

**LOWELL TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 9, 2012**

The regular meeting of the Lowell Town Council was called to order on Monday July 9, 2012 at 7:00 P.M. by President Phillip Kuiper. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed in remembrance of the families who have had tragedies this past week. Clerk-Treasurer Judy Walters called the roll. Members present were Craig Earley, Robert Philpot, Phillip Kuiper and Edgar Corns. Councilman Donald Parker was absent. Also present were Town Attorney Greg Sobkowski, Director of Public Works Greg Shook, Police Chief John Shelhart, Town Administrator Susan Peterson, Building Official Tom Trulley, two members of the media and nineteen citizens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Corns made a motion to approve the June 25th regular meeting and the June 25th work session, seconded by Councilman Early and carried by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

President Kuiper stated he reviewed White Vouchers #1735 - #1785, White-Police #4104 - #4118, Water #2390 - #2417, Waste Water #3359 - #3384. Councilman Earley made a motion to approve the vouchers as listed, seconded by Councilman Corns and carried by voice vote.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, REMONSTRANCES, PROCLAMATIONS

MONTHLY REPORTS – June 2012

Councilman Corns made a motion to approve the monthly reports for June 2012, seconded by Councilman Philpot and carried by voice vote.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES – Annexation Committee

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Works Department Update. Public Works Director Greg Shook stated that we did receive a \$340,000 federal grant towards the State Road 2 curb and sidewalk project which was 80% of the cost for the engineering, surveying, right-away acquisition and non-construction costs. He stated that he has just received notice that the town has been

awarded an additional \$815,000 towards the construction costs of the new curbs and sidewalks, which will pay for 80% of the cost where INDOT has not done anything. This project runs from Burr St. to Fremont St. President Kuiper asked what type of timeline we were looking at. Greg Shook responded that he is hoping to put it out to bid starting early next spring, and starting construction early next summer. Councilman Corns asked if it was from Burr St. to Fremont St. Greg Shook responded yes, and that they will be replacing the curbs and sidewalks that INDOT has not done, and also putting in some new curbs and sidewalks where there are none currently.

Councilman Early motioned to take from the table the motion to adopt the ordinance for annexation from pockets number 3 & 4, seconded by Councilman Philpot and carried by voice vote.

Councilman Early motioned to drop from consideration the motion to adopt for annex the pockets number 3 & 4, seconded by Councilman Corns and carried by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

President Kuiper stated that he had a letter from the president of the Lowell Chamber of Commerce, Carrie Austgen, stating that they are planning a sidewalk sale for all businesses downtown the weekend of Labor Day and she was requesting for the town to waive the permit fee for the weekend of August 30th – September 1st.

President Kuiper stated that he also had a letter asking to waive the transit fee for the vendors who are participating in the upcoming Barktoberfest on Sunday October 7th. Clerk-Treasurer Judy Walters stated that this will only waive the fee for the license, but they still have to go through the application process.

Councilman Philpot motioned to waive the permit and transit fees, seconded by Councilman Corns and carried by voice vote.

Debbie Howe, Superintendent Tri-Creek School Corporation, was pleased to announce that they have moved forward with making some renovations at the central office for Ivy Tech classes and they have begun some curriculum work and some publishing to advertise the classes. Nate Kleefisch, Assistant Superintendent Tri-Creek School Corporation, announced that he was proud to be a part of this movement involving Ivy Tech offering dual college credits to some of the High School students. He mentioned they have also been reaching out to the community through surveys to solidify the need for the presence of Ivy Tech in South Lake County. They are turning their central office vacant space in to a space that can be used for the classes offered by Ivy Tech, opening up opportunities for our community members to afford them classroom space with Ivy Tech so that they are getting credits for the classes they are taking in a current program. They are currently offering an English and Math class that are part of the Common Core Library, meaning these credits will transfer to most state universities in the state. President Kuiper asked if this was going on right now. Nate Kleefisch, Assistant

