

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JASPER, INDIANA
February 21, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Jasper, Indiana, was held on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 610 Main Street, Jasper, Indiana.

Call to Order. Presiding Officer Mayor Dean Vonderheide called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call. Clerk Treasurer Kiersten Knies called the roll.

	<u>In Person</u>	<u>Video</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Mayor Dean Vonderheide	X		
Council members:			
John Schroeder	X		
Chad Lueken	X		
Vince Helming	X		
Paul Lorey		X	
Kevin Manley	X		
Nancy Eckerle	X		
Philip Mundy		X	
City Attorney Renee Kabrick	X		
Clerk-Treasurer Kiersten Knies	X		

Knies announced that in order to have a quorum for the meeting, a majority of the council members must be in attendance. All of the council members were in attendance at the beginning of the meeting, which is a majority; therefore, there was a quorum for the meeting.

Moment of Personal Reflection. Mayor Vonderheide asked that all present take a moment for personal reflection.

Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Vonderheide invited all those present to join him in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes. The minutes from Regular Council Meeting January 17, 2024, were distributed to and examined by the Council. A motion was made by Council member John Schroeder and seconded by Council member Vince Helming to approve the minutes from January 17, 2024, without corrections. Motion carried 7-0.

Department Presentation. Fire Chief/Code Enforcement Officer Kenny Hochgesang gave a department presentation on the Fire Department and the Code Enforcement Department. Hochgesang noted there are currently thirty-seven members of the Fire Department, two assistant chiefs, one captain, and seven lieutenants. The department reports that in 2022, 526 emergency calls were attended, however in 2023 there were only 452 calls attended. The decrease they feel is due to Memorial Hospital adding a second ambulance to the day shift. Of the calls responded to one hundred and twenty were false alarms, twenty-two were carbon monoxide alarms, and two hundred and twenty-nine were medical. About 65-70% of calls are medical and focused on the north side of Jasper. There were three larger fires at the first of the year. The first one being on Birk Drive, the home was destroyed and has since been taken down. Habit for Humanity is building a home there now. A home on Celestine Highway next to Erny Sheet metal also caught fire overnight. A young couple was remodeling it and were just about complete. A battery was left on the counter to charge overnight, and it caught fire. Their home was destroyed and has been taken down as well. The third one was a large garage on 400 West. The fire started about 11:00 pm at night and the department was called about 1:15 am. It was a metal pole barn building. Ireland and Huntingburg did assist because the department could not carry enough water for that big of a fire. This year the department included one Lucas Device in their budget. Local residents, Kevin and Bev Messmer, offered to match the purchase. That donation came today, and the order was placed today. The Leadership Academy purchased twelve of those units, one for each fire department in the county. The city now has three Lucas Devices, one device for each fire truck. There are two windows in the front of the fire station that are scheduled to get replaced this year

and also painting the inside of all three fire stations has been budgeted for. The bids for the painting will be opened next Tuesday at the BPWS. There is a Dubois County Fire School held here in Jasper. It's a great opportunity for fire fighters throughout the state to come to Jasper and there is a wide variety of classes offered for instructors, investigators, leadership, etc. There are a lot of good opportunities for training with the Dubois County Fire School. The department is expecting the Insurance Services Office to conduct an audit soon. The ISO rates communities based on fire protection, water, and dispatch. Currently the ISO rating for the City of Jasper is a Class 4. Only 17% of fire departments in the state have a Class 4 or better rating. The audit is a good report and shows deficiencies in the department and where improvements can be made. Full time fire departments and volunteer fire departments are both subject to the same rating since which makes it sometimes difficult for volunteer departments to get a good rating.

Additionally Chief Hochgesang and Assistant Fire Chief Mike Steurer presented to the council their asset management program. Assistant Chief Steurer created this asset management plan based off of an example from another board he is on. The plan shows budgets, trucks, and equipment. It shows a replacement date and a projected cost based off the current price and a percentage increase over time. It shows the number of units needed, current cost as well as estimated life. They explained how to use the tool and offered to share it with other departments.

