

December 7, 2021

TOWN OF GRIFFITH TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Council President Rick Ryfa called the December 7, 2021 meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

POLICE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY:

Police Officer Henry Laxson
Constable Madison “Skip” Nicholson
Detective Antonio Valentine
Police Officer Richard Houston II
Lt. Garret Famos

ROLL CALL:

James Marker
Lawrence Ballah
Rick Ryfa
Tony Hobson
Melissa Robbins - Absent

ALSO ATTENDING:

Gina Smith- Clerk Treasurer
Greg Mance – Chief of Police - Absent
Steve McDermott – Building Commissioner
Sheri Bradtke McNeil – Attorney for the Town
Roy Schoon – Fire Chief
Andy Raab – Director of Public Works

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Council Member Tony Hobson made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2021 as presented, seconded by Council Member Larry Ballah, Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:

Claims # 36404-36636 \$2,338,837.47 Council Member James Marker made a motion to approve the claims, seconded by Council Member Larry Ballah, Motion Carried

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. The next Town Council meeting will be on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., there will be a study session before the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and one will follow if necessary.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. **2021 Pavement Asset Management Plan:** Public Works Director Andy Raab stated every year by December 1st in order to be eligible for INDOT funding and Community Crossings Matching Grant program we are required to turn in a pavement asset management plan for approval, so this was turned in and approved. We are now set for our Community Crossings Program for the Spring and will be doing our next set of roads.
- **Director of Public Works** – Leaf schedule will be extended. We did post the schedule on our website.
- **Police** – No Report
- **Fire** – No Report
- **Building Commissioner** – No Report

- **Finance Report – No Report**

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: NONE

BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Safety Board Appointment:** Council President Rick Ryfa stated there is an opening for the Safety Board, Council President Rick Ryfa entertained any recommendations for a motion to approve, Council Member James Marker made a motion to recommend Sue Katona, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, Council President Rick Ryfa asked for any other recommendations, none, all in favor of appointing Sue Katona to the Safety Board, all in favor, Motion Carried.
2. **Request for applicants for Board and Commissions:** Council President Rick Ryfa stated we are requesting anyone that is interested in serving on any of our boards and commissions to please either send an email, resume or letter of request to the Town Council, email to towncouncil@griffith.in.gov, all the information is on our website, there will be at least one opening on the Plan Commission, looking to fill as soon as possible. From time to time we get openings during the year.
3. **Request by Griffith Public Schools to reduce permit fees:** Council Member Tony Hobson made a recommendation for the remainder of 2021 and throughout the year 2022 we offer Griffith Public Schools 75% reduction in their permit fees, seconded by Council Member Larry Ballah, Motion Carried.
4. **2021-58 Salary Ordinance for 2022- First Reading:** Council Member James Marker read the first reading for Salary Ordinance 2021-58, essentially this is for a 2 % raise across the board for both full time and part time employees.
5. **2021 -61 Ordinance Additional Appropriations:** Council Member Larry Ballah read Ordinance 2021-61, Whereas, it has been determined that it is now necessary to appropriate more money that was appropriated in the annual budget: now, therefore: Section 1, Be it resolved by the Town of Griffith, Lake County, Indiana that for the expenses of the taxing unit the following additional sums of money are hereby appropriated out of funds named for the purposes specified, subject to the laws governing the same: Council Member Larry Ballah made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by Council Member James Marker, Roll call taken, Council Member James Marker, in favor, Council Member Larry Ballah, in favor, Council President Rick Ryfa, in favor, Council Member Melissa Robbins Absent, Council Member Tony Hobson, in favor, Council Member Larry Ballah made a motion that would grant final approval on Ordinance 2021-61, seconded by Council Member James Marker, Motion Carried.
6. **Griffith CCMG 2021-2 Design and Inspection Agreement:** The Town of Griffith 2021 CCMG supplemental agreement number one. We were awarded \$793,541.15 from the Community Crossing Grant, we need to match that so we get \$1,724,131.76, we take very good advantage of the CCMG, we do have to go ahead and pay the consulting engineers which is Butler Fairman & Seufert, Inc, that amount is \$35,000.00, Council Member Tony Hobson made a motion to approve the supplemental agreement number 1, seconded by Council Member Larry Ballah, Council President Rick Ryfa stated there are a list of roads 18 to 20 that will be repaved next year, in addition to the projects that we recently got approved that will also come towards the middle of the summer, Motion Carried. Council President Rick Ryfa stated we believe this will take our total to about \$8 million dollars' worth of road work that we have had a 50% match from the state, the program is working well for us.
7. **Letter of Support-C&O Trail:** The Town of Griffith recognized the importance of trails and greenways to our community and the entire northwest Indiana region, we have

previously coordinated with Lake County parks and recreation in the creation of a connector trail along Colfax Road that links the Erie Lackawanna Trail and the Oak Savannah Trail the western edge of Oak Ridge Prairie Park. The Town of Griffith is in full support of your efforts to obtain Next Level Trail funds to fill in this gap in the C&O Trail and add to the growing network of interconnected greenways in Northwest Indiana. Council Member James Marker made a motion to continue our support for this project, seconded by Council Member Larry Ballah, Motion Carried.

PENDING ITEMS:

1. **Sidewalk replacement Program:** Council Member Larry Ballah read a letter that will be going out to some of our residents regarding tree removal in conjunction with the sidewalk replacement. The letter was issued by Butler Fairman & Seufert, Inc., our Town engineer. On behalf of the Town of Griffith, BF&S Civil Engineers is aiding on the Griffith sidewalk project. Part of this assistance includes determining trees needing to be removed due to their conflict with the proposed sidewalk replacement. If you are receiving this letter, it was determined that a tree or trees in front of your home within the Town's right of way, located between the concrete curb and sidewalk, requires removal for the new sidewalk replacement to occur properly. This removal will include stump grinding and restoration to the disturbed area at no cost to the homeowner. In the event you wish to plant a new tree upon completion of the sidewalk project, a list of acceptable species to be planted in the parkway is listed at the bottom of this letter, which are several types of trees that you could choose from. The homeowners will be responsible for the costs associated with the new trees. The tree removal will be taking place during the warmer months of 2021 -2022 and 2022-2023. There is a name and phone number on the letter if you have any questions and wish to call BF&S.
2. **Airport Advisory Committee:** No Report
3. **Hammond Water Works:** No Report

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Resident questioning when leaves will be picked up. He stated he had called and felt he was misinformed on the days. He felt the driver made no attempt to wait for the resident to move his vehicle. He wanted to formally make a complaint. He was not happy to present this at a Town Council Meeting. Andy Raab, Public Works Director, will meet with him.

Don McCarter stated Good job to Public Works, he has never had a problem and congratulated Public Works.

Tim Diamond asked about bike trail, and tree removal.

There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE TOWN OF GRIFFITH, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA

Rick Ryfa – President

Lawrence Ballah – Vice President

James Marker

Tony Hobson


Melissa Robbins


Attest: Gina Smith - Clerk Treasurer