Superintendent, responded that they have some classes for the high school students now but will be expanding on that, and the community classes will begin August 20th of this year. There are eight classes scheduled currently. Mike Worosz from Ivy Tech College stated that it does take a couple of semesters to get things going. There is a big need out there for trained people with work skills. There is also a need to be able to bring some of that in to the community, like general education classes that students don't have to drive all of the way up to the campus for. Any specialized classes will be held at the campuses in East Chicago, Gary, Merrillville, and Valparaiso. Mr. Worosz stated that it was a pleasure working with the Tri-Creek School Corporation and hopefully they'll be able to build programs where people don't have to drive so far to get an education. Councilman Philpot asked if they were dual credit classes. Mr. Worosz stated yes for high school students. Nate Kleefisch, Assistant Superintendent, stated that there are new programs initiated with the manufacturing industry in this region such as BP, NIPSCO, and Mettall. One of the programs Ivy Tech offers currently is the Steelworkers of the Future program. This program provides courses in an industrial environment that are geared towards the needs for these companies. Upon graduation, students will take an entry test with the company and this course prepares them for that test. They could be employed at one of the companies that have a great demand for certain positions that this training is made for. Mr. Worosz stated that unemployment rates are high, but there are positions that need to be filled with these companies and these classes are designed to give students the skills for those positions. President Kuiper asked if people are supposed to contact Ivy Tech. Mr. Worosz responded both Ivy Tech and Tri-Creek School Corporation have the information. Debbie Howe, Superintendent stated that the information is also on the school website. President Kuiper asked if Ivy Tech reached out to these companies or if they reached out to Ivy Tech. Mr. Worosz responded that Mettall had reached out to Ivy Tech and that they welcome other companies to as well. Ivy Tech has a working relationship with BP, who they wrote a program for and an associate degree program as well, Praxair, and US Steel. Nate Kleefisch, Assistant Superintendent stated that these classes are tailor made to certain corporations. Mr. Worosz stated that Mettall offers an internship along with the program at Ivy Tech. Students with 12 credit hours in work related subjects are eligible for an 8 week paid internship that pays from \$18 – \$20 an hour. The students work 40 hours per week Monday through Friday with a mentor. They make about \$6000, which easily could pay for their tuition. They also can get up to 3 internships. The students are ready to work after these internships. Mr. Worosz stated that all of the big companies have put their foot forward. Debbie Howe, Superintendent, also stated that if our students start these programs as juniors, they can graduate as seniors with an Associates degree or certifications in mechanical or electrical technical skills and can go get a job that pays \$60,000 a year. Mr. Worosz stated that these classes are not just for High School students. They are also for people who want to re-train themselves, but our biggest source will be from the High School. Mr. Worosz also stated that in 5-10 years, there would be thousands of jobs. Debbie Howe, Superintendent, stated that they want to position these kids above others. Nate Kleefisch, Assistant Superintendent continued to hand out copies of the High School's strategic plan guide.

Councilman Corns stated that he had been on the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation district for 28 years, which was an elected position, but had to resign after

he was elected to town council. Councilman Corns was happy to hear that Kevin Garling, the instructor of Agriculture from the High School, was elected after him. Councilman Corns explained that there are currently white stencils on the storm drains that the kids have been placing on there, and at the meeting the other night there was a new stencil presented with a new adhesive to stick on the curb, and also new door hangers to inform citizens of conservation. Councilman Corns stated that Kevin Garling has some people in the Agriculture department that would do the work at no cost to the town and Councilman Corns wanted permission to go ahead with the project.

President Kuiper motioned to approve the storm drain project, seconded by Councilman Early and carried by voice vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Kuiper announced that the next regular meeting would be held Monday July 23rd at 7:00 P.M.

MEDIA QUESTIONS / PUBLIC COMMENTS

Melanie Csepiga from the Times asked why we have decided to drop areas 3 & 4 for areas of annexation. Ms. Csepiga stated that she knew they had explained it once before, but if they could explain it again. Councilman Early stated that after reviewing the fiscal plans, it did not seem to be responsible cost wise. Councilman Early continued to state that it would cost the town more money than what they would make on it. Councilman Corns stated that this would have a \$300,000 negative effect on any revenue if we included those areas.

Marcia Carlson, 240 W. Main St., asked about the progress on the walkway over the railroad tracks on Main St. Greg Shook stated that he has not reached anyone at the railroad, but they have talked about extending the sidewalk to add on to what is already on the bridge on the south side, but some small pieces are missing by the fire hydrants. Ms. Carlson stated that there should be some way to cross the railroad without being in the street, which is not possible right now. Greg Shook stated that to do that we need to get a hold of the railroad. Councilman Early asked if they were speaking about west of the tracks. Ms. Carlson stated that she is talking about across the tracks. Councilman Early stated that the road turns and there are no more sidewalks. Ms. Carlson stated that every railroad has a pedestrian crossing. Councilman Early stated that maybe some of the money for the sidewalks and curbs project could be used for that.

Councilman Corns asked if the survey on delineation of the Powell ditch was done. Greg Shook stated that it was done today and that he had forwarded the letter to IDEM. Greg Shook stated that once the survey is done, they would be submitting it to the DNR and Army Corp. Councilman Corns asked if they found anything out about a buried cable at the railroad trussel. Greg Shook stated that he doesn't believe so. Greg Shook followed up by saying that he has mentioned it to the county, and they were not aware of any

cable. Greg Shook stated that he has walked down there himself and it looks like the water rises up, but there must be about 60 feet or so that goes across and then drops off. Greg Shook also stated that part of the rocks that were dammed was moved. Greg Shook stated that water does rise up about 60 feet, runs along the trussel, and then drops off deeper. Greg Shook stated that as far as taking out more rocks, we need to find out if there is something buried in there. Councilman Corns stated that if we can move more, it might drop Cedar Creek 1 ½ feet to 2 feet. Councilman Corns stated that there are phone cables down there, but he is not sure about fiber optic cables. Councilman Philpot stated that the county should be looking in to that. Greg Shook replied saying that they said they would look in to it. Greg Shook stated that he went back there to look for a sign with a phone number, and couldn't find one. Councilman Philpot asked about the cables that do exist, and wondered how deep they were. Greg Shook stated that they would be able to locate but not tell the depth of the cables. Councilman Philpot stated that they should have gotten a permit. Greg Shook replied that he would get IUPPS to find out about the cable.

There being no further business or discussion, Councilman Philpot motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Corns at 7:34 P.M.

Phillip Kuiper, President

Attest:

Judith Walter, Clerk-Treasurer