

CITY OF PERU COMMON COUNCIL MEETINGS MINUTES

PERU CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

PERU, INDIANA

June 7, 2021

6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Hewitt opened meeting at 6:03 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLIGENCE: Led by Betsy Wolfe

INVOCATION: Brent Wedding

ROLL CALL: Anderson, Gustin, Plothow, Ramsey, Russell, Sahaidachny, and Wolfe were all present.

READING AND CORRECTING JOURNAL- of the minutes of the Regular meeting on May 3, 2021. Motion to accept the minutes, with a partial deletion of a statement made by councilman Ramsey at 23:14 to 23:21 in the meeting on April 5, 2021, was made by Wolfe, seconded by Plothow. Roll call vote taken with 7 Ayes, 0 Nays.

MOTION CARRIED

COUNCIL LIASION COMMUNICATIONS:

Patricia Russell: The Utilities Board met on May 5th and May 19th at 4pm at the Peru Utility building. There were bad debt write offs from October 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, of \$31,553.62. They were abnormally high due to Covid pandemic. Bad debts, unless extremely high, are possibly recouped when a customer re-establishes service. Materials and supplies are becoming more difficult to obtain due to the pandemic. IE: conductor wire was quoted at 6 – 9 ½ months to receive. There is also a chlorine supply shortage, and the costs will be going up. Thankfully, the company that supplies it was able to offer a special. On a positive note, the 3rd quarter 2021 electric tracker rate decreased which will be passed on.

Peru Planning Commission met on May 25th at 6pm in the Common Council Room. On the agenda was the vacating of a portion of Darrows Street. It was tabled for further investigation.

Peru Civic Center committee met on May 8th at 9:30 am at the center. On the agenda was a job title change from Event Coordinator to Event Host. At this time, we have one person in the position and are advertising for more people. The job is listed on the Peru Website. We have a new committee member. Her name is Natalie Jackson and she is a new member of our community. She has past experience with catering. Thank you, Pete, for inviting her. There is an event called “Meet the Mayor” in the planning stage to be held at the civic center. A date is not set at this time. The details will be forthcoming.

Aviation Board: Patricia was unable to attend the meeting for the aviation board on May 11th. I was at an appointment in Indianapolis with my doctor. But, please don't forget the Peru Municipal Airport

open house on July 31st from 11am to 4pm. There will be food, music, airplane rides and the Huey Organization will be offering helicopter rides.

Mark Ramsey The County Commissioners pledged \$1.4 million to help fund a major expansion of high speed internet to rural parts of Miami County, money goes to Miami, Cass County REMC for Broadway Broadband. There are 3 dogs at the Animal Control. The Cole Porter Festival is June 10 -13. July 4th is on Sunday, be careful with the fireworks. Miami County 4-H Fair is June 20-27.

Kathleen Plathow said that the Future Growth would be presented in communications so as not to violate open door policy.

Betsy Wolfe reported that in the BOW a proposal by Michael Kuepper to use city equipment was tabled last meeting to be brought up again at tomorrow night's meeting.

Steve Anderson had none.

Pete Sahaidachny reported that the Miami County council meeting on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, had two money appropriation transfers. One transfer was for the Clerks Perpetuation fund in the amount of \$1500, and \$2000 in Credit for Area 5 Guardianship.

Tom Gustin had none.

For unfinished business the adoption vote for the Additional Appropriation Ordinance #5-2021 was brought back. The motion to adopt was made by Tom Gustin, seconded by Steve Anderson. Roll call vote was taken with 7 Ayes recorded, and 0 Nays.

MOTION CARRIED

In new business: CITY OF PERU COMMON COUNCIL ORDINANCE #13-2021, AN ORDINANCE CREATING THE COVID/SDGB PHASE III FUND, was brought up with Chairman Wolfe asking for a motion to consider. Motion to consider was made by Anderson, seconded by Plathow. Debi Wallick and Rachel from United Way stepped forward to explain that the fund was necessary to be able to administer the grant money coming to the city and being disbursed back to the United Way. Motion was then made by Ramsey to adopt the ordinance, seconded by Gustin. Roll call vote was taken with 7 Ayes, and 0 Nays.

MOTION CARRIED

Next order of business was RESOLUTION JUNE #10-2021, A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING RATE TRACKING FACTOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC UTILITY OF THE CITY OF PERU, INDIANA. Motion to consider was made by Sahaidachny, seconded by Anderson. Josh Chance, General Manager of the utilities stepped forward to inform the council that the rate of electricity, on the residential side, decreased by \$.16. In comparing the rate, Duke Energy cost for 1000 KW was \$139.69 or 27% higher than Peru. Heartland was \$134.87 per 1000 KW or 23% higher. REMC Cass was \$144.55 per 1000 KW or 31% higher. The motion was made by Russell to adopt the resolution, seconded by Ramsey. Roll call vote was taken with 7 Ayes, and 0 Nays.

MOTION CARRIED

Next order of business brought forward was the City Council appointee for the Library Board. Maryann Farnham, on behalf of the board requested a new council appointee to replace Austina Reed who had

resigned from her seat a few months earlier. Regina McDowell submitted a letter to the council as a person interested in filling the vacancy. The motion to appoint Regina to the Library Board was made by Gustin, seconded by Wolfe. Roll call vote was taken with 7 Ayes, 0 Nays.