Heart of Jasper Presentation. Heart of Jasper Director, Kate Schwenk, gave an update on the Heart of Jasper. She thanked the city council for their support over the last few years and gave a brief overview of some of the accomplishments in 2023 and shared some of the 2024 projects in the works. Heart of Jasper works with four subcommittees. The Economic Vitality subcommittee oversees the façade grant program. They received fourteen façade grant applications in 2023, of which seven were selected for funding a total of \$177,000.00 in building improvements to the downtown. The applications for 2024 close this week and so far, they have about six applications to make decisions on. This grant is funded in part by contributions from the City of Jasper. The Economic Development subcommittee also oversees the new business incentive. There were four recipients in 2023 totaling \$80,000.00. This program is funded through the Genesis 12 Donor. In total twenty-two businesses moved or opened downtown in 2023. HOJ worked with the city closely on its Downtown Social District which was just approved through the ATC. The goal is to roll that out the weekend of St. Patrick's Day. They are in the early stages of developing designs for the downtown courtyard and activity trail that connects the downtown to the riverfront. The last project they host is an open house of all the vacant buildings in the downtown area. In 2023 the Design committee activated two alleys on the courthouse square with public art and decorative lighting. The goal is to complete the other alley along the Astra in 2024. They know that public art requires maintenance, so they did invest \$25,000.00 in CDs in 2023 to help generate maintenance funds. They are in charge of the crosswalk murals on 4th Street and at the library, the snail mural on Finishing Touches and now the alleys. They host Love your Community Clean Up. They are partnering with the Jasper Park and Recreation Department this year and will be planting flowers and pulling weeds downtown. They plan to join the Avenue of Flags in 2024 with the downtown being its own neighborhood and Heart of Jasper being the neighborhood champion to put out the flags. The Promotion committee's main focus is activation and moving foot traffic. They will host Movies on Main, Music on Main, Downtown Chow Down, Shop and Sip, Family Fun Day, and Mingle on Main. The Organization committee will apply for national accreditation through Main Street. This accreditation shows that all standards are met and allows for additional funding. They will hold a Community Appreciation night to thank Heart of Jasper volunteers and board members on the Spirit of Jasper where they will announce the merger of ROJAC and Heart of Jasper.

Jasper Chamber of Commerce Presentation. Jasper Chamber of Commerce Director, Nancy Eckerle, gave an update on the Jasper Chamber of Commerce. Every year the city invests \$4,500.00 in the chamber for general operating procedures. \$4000.00 goes to general operating. \$500 goes to purchase a table at the annual meeting. There is an official contract with the City of Jasper and the Chamber. The contract requires the Chamber serve as an initial point of contact for citizens looking to relocate to Jasper, to provide information materials regarding the city's infrastructure, to promote the city as a strong economic market to potential new businesses, to act as a small business service center, to promote the general good of the community and to contribute to the strong foundation of the economic base. There are six areas of focus for the future of the Jasper Chamber: networking and connecting, informing and engaging, educating and skills building, advocating and representing, involving and interacting, and creating a strong economy. This year the Chamber is hosting two legislative breakfasts/forums, generating a weekly newsletter to its members, hosting health screenings twice a year for members and the public, hosting members time out from business. They plan to host a Support Chamber Day, an open house at the Chamber, Commander Martinez from Crane and they are sponsoring the Buy Indiana Expo. The

Chamber has a beautification committee called Patoka 2000. They take care of the flowers and flags on the bridge and the landscaped area there. They will help sponsor Old Jasper Day along with the Lions Club and their Strawberry Festival on May 19, 2024. The Chamber hosts Coffee with the Mayor, the next two will be June 20, 2024, and October 17, 2024. Women Empowering Women meets four times a year with the first session next week. The Chamber teams with the Kimball Resource Center to host a paper shredding day. The Chamber's Annual meeting will have a panel to talk about Why Jasper. The Chamber helps facilitate the Jasper Strassenfest. This year the Strassenfest will be back on the square with a German Flare on the Square. The Chamber facilitates several Christmas events and seminars such as succession planning and doing business with the federal government. They intend to host an open house of vacant buildings throughout the city this year. They are hosting the small business navigator in their office. The Chamber has an entrepreneurial group, Hometown Hiring, which will put on four seminars this year. They have ambassadors doing outreach and welcoming businesses to the community. The Chamber is made up of a small staff, just the director and an administrator, but the Chamber has many partnerships within the community. Jasper Chamber is a busy active organization, and they thank the city for its support.

