

Town of LaFontaine

13 W. Branson Street
LaFontaine, IN 46940
765-981-4591

Meeting Minutes, March 13, 2023

The Town Council held its monthly meeting on Monday, March 13th, 2023 at 6pm. Jay Gillespie opened the meeting and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

Attending were Lori Brane, Jay Gillespie, John Krhin, Jordan Tandy, Teresa Snyder, Ethel Eib, Jerry Bowman, Jed Derck, Rob Bellucci, and Tom Simpson.

The board members had not received January and February meeting minutes to approve. They will be presented at the April meeting.

Rob Bellucci from Common Wealth Engineers gave an update on the Wastewater Project. Rob presented invoices to be paid for Division "A" Culy at \$129,752.99, Division "B" Crosby at \$29,730.21 and Invoice #55307, #55308, #55309 from Common Wealth Engineers for a total of \$31,103.74, for a grand total of \$195,966.94. Jay made a motion to pay the invoices. Lori 2nd. Vote 3-0 carried. Rob presented schedules for remaining work. He said there is potential for cleaning and video taping of the remainder of the sewer mains with remainder of grant funds. Jay expressed concern over manhole covers and Rob will address with Culy. He will also ask Crosby about the delay in the stainless steel electrical panels for the lift stations. Rob explained about the new inspector. Jay motioned to accept Mark Field. John seconded. Vote 3-0.

There was no marshal report.

Fire Dept report. Chief Tom Simpson reported for January they had 5 EMS runs and 1 fire run.

Utility Report was given by Jay as Lance is attending Alliance of Indiana Rural Water Conference. Lance plans to flush hydrants the week of April 7th. The water grant is moving forward. Lance has not heard about the Community Crossing Grant. He will be repairing pot holes in the following weeks. Town Clean Up is scheduled for April 13 – April 15. Lance is recommending that the \$159,539.16 from the BNY SRF refund be used as follows: \$50,000 to fund Capital Improvement WW; \$50,000 to fund the USDA-RD 2023 WW Grant Debt Reserve; \$6,000 to fund the first installment of the USDA-RD WW Bond and Interest loan payback; and the remainder to stay in WW operating. Jay motioned, Lori seconded. Vote 3-0.

Lori asked about the status of the street cleaner but Jay had not been updated on that.

Teresa gave the Clerk report in Diana's absence: Wabash County distributions have been received; Beacon checking, Beacon savings and Flagstar banks are reconciled. 49 disconnect letters were mailed. Three residences were shut off and all have been restored. Three adjustments were presented and approved. Five invoices were presented to be paid and Jay motioned to approve, John seconded. Vote 3-0.

On the agenda: Albert Brumley regarding yard and WW project. He was not present.

The town insurance was touched on and will be revisited closer to anniversary date to evaluate a change of agent.

The Library insurance needs to be updated to include the new addition. The library insurance has not been paid out of the correct account appropriation account.

Republic Services has sent a proposal with a rate increase. The Board will discuss this at the April CM.

Accounting issues were discussed. The board approved 40 hours a week for part-time employees to satisfy the SBOA requirements for internal controls even though the Clerk-Treasurer job and the utility clerk job could both be done by one person in 40 hours per week. The board is disappointed that the deputy clerks have not been trained and for the lack of access to websites and banking. Bond money needed to be wire transferred on Friday and Jay had been removed from the account. Jay also was not allowed to set up new accounts. Jay explained the need for these accounts and a letter was prepared for Crossroads Bank to allow the Town to set up accounts for the 2023 Wastewater Debt Reserve and the 2023 Wastewater Bond and Interest. Jay motioned, Lori seconded. Vote 3-0.

Jay explained how the paying of claims from incorrect funds by the clerk could and possibly did impact the grant process. Rob added that the reports given by the clerk showed the town was in no need of grant money for the PER, because the Town could afford to pay for the PER.

The council is concerned because the same issues in the SBOA audit of 2017 – 2020 have not been corrected. The previous clerk was involved from 01/01/2017 through 08/13/2018 of the audit and the current clerk was responsible for audit period 08/14/2018 through 12/31/2020 and continues to present. Incorrect funds are still being used. Example was made of the \$35,000 miscellaneous appropriation and O & M errors that have impacted the grant issuer in recommending rate increase for residents. The clerk needs to be diligent about receiving funds correctly and paying from the correct accounts.

The council is also concerned about utilities being paid late and BNY loan transfer not paid in February.

Jed Derck asked if the clerk can be held accountable for her actions and Jordan replied that while she is an elected official, she does have rules to follow.

The board is in process of getting a water grant and wants the residents to know that any decision that will be made in the present or the future will be based off potentially incorrect data because of the past mistakes.

The board will need to schedule an executive session to discuss the current clerk.

There are Parcels of Land owned by the Town that do not have street numbers, (ie the water tower) and several parcels that are potentially combinable that Jay and Jordan will address with the court house.

The board refused to sign payroll dockets and remittance advice because of not knowing whether they were executed correctly.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Teresa Snyder

Deputy Clerk-Treasurer

March 30, 2023



4/10/23