an item could be placed on the Agenda with the approval of two additional members. This process guaranteed there was discussion ahead of time and that ordinances or resolutions were prepared and ready for full Council discussion, presentation, and consideration. By repealing Resolution 12-2016 it reverts us back to Code language that does not provide rules of operation nor a timeline when a document should be submitted. Having an anticipated deadline is not out of line. She recognizes the benefit of having two additional councilmembers review resolutions or ordinances along with the ability to have an item added with Council majority. She also would like to see an area on the Agenda for Council comments that are not related to adoption of an ordinance or resolution. She suggested Resolution 1, 2024 be tabled and amend resolution No, 12-2016. She thinks the Mayor should be removed from the equation of the Council Agenda items and add a component to the Agenda to officially include comments prior to the public comment or comments with the liaison reports.

Councilmember Anderson – He supports Councilmember Reed’s comments. He wants to support Councilmember Cotton and show unity. His conscious will not let him vote yes to repeal Ordinance 12, 2016. If repealed it will go back to Code. Under those circumstances an item can be introduced up until and during a meeting. He feels this defeats transparency for the Council and the Public. He asked to have one sentence put in saying that items had to be submitted by Wednesday at 4:30 so it could make it on the Agenda and have full transparency.

Councilmember Hunt – She feels 31.03 says items should be submitted prior to the Clerk-Treasurer submitting it for publication. She understands currently publication occurs on Thursday so Wednesday is the deadline date. She feels the intent was to have a Code that moves with the City. This puts the power back in the legislative body as opposed to the executive body.

Councilmember Domer – The intent of Resolution 1, 2024 is to undue obstacles and constraints and bring back balance.

Councilmember Kapitan – She is in support of the repeal because it will give power back to the Council and the people that elected it.

Mayor Costas – Currently ordinances and resolutions need to be filed by 4:30 pm on Wednesday and Publish by 4:30 Thursday. If this is repealed any councilmember can submit an ordinance or resolution to the Mayor’s office by 4:30 on Wednesday, they will compile it and get it to the Council and media at 4:30 on Thursday.

Councilmember Cotton- The Code served well until his first term. He has been assured the Code will be addressed comprehensively rather than piece meal. Things entered as an emergency have been honored by the Council. The Code respects the separation of power and makes for a representative Council. He has had circumstances where he has had no communication before a meeting and then a vote is taken.

Mayor Costas – Ordinances and Resolutions are generated by the City because they are budgetary and housekeeping items. Those will come on the Agenda naturally. Staff will continue to use the current procedure, which is to have any ordinance and resolution to the Mayor’s office by 4:30 on Wednesday and compile them and get them to the Council and media by 4:30 Thursday.

Councilmember Hunt – If a deadline is missed, Code 31.03 requires three councilmembers to approve a late submission.

MOTION: Councilmember Cotton moved to adopt Resolution No. 1, 2024. Councilmember Kapitan seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote the motion carried with a 4-2 vote. Councilmembers Reed and Anderson voted No.

Council Liaison Reports

Councilmember Reed – Mark Hardwick was appointed to his third term on the Park Board. Tim Warner was appointed President. She has received a request from a citizen regarding the fee at Rogers Lakewood Park. She has been advised this is on the Agenda for the next Park Board meeting which is January 23, 2024. She has received a call regarding streetlights are on continually in the Target shopping area. She will be looking into this.

Councilmember Kapitan - Plan Commission is Wednesday January 10th at 5:30. Traffic and Safety is on Friday at 10:00 am.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gary Brown – 203 Harrison. He wants the Mayor to resurrect the Valparaiso Environmental Task Force as a standing committee. He wants it to be a funded Task Force. There are less trees than there used to be. There have been Family Nature Nights for ten years. There is interest in Valparaiso for conservation. They want to do nature projects through the schools.

Walt Breitinger – Park & Academy. He agrees there needs to be an Environmental Committee that is funded. He has asked three times, and nothing has happened, so he is asking again – Please have Julie Peller, a VU Profession on the Council Agenda to do a presentation on plastic waste.

Joe Dauginas– 701 Erie. In the lobby of City Hall there are magnets that have the trash pickup schedule printed on them.

Larry Tumbleson – 1402 Peachtree. He was on the Ethics Committee. He feels there should be term limits on all Boards. Under Mayor Murphy all signs of the Ethics Committee, Ethics Ordinance or anything else relating to this has been removed.

Mayor Costas – He is working with the City Attorney on a revised Ordinance.

Hanna Trueblood – McCord. Thank you for her appointment to the BZA. Today there was a water main break. There was no notice or boil order anywhere. Citizens need to be prioritized and given updates on infrastructure.

Steve Poulos – A boil order is only put out if there is an interruption of service. Today’s break was small and was repaired live which means no interruption of service. Staff did go door to door in the immediate area. Valparaiso is the most communicative community in the State of Indiana when it comes to boil orders.

The Next Council Meeting will be January 22, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

/s/ Holly Taylor, Clerk-Treasurer