

**LOWELL TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 11, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Lowell Town Council was called to order on Monday, January 11, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. by President Christopher Salatas. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a moment of silence. Clerk-Treasurer Judith Walters called the roll. Members present were Michael Gruszka, LeAnn Angerman, Will Farrellbegg, Christopher Salatas, and Edgar Corns. Also present were Town Attorney David Westland, Police Chief Erik Matson, Public Works Director Greg Shook, Building Administrator Carl Ferro, Commonwealth Engineers representative Roger Kottlowski, one member of the media, and forty-five citizens.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - 2016

Councilwoman Angerman made a motion to nominate Christopher Salatas as President in 2016, seconded by Councilman Corns and carried by roll call vote with five ayes. Councilman Corns made a motion to nominate LeAnn Angerman as Vice-President in 2016, seconded by Councilman Farrellbegg and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilwoman Angerman made a motion to approve the December 28, 2015 regular meeting minutes, and the January 5, 2016 executive session minutes, seconded by Councilman Corns and carried with five ayes.

TREASURER'S REPORT - December 2015

Councilman Corns made a motion to approve the December 2015 Treasurer's Report, seconded by Councilwoman Angerman and carried with five ayes.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

President Salatas stated he had reviewed White Vouchers #1000 - #1061, and White Voucher #2354 from 2015, White-Police #4000 - #4008, Water #2000 - #2043, Waste Water #3000 - #3039, and Stormwater Utility #5000 - #5005. Councilwoman Angerman made a motion to approve the vouchers as listed, seconded by Councilman Corns and carried with five ayes.

SWEARING IN CEREMONY

Swearing In Ceremony of New Town Judge - Judge Karen Coulis swore in Christopher Buckley as the new Town Judge. Councilwoman Angerman thanked Ms. Coulis for her dedicated service to the Town of Lowell and wished her luck in all of her future endeavors. Ms. Coulis thanked the court staff and the citizens of Lowell and wished Judge Buckley the best of luck.

MONTHLY REPORTS - December 2015

Councilman Gruszka made a motion to approve the December 2015 Monthly Reports, seconded by Councilman Farrellbegg and carried with five ayes.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

1st Reading - Ordinance #2016-01 - Discharging Firearms - Councilman Gruszka made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance #2016-01 by name and title only, seconded by Councilman Corns. Attorney David Westland stated this ordinance is very similar to Ordinance #2015-10 that was passed in 2015, but never acted on. If it is the Council's pleasure to move forward on this with the first reading, it would be appreciated, and it will also necessary to revoke Ordinance #2015-10. The motion carried by roll call vote three to one with Councilwoman Angerman and President Salatas voting nay. Councilman Gruszka made a motion to rescind Ordinance #2015-10, seconded by Councilman Farrellbegg and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Works Department Update - Streets/Sidewalks - Rt 2 Curb/Sidewalk Grant - Right-of-Way Acquisition - Public Works Director Greg Shook gave a brief description of the INDOT project for the new Council members. Roger Kottowski, Commonwealth Engineers, stated we are now moving in to the phase of the project where we need to begin acquiring easements and right-of-ways, which will affect forty-six homes. There are certain requirements that need to be met for these acquisitions, such as notification of property owners, and working with appraisers that are pre-qualified with INDOT to work on these sorts of projects and acquisitions. Mr. Kottowski mentioned that there is about a one year time line to complete these acquisitions. He then introduced Denny Cobb and Ben Hinshaw, the gentlemen that Commonwealth has hired from First Group Engineers to assist in the acquisitions, along with the review appraiser, Jeff Vale, the appraiser, Steve Kovachevich and the buyer, Mr. Kliheman. Mr. Cobb gave a brief synopsis of how far in to the process of acquisition they are and mentioned that they are currently two months ahead of schedule. Councilman Farrellbegg asked if there had been any resistance to the right-of-way acquisitions yet. Mr. Cobb stated they have not had any yet. Mr. Kottowski stated they have held two public hearings on the project as well.

NEW BUSINESS

Appointment of Department Heads - Council appointment - The following appointments were approved on motion made by Councilman Corns, seconded by Councilman Gruszka and carried by roll call vote with five ayes: Public Works Director-Greg Shook, Building Administrator-Carl Ferro, Street Superintendent-Frank Lovely, Water Superintendent-Dan Myers, Distribution Superintendent-Eric Barnhill, WWTP Superintendent-Terry Wright, Park Superintendent-Tom Sullivan, and Special Events Coordinator-Susan Peterson.

