

## February 21, 2023

# TOWN OF GRIFFITH TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Council President Rick Ryfa called the February 21, 2023, meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### POLICE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY:

Police Officer Peter E. C. Jerving  
Police Officer Christopher Fitzgerald  
Police Officer Geoffrey Redd

The Griffith Clergy Association, for the first time since covid, is going to be having a community wide Good Friday Service coming up in April. This will be held at the Griffith Lutheran Church.

### ROLL CALL:

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

### ALSO ATTENDING:

Gina Smith- Clerk Treasurer  
Greg Mance – Chief of Police  
Steve McDermott – Building Commissioner - Absent  
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 February 7, 2023, meeting seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, Motion Carried.

### APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:

Claims \$1,471,227.17 (Various funds) Council Member Larry Ballah made a motion to approve the claims as presented, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, Motion Carried.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. The next Town Council meeting will be on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, 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.
2. Council President Rick Ryfa congratulated Wes Schafer, he celebrated 100 years last year, he turned 101 last week, look forward to seeing him turn 102.

### COMMUNICATIONS:

1. LARC requesting fee wavier for Central Park Rental on August 20, 2023: Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to waive the fees, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, all in favor, Motion Carried.
2. Griffith Youth Baseball, Opening day Parade: Board of Directors would like to hold their opening parade on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, lining up at 8:30 am, starting at 9:00 and last till approximately 45 minutes. Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to approve the opening day parade, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, all in favor, Motion Carried.
3. Meals on Wheels requesting fee waiver for Central Park on October 1, 2023: To use Central Park as a stop on their fundraising event, the purpose of the event is to raise awareness for Senior nutrition in the region as well as much needed funds. Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to approve the use of the pavilion and waive the fees, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, all in favor, Motion Carried.

**REPORTS:**

- **Director of Public Works**-No Report
- **Police** – No Report
- **Fire** – No Report
- **Building Commissioner** - No Report
- **Finance Report** – No Report

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:** NONE

**BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL:** NONE

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** NONE

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Ordinance No. 2023-3:** Ordinance Establish Petty Cash Fund: Whereas the Town of Griffith desires to establish a Petty Cash Fund and now therefore it be ordained by the Council of the Town of Griffith, Lake County, Indiana. Petty Cash amounts as follows:  
Clerk Treasurer: \$500.00  
Police Department: \$400.00  
Senior Center: \$200.00  
Council Member Tony Hobson gave the first reading for 2023-3.
2. **Resolution No. 2023-4:** Approving a 75% Reduction in Permit Fees for the Griffith Public Schools Corporation, this is something we do every year and present it, Council Member Larry Ballah made a motion that we adopt this Resolution to reduce the fees for the schools, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, all in favor, Motion Carried.
3. **Resolution No. 2023-9:** A Resolution by the Town Council of Griffith, Lake County Indiana for the employer to pick up the Mandatory Member Contribution to the 1977 Fund, whereas the Town Council of the Town of Griffith, as been informed and advised that the current cost of the 1977 Police officers and Firefighters pension and disability fund is 17 and one half percent of the certified Salary to be paid by the employer and six percent of the certified salary to be paid by the member, whereas the Town Council acknowledges that I.C. 5-10-2-3-2 authorizes employers to pick up and pay all of or part of the members' mandatory contributions, whereas the Town Council elects to pick up the Griffith police officer members' six percent mandatory contribution. Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-9, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, all in favor, Motion Carried.
4. **Ordinance No. 2023-5:** Amending Town Ordinance No. 2022-42, An Ordinance establishing Salary and Wages of the Town of Griffith for 2023, Repealing all Ordinances and Town code sections, or parts thereof, in conflict herewith, and all matters related hereto, this amends to add a part time social worker that is funded with a Grant, and the six percent of the members' mandatory contribution for participation in the 1977 Police Officers and Firefighters pension and Disability Fund as a new money pick up. Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, roll call taken, Jim Marker absent, Larry Ballah, in favor, Rick Ryfa, in favor, Melissa Robbins, in favor, Tony Hobson, in favor, rules suspended, Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2023-5, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, all in favor, Motion Carried.
5. **Resolution No. 2023-6** Transfer Appropriations: Transfer appropriations from – to, totally \$19,511.51. Council Member Tony Hobson made a motion to allow for the transfer of appropriations, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, all in favor, Motion Carried.