HELP Grant/Owner Occupied Rehab Program. Jenny Mathies of IN Region 15 gave an update on the HELP Grant/Owner Occupied Rehab Program. The City of Jasper and Dubois County partnered for the Hoosiers Enduring Legacy Program which has been ongoing for the past couple of years. Grant funding was received as part of the Hoosiers Enduring Legacy program and funds will be used towards an Owner-Occupied Rehab Program and improving the Head Start facility in Jasper. Head Start will hire new staff and create a new sensory room. The remainder of the funds will be used toward the Owner-Occupied Rehab Program. This is a new undertaking. There are five projects that can be taken care of through this program: roof repair and replacement, water heater, HVAC updates, electrical upgrades and lighting and ADA accessibility up to the threshold of the home. This program is income based in relation to family size. For a family of four the income limit is \$70,150.00. For a single person household, the income limit is \$49,150.00 a year. The program will use the RFP process to select a home inspector. The home inspector will look at the homes of applications received and rank them according to priority. The work will then be put to bid. This program is open to any resident in Dubois County who meets the income criteria. Once homes are selected there will be an environmental review. The number of families requesting applications proves the obvious need in the community. It is a great catalyst for future investment in these homes as well. The goal is for an inspector to be selected mid-March, for applications to go out next week, and for work to begin on these homes in late spring. Applications will be available online; paper copies can be picked up at Indiana Region 15 and they will also host some sessions helping people complete the application.

Ordinance No. 2024-1

An Ordinance Establishing a Fund for the Repair and Maintenance of the City Owned Assets Located in and around the Heart of Jasper District

A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Vince Helming to read the ordinance by title only on the second reading. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2024-1 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Chad Lueken to approve Ordinance No. 2024-1 on the second reading. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by Kevin Manley to read the ordinance by title only on the third and final reading. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2024-1 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by John Schroeder to pass and adopt Ordinance No. 2024-1 on the third and final reading. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2024-2

An Ordinance Appropriating Additional Money for the City for the Remainder of the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2024

Mayor Vonderheide opened the meeting up for a public hearing. There being no one from the public appearing, a motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Chad Lueken to close the public hearing. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by Chad Lueken to consider Ordinance no. 2024-2 for one reading only. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Vince Helming to read the ordinance by title only on the first and only reading. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2024-2 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Nancy Eckerle to pass and adopt Ordinance No. 2024-2 on the first and only reading. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2024-3

An Ordinance Establishing the City of Jasper RDA Lease Rental Revenue Bond, Series 2024 Project Fund

A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by John Schroeder to consider Ordinance No. 2024-3 for one reading only. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Vince Helming to read the ordinance by title only on the first and only reading. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Ordinance No. 2024-3 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Chad Lueken and seconded by Kevin Manley to pass and adopt Ordinance No. 2024-3 on the first and only reading. Motion carried 7-0.

Resolution No. 2024-2

A Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds (Community Crossing Fund)

A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by John Schroeder to read Resolution No. 2024-2 by title only. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Resolution No. 2024-2 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by Kevin Manley to pass and adopt Resolution No. 2024-2. Motion carried 7-0.

Resolution No. 2024-3

A Resolution Authorizing the Investment of Riverboat Funds into Dubois County Community Foundation Endowment

A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Vince Helming to read Resolution No. 2024-3 by title only. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Resolution No. 2024-3 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by Vince Helming to pass and adopt Resolution No. 2024-3. Attorney Kabrick noted that the resolution would be better written if titled Authorizing the Transfer of Riverboat Funds as opposed to reading Authorizing the Investment of Riverboat Funds. Motion carried 7-0.

Resolution No. 2024-4

A Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Interest in the Jasper Municipal Swimming Pool Facility to the Jasper Redevelopment Authority

A motion was made by Kevin Manley and seconded by John Schroeder to read Resolution No. 2024-4 by title only. Motion carried 7-0.

City Attorney Renee Kabrick so read Resolution No. 2024-4 by title only.

Thereafter, a motion was made by Nancy Eckerle and seconded by John Schroeder to pass and adopt Resolution No. 2024-4. The resolution should be amended to include Habig Center in the body. Motion carried 7-0.

Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Council member John Schroeder and seconded by Kevin Manley to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 7-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The minutes were hereby approved _____ with without corrections or clarification this 20th day of March 2024.



Mayor Dean Vonderheide, Presiding Officer

Attest: 

Kiersten Knies, Clerk-Treasurer