

April 4, 2023

TOWN OF GRIFFITH TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Council President Rick Ryfa called the April 4, 2023, meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

POLICE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY:

Detective Sergeant Mason Griffith
Police Officer Garrett Crumby
Detective Sergeant Nicholas Pepper
Firefighter Marthew Brian Smith
Chief Minton "Butch" Beach
Firefighter Jeff M. Pfeiffer
Firefighter Edward "Eddie" Hykel
Firefighter Jermaine A. Pelt

ROLL CALL:

James Marker
Lawrence Ballah
Rick Ryfa
Tony Hobson
Melissa Robbins

ALSO ATTENDING:

Gina Smith- Clerk Treasurer
Greg Mance – Chief of Police
Steve McDermott – Building Commissioner
Alfredo Estrada – 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 March 21, 2023, as presented, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, all in favor, Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS: Various Funds \$1,221,620.86 Council Member Jim Marker made a motion to approve the claims as presented, seconded by Council Member Larry Ballah, all in favor, Motion Carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. The next Town Council meeting will be on Tuesday, April 18, 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.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. The Highland/Griffith Chamber of Commerce requesting the use of Central Park Pavilion on July 11, 2023, for their Membership meeting, non-profit organization respectfully requesting the fees waived. Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to approve and waive the fees, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, all in favor, Motion Carried.

REPORTS:

- Public Works – Sidewalk project 70% complete A& B, remaining completed by end of year.
- 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:

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Public Works Request permission to advertise and sell two trucks:** 2011 Ford F550 and 2006 Chevy 2500 HD, Council Member Jim Marker made a motion authorizing the auction of the assets from Public Works, seconded by Council Member Larry Ballah, all in favor, Motion Carried.
- 2. TIF Report:** Council President Rick Ryfa stated the State of Indiana requires each Redevelopment Commission to present the report by April 1st of each year to the Governing body, in this case the Town Council, this will be the first of many reports but the least formal of them, the next reports will require public hearings and or notices and mailings sent out. The Redevelopment Commission hired Reedy Financial to provide the TIF requirement through December of 2022. The TIF areas and the revenue that came in the outflows and the balance at the end of year, the Redevelopment Commission is providing the Town Council with this report as required. Council Member Tony Hobson made a motion to accept the year ending report for 2022, seconded by Council Member Melissa Robbins, all in favor, Motion Carried.
- 3. General Service Agreement BF&S:** Proposal to the Town of Griffith providing services to prepare updates to the Storm Water Technical Standards Manual for construction and post-construction activities and to prepare updates to the Storm Water Ordinances, to meet the newly adopted General permit requirements of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management IDEM. NPDES MS4 and construction general permits. The estimated cost of \$24,200.00 will be billed to the Town of Griffith on an hourly not to exceed basis in accordance with the terms of our General Services Agreement. Council Member Melissa Robbins made a motion to allow Town Council President Rick Ryfa to sign this contract, seconded by Council Member Tony Hobson, all in favor, Motion Carried.
- 4. Appointment of Town Attorney:** Letter from Burke Costanza & Carberry Attorney Law Firm, with the retirement of our previous attorney that was handling the Town Council business, we have retained Burke Costanza & Carberry to provide the Town with legal work and have outlined their services and also noting that Attorney Alfredo Estrada will provide legal services as assigned and directed by the Town of Griffith and not limited to the Town Council. Council Member Larry Ballah made a motion that we allow President Rick Ryfa to sign the letter of intent and to welcome aboard Mr. Estrada, doing fine work, seconded by Council Member Jim Marker, all in favor, Motion Carried.

Council President Rick Ryfa addressed the tax bills. Assessments in Griffith have gone up. The way the system is supposed to work is each Municipality would go under what is called a General Reassessment about every 4-5 years. In Griffith's case we were due for general reassessment, sometimes they do a third of the Town at a time and in three years they complete. This year all of Griffith was completed in 2022 to reflect the assessments for 2023 pay. We saw a significant increase of about 28 percent in property values, reflected in the bills this year. A portion is driven up simply by the explosion in the housing market. We had approximately 1100 homes sell in a five-year period and the prices in 2021 and 2022 were times the offer price or the selling price was higher than the listing price. Lots of bidding wars which drove up the assessments. Housing values have gone up significantly and are stable right now. Approximately one out of every five homes in Griffith have a new homeowner, which is unheard of. The value should reflect what the true market value is, anyone questioning if their assessment is too high just ask yourself what do I think I would list my own for, what can I sell if for, we have looked at other sites such as Zillow that will give you estimates on your home, sometimes they are accurate sometimes not, certain things

you can look at without having to pay for an assessor to come in, what we have said for years we have had the same thing happen 3 or 4 years when a part of the Town was hit hard with higher assessments, you can appeal but if you do appeal they will take a much closer look and the assessment may or up or down. Everyone would need to decide. The process is easy, you could call the Town Hall and get information, but with that said it is important that everyone makes sure all the property deductions are on their property. Homestead, mortgage exemptions, and if you are sixty-five or older and eligible to apply for the deduction. Ryfa had spoken with John Petalas, Lake County Treasurer, he gave the updated information, anyone that has a home that assessed at \$240,000.00 or less and have a joint income of \$40,000.00 or single income of \$30,000.00 you are fully eligible for the sixty-five and over deduction. We anticipate we will be looking at the property taxes more in depth and in a couple of weeks we will try to have one of our financial advisors give a presentation.

Pending Items: NONE

Public Comment:

Sam Fies: Present last fall about policies needing changed.

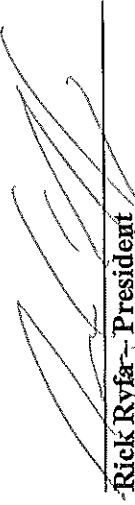
Mr. & Mrs. Rosinko thanked the Town for the new sidewalks.

Diane: Tax situation, raised about \$2000.00, Deer crossing sign.

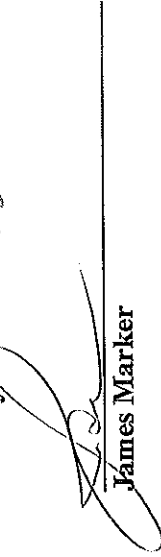
Basma Abdelkader: Inspections

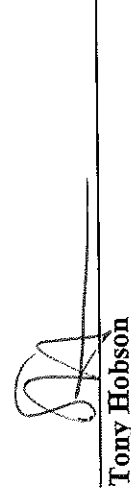
There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:35p.m.

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