6. **Ordinance No. 2023-7:** Amending Chapter 86 Zoning b the Addition of a new section 86-301 Written Commitments: This Ordinance would allow the commissioner and Town Council to allow or require written commitment from the owner, petitioner or developer for a proposal to change the zoning map filed by a property owner developer. Written commitment may establish the zoning district or use or a range of use is permitted into territory being considered by the proposal. A written commitment would be binding upon the owner the parcel affected, a subsequent owner of the parcel and a person who acquires an interest in the parcel. This came up through the Planning Commission with some questions about rezoning some of the property in Town. Council Member Larry Ballah stated this is the first reading and no action this evening.
7. **Ordinance No. 2023-8:** Amending Ordinance 2022-46 Vacating Alley: Whereas, the Griffith Town Council on January 17, 2023, under the authority of I.C.36-7-3-12, passed Ordinance No. 2022-46 vacating a public alley within the Town's Corporate Limits; and whereas, due to a scrivener's error the legal description contained in said Ordinance is incorrect; and whereas, to correct the legal description the Griffith Town Council must pass this amending Ordinance, we allowed the vacation of a unused alley but we did not have the proper legal description for that alley so we are redoing this now with the proper legal description, Council Member Larry Ballah made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, roll call taken, Jim Marker absent, Larry Ballah, in favor, Rick Ryfa in favor, Melissa Robbins, in favor, Tony Hobson, in favor, rules suspended, Council Member Larry Ballah made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2023-8, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, all in favor, Motion Carried.
8. **BF&S Supplement for Asset Management Plan:** Supplemental Agreement No. 1. Town of Griffith, Griffith Sanitary District. Whereas the State Revolving FUND requirements amended their requirement for an applicant to provide a completed Asset management Plan, now requiring this to be submitted with the Preliminary Engineering Report in lieu of prior to project completion, therefore, expediting the schedule. The parties agree that the October 20, 2022, agreement be modified by this Supplemental Agreement No. 1; adding the scope of an Asset Management Plan, and therefore, increasing the amount of compensation by an amount of \$27,500.00, as described in Appendix D., attached hereto; Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to allow Town Council President Rick Ryfa to sign this agreement, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, Council President Rick Ryfa stated the purpose of this is funds may be available through the state revolving, they do require that this Asset Management Plan be in place when we would submit any application, we will be prepared if something should come up, all in favor, Motion Carried.
9. **Solar Farm Update:** Dr. Bruce Breeden with Telamon Energy attended, he had spoke last August 10<sup>th</sup>, when the Town Council approved the accepted bid to start the project. We are 177 days since that date, if anyone is looking for a PHD topic for a dissertation the Griffith Solar Project would be a prime example of bureaucracy by governmental agencies to do a research project. We believe now this is the seventh governmental agency that is reviewing the project. This one is the lakes and rivers, the great lakes and rivers federal agency, however we are in great shape that we do think this is the last agency that needs to approve and go through the changes, the construction is planning to start before July 15<sup>th</sup>, with that we have had several changes that have been required by various agencies, the proposed change order for the Town Council to consider. The original contract price that was approved was \$428,339.00. INDOT made several required changes, some of the challenges we have had and Jenny from Christopher Burke correctly anticipated this, that we are so close to the Interstate 80/90 being so close to a major referral fair of Cline Avenue that they have added all kinds of hurris, we knew we would have a temporary road going in, for example and on your requested change of investment majority of the price. INDOT is requiring we follow their exact specifications for a temporary road, so the vast majority of the cost increase is related to

