

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
VALPARAISO, INDIANA
February 8, 2021**

The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met on Monday February 8, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall. Mayor Murphy called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Present were Councilmembers Reed, Cotton, Schmidt, Pupillo, Anderson, Costas and Douglas.

MINUTES

Councilmember Douglas moved to approve minutes of the January 25, 2021 meeting. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Upon voice vote the motion to approve passed with a 7-0 vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 2, 2021

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING FUNDS IN THE UNSAFE BUILDING FUND AND PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION OF NOTICE

Councilmember Douglas moved that Ordinance No. 2, 2021 be read a second time by title and a third time in full and be considered for adoption and the opportunity be given for the offering of amendments. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read the Ordinance.

Vicki Thrasher explained this is an annual request to appropriate funds to cover any demolitions they may have this year.

Mayor Murphy stated Ordinance No. 2, 2021 requires a Public Hearing. He presented Proof of Publication that at tonight's meeting the Council will hear comments for and against an appropriation in the Unsafe Building Fund. Attorney Patrick Lyp stated no requests have been received from the public to speak for or against this Ordinance. Seeing no one to speak on this Ordinance, Mayor Murphy closed the Public Hearing.

Councilmember Douglas moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2, 2021. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote the motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2, 2021 passed with a 7-0 vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 4, 2021

A RESOLUTION OF THE VALPARAISO CITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) COVID-19 RESPONSE PROGRAM APPLICATION TO THE INDIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND RURAL AFFAIRS (OCRA)

Councilmember Douglas moved that Resolution No. 4, 2021 be read and considered for passage. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read Resolution No. 4, 2021.

Maggie Clifton explained the City is applying for a grant in the amount of \$250,000 from OCRA. The funds will be used to give \$10,000 grants to local businesses that employ people at low to medium wages. The funds are to help with rent and payroll. This is a very competitive grant. To make the City of Valparaiso's application stand out the Redevelopment Commission is matching 20%. There will be a Public Hearing at the next Board of Works meeting.

Mayor Murphy asked if a business has received a previous covid grant, are they eligible to apply with the City for this grant. Maggie Clifton replied it is her understanding that they can. However, the guidelines have not been established yet. That could be added if the City feels it is necessary.

Councilmember Douglas stated this is a wonderful idea. The guidelines will be important. Also getting the guidelines out so citizens know what they are, is important.

Councilmember Pupillo asked if there is anything the Councilmembers can do to influence the decision to award the grant to the City of Valparaiso. Maggie Clifton stated they could encourage businesses to send in statements in support of the program. She will see if there is anything else the Councilmembers can do.

Councilmember Anderson asked if this is a replica of the grant received by Hebron. Maggie replied it is similar but Valparaiso will do its own guidelines. Councilmember Anderson asked if the business must show a hardship or just that they employ low to moderate income employees. Maggie stated they will have to look at the business and make sure they comply with the guidelines as they are determined. 2019 and 2020 payroll figures will be looked at.

Councilmember Cotton asked if this is a new program or did Hebron just act fast to receive their grant already. Maggie Clifton advised for the Covid-19 Response Program Grant, this is the third phase. Usually the City of Valparaiso is not eligible to apply because the City's median income is too high. So it has not been available to the City previously.

Councilmember Douglas asked if the business pays back the funds received. Maggie Clifton replied this is a grant and does not require being paid back.

Councilmember Douglas moved to adopt Resolution No. 4, 2021. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote the motion to adopt Resolution No. 4, 2021 passed with a 7-0 vote.

Other Business

Councilmember Douglas discussed the City's Strategic Plan Process. Citizens can go to the City's website to participate. There are eight questions to answer.

Councilmember Cotton stated it appears the Council Chambers has room to have people attend the meetings. He is hearing that by virtue of the message on the Agenda, citizens are not welcome. There is a process listed though. He would like to know if any thought has been given to having people come down and attend the meetings in person. Mayor Murphy stated the Agenda gives the information for citizens to contact Marci and make an appointment if they want to attend a meeting in person. As restrictions are lifted, the City will change the policy of the public attending. Until then, maintaining safety for all citizens is important. Councilmember Cotton stated making an appointment is a deterrent to attending a meeting. He asked if this is being done as a mandate from the Governor. Attorney Patrick Lyp stated the City is working with the County Health Department. Right now they are working on balancing those who want to come to a meeting with safety regulations. Making an appointment ensures the citizen can have a seat. Until there is a safe environment, meeting procedures will remain as is.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor stated Ordinance No. 23, 2020 has been pulled and will not be presented. This Ordinance has to do with collecting unbilled costs for the Fire Territory. The Department is researching other avenues.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor stated for clarification, the Rainy Day fund balance is now at just over \$4.5 million. The City can only transfer 10% of its unspent appropriations. For 2020, unspent appropriations were at \$1.8 million. We could've transferred \$180,000, however with the reduction in some revenue sources and the uncertainty ahead of us for 2021, she opted to remain conservative.

Public Comment

No public comments have been received for tonight's meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

/s/ Holly Taylor, Clerk-Treasurer