MOTION CARRIED

Linda Johnson, Director of Area Five Adult Guardianship VASIA (Volunteer Applicants for Seniors and Incapacitated Adults) presented an update to the council and Mayor. Also, notification/update of budget needs for 2022; approval now or in the fall. Linda explained the program was similar to the CASA program for children, and served the counties of Tipton, Howard, Cass, Miami and Fulton. The program was initiated to serve the most vulnerable at risk population and Covid had prevented them from being able to do so as much as needed. The story of a mom and son from Peru was brought up as an example of a recent case they were involved in helping with. The home was condemned and would be signed over to the city from the agency who took possession of it after rescuing the mom and son. The mom was in a facility and doing well with the son finally being placed in a group home he was able to adjust to. The program runs off of grant money and gets no money from Area 5. Linda would like to have a pledge letter in the amount of \$5000 from the county council, city council and Mayor around September or October of this year. Linda would hope to get about \$125,000 from the five counties and would be able to get a match up to \$75,000 from the Supreme Court Grant she is applying for this year. She also asked for an attorney who would work pro bono for cases in Miami county as they have no one available to do this here yet. She stated she would be contacting the mayor and council back in the fall for a pledge hopefully.

Heather Muzzillo stepped forward and presented the council with pictures of flags that were flying around her neighborhood with an obscene word on them. She was asking council if there was a way to have an update on the city ordinance to help regulate this from happening. Council agreed that something should be done but legally unsure what path they could take to rectify this problem. Council asked the city attorney if he knew how they could legally stop this. Dustin Kern, the city attorney, looked up state and federal regulations on signs and flags. It was stated that signs could be regulated somewhat, whereas flags could not as it would be an infringement of the freedom of speech by federal laws. Betsy said she heard that the city of Manchester had a similar problem, and she would get the name of the attorney that Dustin had spoken with to see how they were handling the situation in their city. Steve Anderson said he was going to look into what other cities were doing to see if there was something the city could change. The council said they would look into this further and she could contact them to see with what they find out.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Debi Wallick from United Way stepped forward to update council on the second kiosk that was placed this month. Adam and the street department, and Chris Ousley from Stow-Away Storage was given thanks for installing the kiosk. She said a third kiosk would be placed at Waste Management District next. Mayor Hewitt stated that about 250lbs. of needles have been collected from the first kiosk. Debi

also informed the council that the United Way kickoff is August 21, 2021, from 5:30 – 7:30 at the Toll House with a Ducky Run planned. The ducks will be \$5 apiece.

Stephanie Graf stepped forward to inform the council and the public that a Juneteenth event is being planned in Maconaquah Park on June 19, 2021. All the proceeds from the event will go into establishing Lillie's House. The mayor has been invited to help come and kick off the event which is start at 12 and go until 8PM on the 19th. The Lieutenant Governor, Suzanne Crouch, has accepted the invitation to be at the event. Jefferson Street BBQ will cater the event from 12 – 3PM. There will be a band playing between the hours of 4 – 8pm. The cost of tickets is \$20 for adults, and \$10 for children. There will be scholarships offered to families with more than one child to help with cost of the other children. Or if a family, or individual cannot afford to attend there will be scholarships available for them. There will be a bouncy house, snow cones and cotton candy. Hopefully, those from leadership will show up and support the event.

Kathleen listed the names of several people she wanted to be voted in the Future of Peru Committee she and Pete are currently the liaisons for. Dustin Kern, city attorney, asked Kathleen is the committee had been formed by the mayor or by council. After a discussion, which it was determined it was not clear to who had formed this committee. Before proceeding to vote on people to join this committee it was decided that that question needed to be answered. Kathleen said she would look into this further and do her research to find the answer. Kathleen went on to say that a Foia request of hers, requesting the information from the FOIA request of Matthew Jelenek had been denied. She said she had only gotten a couple of things so far and would be filing charges tomorrow. Dustin, City Attorney tried once again to offer an explanation of what was expected and had been provided. Kathleen stated she asked for the original request from Jelenek and the letter sent to department heads. All she received was the original request. As there was no letter sent to the department heads, just the request forwarded to them she had in fact gotten what she requested.

Mark Ramsey stated that he was hoping that the council would be able to start working together in the future to benefit the city of Peru and not themselves. He also requested that any information sent from council members to other council members be sent to him as well in a timely manner. He stated that at the Veterans ceremony on the weekend only him and the mayor were in attendance. Mark also expressed his concern on only a few council members attending the board meetings for their liaison assignments. Ramsey reminded people that the Cole Porter Festival was June 10 -13. He remarked it was good to see the kids out and about for the summer and that the Miami County Fair is June 20-27 this year. Thanks to Molly Grant and Sherriff Hunter for taking him around the 911 facility at the sheriff's' office. They've had 1,000 logged calls in the 1st 5 months. If you want to go out and see what our tax money is going for, they will take you around. Thanks to the street department for cutting down trees that need to be cut down and especially trees on my corner.

Betsy brought up the CCMG as to why the city missed getting it. She stated the mayor had explained in a meeting that it had been completed but failed in the submission. The mayor determined that the only loss was in time, as the project would only be delayed. It was brought out that it would be applied for again this year in July. Mayor Hewitt said that it would be the plan this year to pave Abraham Lane and all the graveled alleys.

Diane, from the audience, asked if they knew when the lines on West Main Street would be painted. She said it was hard to see any lines after dark and made it hard to know where the lanes were. Mayor


Hewitt said they had been working on painting lines, but rain had slowed it down. He would check and see if those lines were getting painted soon.

Tom Gustin made the motion to adjourn, with Steve Anderson seconding his motion. All said Aye and meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miles Hewitt", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Miles Hewitt, City of Peru, IN

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Rylands", written over a horizontal line.

Clerk-Treasurer, Susan Rylands