



July 10, 2024 Town Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees: MacKenzie Taylor, Larry Randolph, Dean Smith, Dana Rutter, Avery Ferguson, Vernon Miller, Addie Miller, Jim Winkler, Ray Rodriguez, Jon Veenstra, two women from 5 Little Stones, Mike & Lisa Dull.

Dean made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 26, 2024. Dana seconded the motion. Upon voice vote the meeting minutes from June 26, 2024 were unanimously approved.

Water: Avery mentioned he wasn't at the last meeting. Since then, he's done a repair with Stouder on Main Street. There was a leak within the main line that Avery didn't even know was there. This has been fixed.

Avery gave the council an estimate to get one of the wells repaired. (Town has two wells). The well is still running fine but it's been eight years since it's been redone. The numbers are still good as far as activity but the well is slowing down. The quote consists of getting the well refurbished for \$21,600. This is something to think about looking forward into the future. Council asked MacKenzie if there's money in any accounts for this repair. MacKenzie said there's plenty in water utility improvement, maybe wait and schedule this in 2025 so we can continue to build up on this fund. The council was in agreement and gave Avery permission to schedule this repair for sometime in 2025.

Avery began to briefly mention something about a rate study and told MacKenzie she could explain the rest. MacKenzie said Jeff Rowe from Baker Tilly reached out to her and informed me that it's time or soon approaching to have a rate study completed for the town. Of course, with inflation, increase of chemicals, and the economy in general, we need to start taking a look at this. Avery and MacKenzie have a meeting set up with Jeff tomorrow to discuss this.

Avery said the lead line survey is going well. All information has been mailed to utility customers. So far, he suggested we've received 12-20 responses. He's hopeful more will start coming into complete our October deadline.

Larry said, did you get a notice to stop by Mary Yoder's? Avery said yes, and I've had other people reach out to me for assistance which he is willing to help. It just may be a couple of weeks. Avery tried to clarify he is only looking for the line coming into the wall to the meter. It's not a concern what goes into the house.

Dana asked, someone has reached out to him, they refer to him as “shorty.” He has Dean’s old shop. He said the guy told him there’s a problem with the meter? Dana said, the guy expressed that they’ve had a problem since they moved into the building. Avery said, it’s not the meter. I put in a new one last year. Avery admitted when he originally installed a new meter, he put it in backwards. It was installed that way for a couple of months, since then the issue has been corrected and there is nothing wrong with the meter. Avery said, according to the consumption/usage they have a major leak some place. Larry asked how much was their bill? MacKenzie said it was \$180.00 something but can’t remember the gallon consumption. MacKenzie told the council that Robert has taken his squad car to get air in his tires or patched and a guy named Bobby admitted to Robert that they have had a leak in the toilet. Since then, he thought it had been fixed but didn’t seem too certain. Avery suggested maybe a neighbor is using their water, pulling off a spicket, going over there to shower, he has no idea. Avery said every so often with this account holder, they spike a high-water bill and complain. Avery said, he isn’t too sure what to tell you. Dean said, it’s almost got to be the toilet. MacKenzie said she warned Avery about this as soon as she noticed this when getting water bills ready to print. MacKenzie advised Avery to look at a leak report and see if he could pull a daily log like we did for the Butler’s. MacKenzie also expressed she has had very poor encounters with a lady who calls in for them and Avery is well aware of this.

Wastewater: Avery said everything is working pretty well. I had a surprise inspection as you all know from IDEM. Since then, he’s improved some of the forms and has three more forms to get fixed.

The lift station out at wastewater received a clog in the pump. Tanner came out and helped pump it out. It looked like it was those flushable wipes that clogged it. There was a problem with the chain on the pump, it was rusting out. Avery said he had to call Middlebury Electric so we didn’t drop that pipe. Avery made the decision to add stainless steel chains to prevent this situation from happening again. A heavy-duty chain was used instead of a stainless steel. Avery would like to switch over all of the chains to stainless steel ones. The council was in agreement and okay with Avery making this change.

Community Development: MacKenzie announced to everyone in the room to mark their calendars. November 2nd we are going to have a grand opening/ribbon cutting celebration for the new addition to the park. We don’t have a time yet, we’re thinking 11:00am-2:00pm but we will let you know as we hammer out details. This will be really big for us. Micah informed MacKenzie, Pumpkin Patch’s manufacturer from Swing Kingdom will be flying out a marketing representative to come to the event and take photos.

MacKenzie told the council she is meeting with Ray Cadwell and Jon Hunsberger from VBC and Community Foundations on Friday to discuss the towns progress with the park revitalization.