- the INDOT requirements. This would be using local labor a construction company here in Town will be doing the road construction, we're required after the project is completed to partially remove the temporary road and that number includes that partial removal afterwards. We will be using IBEW licensed electricians for the hookup. INDOT required to put in traffic management devices, to warn people driving North on Cline, that people will be working 50 feet to 80 feet off of Cline Avenue. The final is the associated pricing increases that we've had since August. Which now the total request is \$92,594.00, bringing the total price of the project \$520,933.00, however there is always a silver lining, in August it was discussed and announced that we heard rumors the Inflationary Reduction Act was going to be passed, and not for profits that do not normally file taxes would be included, now knowing for sure, and even though the price went up, the Town will receive a rebate check from the Federal Government for \$150,000.00 plus 30% of the fees which are not included in the contracted price so altogether we will get about \$175,000.00 rebate, we will have to file taxes for the first time because the IRS is administering this, there will be a special form for cities and towns that have never filed taxes before to file taxes for this rebate check. This will be filed in January by April 15, 2024, the rebate will be received by June 15, 2024, assuming we complete the project in 2023. The good news is we've reduced the cost by \$175,000.00 altogether that couldn't have been guaranteed summer. We are still getting a six year payback, saving our community \$1.4 million dollars in round numbers over the 25 year warrants of the life of the system and our return on investment by taking the \$520,000.00 and put in the bank getting a 14.79% return. About 8-14 weeks out on ordering materials. Council President Rick Ryfa asked about the permits, Lake Coastal Permit, Breeden stated three attorneys from the DNR reviewed the permit, two attorneys signed off the third attorney would not, the Federal Coastal Waters has to approve before we can approve, this is the final agency that is reviewing. Andy Raab stated to be clear the Army Corps have not signed off on because they are waiting on the final approval.
10. **Purchase of Vehicle for PD:** The Griffith Police Department would like to purchase a 2023 GMC Terrain, for \$35,000.00. Council Member Tony Hobson made a motion allowing the PD to use CAGIT funds to purchase the vehicle, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, all in favor, Motion Carried.
11. **Park Department requesting approval to purchase 2 vehicles not to exceed \$35,000.00 per vehicle:** Council Member made a motion to continue this, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, all in favor, Motion Carried.
12. **Town of Griffith MS4Stormwater Quality Management Plan:** The Town is required to submit this plan, Council Member Tony Hobson made a motion that we adopt the February 8, 2023 Storm Water Quality Management Plan, also in the motion to allow our Town Council President Rick Ryfa to sign the annual report, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, all in favor, Motion Carried. Mr. Raab gave a summary of the MS4, Raab stated IDEM issued a new permit for Stormwater every five years. The Town is required to abide by the changes. Update Stormwater quality management plan. Basically every five years make the necessary changes that IDEM wants to see in the program, we are an MS4 community, we are required to complete an annual report, a water characterization update. IDEM wants to have clean, like we all do, clean streams. Everything we do we want to make sure we're improving our storm water quality, which is part of the plan, educate the community as well, checking and inspecting outfalls making sure we are not polluting our waters.
13. **2023 Griffith Events:** The events which include the Market, which will start in May on Fridays and go thru September, BluesFest: June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, Rock Rail: Labor Day weekend, August 31<sup>st</sup>, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 3<sup>rd</sup>. Oktoberfest: October 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, Park Full of Art, The Symphony, Fall Harvest Fest, Safety Day: September 9<sup>th</sup>. Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to approve and allow the Town to serve and sell alcohol at the Town Events, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, Ryfa state our events are Central Market, Bluesfest, Rock N Rail and Oktoberfest, all in favor,

Motion Carried. Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to approve the Vendor fees for the Market which will be the same as last year, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, all in favor, Motion Carried.

**PENDING ITEMS: NONE**

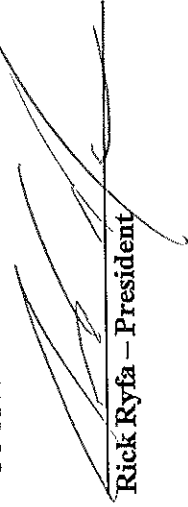
**Public Comment:**

Kim Rausch asked with the MS4 will there be a fee on our taxes, Raab stated the MS4 cost now is part of the water bill which is \$7.50 charge.

Kim asked what is the solar farm, Ryfa stated we have been talking about for the better part, it would be installed on the golf course near the Griffith Sanitary Station, the purpose would be to power to the Sanitary Station as Bruce has said the payback period would be six years, after six years then all the electricity would be paid for through the solar panels themselves so the electricity generated from there, it is not a huge farm but it is enough to provide electricity to power the sanitary station, were looking at close to \$200,000.00 plus a year in credits. Raab stated depending on what happens with our Sanitary Station, making upgrades as part of the agreement with the government and Hammond.

**This meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.**

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

  
Rick Ryfa – President

James Marker

  
Melissa Robbins

  
Lawrence Ballah – Vibe President

  
Tony Hobson

  
Attest: Gina Smith - Clerk Treasurer