Appointment of Legal Counsel and Planning Consultant - Councilman Gruszka made a motion to appoint Westland and Bennett as the Town's Legal Counsel, and Jim Mandon as the Town's Planning Consultant, seconded by Councilwoman Angerman and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Board Representatives (all Presidential appointments) - The following appointments were approved on motion made by Councilman Farrellbegg, seconded by Councilman Corns and carried by roll call vote with five ayes: Lake County Economic Opportunity Council-Dorothy Gwyn-Maas, Board of Finance-Town Council President and Judy Walters, Lake County Solid Waste District-Edgar Corns, N.W. Indiana Cities and Towns-Edgar Corns, Northwest Indiana Planning Commission-Will Farrellbegg, Freedom Park Committee-LeAnn Angerman and Randy Hall, Tri-Creek Ambulance Board-Will Farrellbegg and Edgar Corns, Fire Department Liaison-Mike Gruszka and LeAnn Angerman, and Emergency Management Director-Police Chief Erik Matson, Co-Director-Clint Gorbball.

Appointment to Boards & Commissions - President Salatas read the following appointments: Plan Commission - Town Council Members - Christopher Salatas, Edgar Corns, and Mike Gruszka, Plan Commission /BZA - Donald Parker, B.Z.A. - Sean Brady and Chris Vandyke, Police Commission - Lynn Adams and Ray Borchert, Traffic Commission - Erik Matson, Jim Konradi, Dennis Rosengard, Eric Barnhill, and John Yelkich, Historic Review Board - Connie Schrombech and David Schoon, Redevelopment Commission - Town Council Members, Storm Drainage Board - David Schilling, JMOB - Will Farrellbegg and Edgar Corns, Shared Ethics - Edgar Corns and Ray Raszewski, P3 Bike Committee - Mike Gruszka, and Hotel/Motel Committee - LeAnn Angerman, Edgar Corns, and Judy Walters. Councilman Corns made a motion to approve the appointments as listed, seconded by Councilman Gruszka and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

President Salatas stated they discussed creating a Park Advisory Committee made up of five citizens that will advise the Council as to what they would like to see in our parks. Councilman Farrellbegg made a motion to approve the creation of a Park Advisory Committee, advertising for applicants for 30 days, seconded by Councilman Gruszka and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Act on agreement with James Mandon, Planning Consultant - Councilman Corns made a motion to approve the agreement between the Town and James Mandon as the Planning Consultant, seconded by Councilman Farrellbegg and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Act on employment contract with Chief of Police - Councilman Gruszka made a motion to accept the employment contract with Erik Matson for the Chief of Police through December 31, 2019, seconded by Councilwoman Angerman and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Permission to invest excess funds during 2016 - Councilman Corns made a motion to give permission to Clerk-Treasurer Walters to invest any excess funds, seconded by Councilman Gruszka and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Set Lowell Tribune/Pilcher Publishing - publication requirement - Councilman Farrellbegg made a motion to set the Lowell Tribune as the publication requirement for 2016, seconded by Councilman Gruszka and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Appoint committee to disburse 2015 hotel/motel tax funds and set deadline for requests - Clerk-Treasurer Walters stated the normal deadline is March 31st and the amount to be disbursed is \$4,725. Councilwoman Angerman made a motion to set the deadline as March 31st for requests, seconded by Councilman Gruszka and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Enter into annual agreement with McMahon & Associates - annual water assets - Councilman Gruszka made a motion to enter into the annual agreement with McMahon & Associates, seconded by Councilman Farrellbegg and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Approve 2016 Operating Budget for Stormwater Utility - Councilman Corns made a motion to approve the 2016 operating budget for Stormwater Utility, seconded by Councilwoman Angerman. Clerk-Treasurer Walters stated she would like to note that the budget is the same as 2015, \$300,000, which is based on revenue that is received. At the end of the year whatever is not spent is put in the Stormwater Utility Improvement Fund, and this year we were able to transfer \$85,000 to use for future projects. The motion carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

Request for waiving of solicitors license fee for 2016 Barktoberfest - Councilwoman Angerman made a motion to waive the solicitors license fees for the 2016 Barktoberfest, seconded by Councilman Gruszka and carried by roll call vote with five ayes.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Salatas announced that the next regular meeting would be Monday, January 25th, 2016 at 7:00 P.M.

MEDIA QUESTIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Melanie Csepiga, The Times, asked if she could get a copy of who had been appointed to the Boards and Commissions. She also asked for the specifics of the Police Chief's employment contract. Attorney Westland stated it was a four-year contract and the benefits and salary are in line with the salary ordinance. Ms. Csepiga asked if the dissolving of the Annexation Committee was something that was done at this meeting. President Salatas stated no one had asked to be appointed or re-appointed to the Annexation Committee, and with the current annexation laws, the Council felt it better to just do away with it for the time being. He stated we can always recreate the committee if need be, and hopefully the annexation laws will become more favorable to the towns and cities at some point.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Angerman made a motion to adjourn at 7:28 P.M., seconded by Councilman Gruszka and carried with five ayes.

Christopher Salatas, President

Attest:

Judith Walters, Clerk-Treasurer