Maintenance: Dean said Matt isn't here. Avery said Matt wanted me to relay a few things. Matt told Avery he is working on a quote to get lines painted. He is also working on getting the internet fixed out there. He'd like to get a quote to put a fence up around the maintenance building. There's been an issue with people walking through there and spray painting. Dean asked Avery, did he mention anything about Kimberlin's place over here? Avery said he didn't. Dean said if you could tell him, if he doesn't have something in the works by next meeting the board will find someone else to do it. Kimberlin has a lot of standing water over there and it needs to be fixed, Larry said. He has had long enough since this issue was brought up 2 ½ months ago. Dean said I am happy to say Brian Yoder's property looks great. There doesn't seem to be anymore flooding issues. Avery mentioned to the council I know last week was a short week with the 4th Holiday and Austin has been on vacation all week. Larry asked, when is he coming back? Avery said he is not certain but should be back Monday.

Marshal: Dean asked Ray if they have gotten the floor mats for the Durango? Ray said he wasn't sure. Larry thought that Robert told him he did.

Ray told the council Bontrager Security emailed him about the additional cameras to put around town. Ray said he was having some issues with Nipsco not wanting to have cameras on their poles. Then, the more Ray thought about adding a camera to certain buildings, he decided that wasn't a good idea. Ray was thinking two of the cameras could be placed at the intersection of Jefferson and Washington. Then, put the other one at the entrance of SR-13 near the Dollar General. Larry said, we should proceed with it since I know there was blessing given to you in the past with this project. It has been pushed back with different obstacles from Nipsco. All council members agreed to have Ray contract work to install two cameras at those two locations.

Ray said he would like to discuss how to proceed with the vandalism incident that took place in the restroom at Cook Station Park. Dean said let's table that until the August meeting since we won't have another one this month. MacKenzie asked Dean, really? He said yeah, we do this every year with fair week. MacKenzie thanked him for canceling the last July meeting. Next meeting will be August 14, 2024 at 5:00pm.

Dana asked Ray if he had heard about the citation given to a business on the corner of Washington and Jefferson. Ray said, Robert went and talked to them but wasn't sure of the outcome. Dana said that stuff has to go. It's wrong and gross. No one should buy furniture that's

been sitting outside in different states of weather. Ray said he would ask Robert if he sees him tomorrow. Dana said thank you.

Park: Vernon said things are going well. It's kind of flooded right now. Larry asked if the grass was growing? Vernon said you know it.

Vernon mentioned Friends of the Park asked about the power. Last year they brought this up and it was kind of shot down. They need a lot more power out there. They have more food vendors than ever. Floyd asked if they could put in a transformer (Vernon thinks that is what the part is called) there is a wire out there that would work for it. Arrow said they would donate a \$1500 transformer to put there and all we need to get is a utility box and post it. It shouldn't be more than a couple hundred dollars. Dean said, that doesn't sound bad or expensive. Dana asked if it would interfere with the new project. Vernon said no, absolutely not. Dean made a motion to approve adding in a new transformer and utility box. Larry seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to put in a transformer in the park.

Vernon said another thing that was mentioned. There used to be a hydrant near the walking path. Vernon was told some kids had pulled it out and since then the hydrant was removed and capped. Can we put another hydrant there? Friends of the Park only has one hydrant they're using to pull water from for all of the vendors. Dean, Dana, and Larry said that will be fine to reinstall another hydrant in the existing spot. Avery said he believes he has one to put on the area.

Clerk Treasurer: May bank reconciliation is complete, balanced, and signed off by Suzy Bass for you all to take a look at and approve. The council reviewed the packet and approved the May bank reconciliation.

MacKenzie informed the council she's been in contact with Janet Alexander to help with budget again. This is very helpful and beneficial to MacKenzie. While Janet is in the area, we split the cost of her room with other municipalities and she spends eight hours on site with MacKenzie to complete the budget in one day. Last year it was 750 or something like that. The council gave their blessing to continue working on budget with Janet.

The only other thing I have is the amended chicken ordinance. The council reviewed the amended changes and were satisfied with the revisions of the ordinance. Dean made a motion to waive the seconded reading of the amended chicken ordinance. Larry seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to waive the second reading. Dean made a motion to approve and adopt the amended chicken ordinance. Dana seconded the motion.

Upon voice vote the amended chicken ordinance was unanimously approved. Larry said he heard a rooster last week that was on Oak Street. We've been told it was Austin Tuner, Robert said he was a little upset with him when he asked him to have the roosters removed. Since then, all chickens and roosters have been removed. Larry said there's a woman on Blessing Street that has them in her garage, should add in the ordinance you can't keep them in garages? MacKenzie suggested, wouldn't it be easier to just have a conversation with her instead of adding and changing the ordinance? Avery told the council; I don't think the resident has chickens anymore on Blessing. I'm pretty sure it's a puppy, small dog, or cat.

Old Business: Avery told the council MacKenzie reached out to me about Petra's home on Oak Street. Avery contacted someone from County's health department and Building Inspection. We are tackling this from all angles and are trying to find a name and if we can't we will ask them to proceed with condemning the home. Just keep in mind, this will most likely be a step-by-step process.

Dean asked about the other resident on Oak who the town has been having issues with. MacKenzie asked Addie, he called in this week, right? He was telling you about a loan company coming to collect his cars or something? Addie said yeah, he called in and let us know that he has a loan company coming to collect cars. Addie added, he told me that his weed wacker broke and he'll get a new one by the end of this week to mow the lawn. Avery said he called MacKenzie and asked who flagged his yard. I told her I had to go out and do locates because the owner is putting up a fence. Dean asked who's the landlord? MacKenzie said I think it's John Bontrager. Then, someone mentioned John's son is trying to fix up Eugene Miller's old place.

MacKenzie was asked about update on the land purchase. MacKenzie said she hired two different appraisers. I don't have paperwork from either of the appraisers yet but one did tell me it'll more than likely appraise at \$60,000. So, hopefully the other one comes in a bit higher because we'll have to stay within that median. Larry said, the RDC would still dump \$50,000 into it. MacKenzie explained, you wouldn't be able to until the annexation takes place. Or you could just pay back another fund.

New Business: Jim let the council know he informed MacKenzie that he received an email about the upcoming round of CCMG that is due this month. MacKenzie let them know she reached out to Rick last week and told him we want to start the submission. I spoke with him the other day then about a committal letter. He said he will have a figure for me by Friday. Jonathan was waiting to see if our price stayed the same from the last submission. So, we may have to have a special meeting this month and get your signatures on the letter since we officially canceled our last meeting.

Mike told the council he has a concern. He apologized because the incident was still fresh in his mind. We planned a vacation over the 4th of July. We're driving down and all of a sudden, our house alarms are going wild. He mentioned how he stopped the car to see what was going on. The neighbor next to us was shooting off fireworks and the debris was hitting our house. It shot off and hit the roof, landed in the gutters, and we thought for sure we were going to lose everything because of this irresponsible neighbor. It was so hard to see. The fireworks were hitting off of the window. One landed in the bed of Mike's truck and was smoking. When they got home, there was debris everywhere. Barrels of huge fireworks, I collected one and it's 3-inches round some of them were even four inches. Mike said, I know this was wrong of me but when I collected most of the debris from the fireworks, he threw it at the neighbor and the neighbor kept taunting me telling Mike to hit him. This neighbor ruined what was supposed to be one of the best nights I could have had with my family. During the confrontation the neighbor proceeded to tell Mike, the town allows me to fire them off and he'll continue to do it. Mike said, he is just asking to please revise the ordinance. Dean asked Ray, what can we do? Ray said we can ban all ariel fireworks. Mike said, it's just so frustrating because we don't enforce what we have already. Mike fears with the lack of enforcement, someone will end up losing a home around here. Mike said, they have never experienced a problem like this before. It's been awful since this neighbor moved in. Jim agreed that the fireworks were extreme this year. He said he heard loud ones going off at 1:00am. Lisa mentioned, the houses are too close together to be doing this. We shouldn't be finding these in the backyard of homes. Dean said we'll look into this and understand something needs to be done with this.

Two women introduced themselves as being from Five Little Stones. Last year, they had raised flower beds put in. They received a grant for these from LaGrange County. They expressed they use these raised beds as an outdoor education lab for the children. The children take care of everything that's in those beds. They explained how they are experiencing difficulties with the tenants in the apartment next door. Flowers are being dug out of the boxes; it's being treated as a sandbox/ash tray. She also stated she has picked out beer bottles, caps, and other beverages out of the boxes. The tenants just aren't respectful to this. I'd like to have a sign made explaining what these boxes are being used for and state that it isn't anything otherwise. Dean asked if we could get the residents for littering? Ray said, if we see them, we could. The lady from Five Little Stones expressed they have worked so hard on trying to make that area beautiful. Dean asked Ray if he could have a talk with the owner of the apartments about it. MacKenzie said she did speak with Jeff on Monday and expressed concerns/complaint matter anonymously. He told MacKenzie that he has been out there to clean up once already but he would also tell the tenants the same thing. He assured MacKenzie if we ever have a problem with the tenants to please call him and he'll take care of it. MacKenzie added, but I still see there's junk outside of the building from here. Dean suggested staying on him and call him to get him or the tenants to

clean up their mess. Dean asked what do you think about getting them a cig ash tray thing? Someone said, if they use it, someone will have to clean it. Who will be responsible for that? The lady from Five Little Stones asked, could we suggest to him about getting a 3-yard dumpster? Dana said we can. If not and there's trash out in the area we'll write them citations.

Dean made a motion to pay bills. Dana seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to pay bills.

Dean made a motion to adjourn. Larry seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to adjourn.

Next Town Council Meeting August 14, 2024 at 5:00pm.




