



REGULAR MEETING
March 21, 2024

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Bonta

Commissioners Present: Mayor Bonta, Lach, Ambler, Jozwiak, Mundt, Vazquez

Commissioners Absent:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Jozwiak made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2024 minutes. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5 yes 0 nays

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:

Commissioner Lach asked to remove the payment for Krohn and Associates of \$6,000.00 off the General Fund Budget. Mayor Bonta stated that Krohn and Associates had called requesting it be removed as they investigate the work done for this claim.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve the claims presented to the RDC on March 21, 2024 minus the \$6,000.00 claim from Krohn and Associates on the General fund. Commissioner Ambler seconded the motion.

5 yes 0 nays

STAFF REPORTS:

Karl Cender with Ceder Dalton Municipal Advisors presented the Redevelopment Commissions Annual Report for 2023. He stated that they have included the Overlapping Taxing Units pertaining to Tax Increment Allocation Areas as well. He stated the General Fund ended the year with \$1,090,615 and the Allocation fund ended the year with \$7,505,969. He spoke of the budget for 2024, but will defer this to the Redevelopment Director, Dan Botich, who will have a more defined budget later in this meeting. He stated that the Tiff areas such as the Southport Allocation Area, allow the Commission to offer incentives to help stimulate growth and economic development in the City. He stated that this will be uploaded into the Department of the Local Government Finance Gateway website so that the Clerk Treasurer can certify this report has been posted in Gateway. He stated he is seeking approval from the Commission to approve the Annual Report and that Resolution 24-01 is to notify that next year (2025) the Commission will need all the tax incremental and increased assessed value to make payments on our bonds and activities the Commission has planned for next year.

Commissioner Mundt made a motion to approve the Annual Report for 2023 as presented. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 yes 0 nays

Mr. Cender stated that Resolution 24-01 is the Tiff Capture Resolution that states that the Commission is seeking to capture all the increment to continue making payments on our debt service and further the activities of the Redevelopment Commission next year. He stated the next item would be a letter that Director Botich would send out to the Porter County Auditor.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to adopt Resolution 24-01. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5 yes 0 nays

Rich Piazza with Abonmarche gave a status report on the Portage Library Garden Project. He stated that the project is moving along and that the sidewalks, the bridge, the pavilion, and a partial sundial are in place. He stated that there is a ribbon cutting ceremony planned for May. He stated there are a few items such as landscaping, and some painting that need to be done, but should be taken care of shortly.

Commissioner Vazquez asked how much is the County and Library involved in the financing of this? Mr. Piazza stated that this would be something listed in the MOU which he does not have. Mayor Bonta asked Director Botich if we had a copy of the MOU. Mr. Botich stated that he does not have access to this at the moment, but would look into it. Discussion was held.

Dan Botich, Director of the RDC stated that he asked Mr. Piazza to provide a status report because next month they will see a substantial payment request for the project, and wanted them to hear where the project stood prior to seeing the invoice.

Director Botich stated that. He stated there have been a number of revisions made to the 2024 RDC budget since it was provided to them, such as more clarification of items. He did state that there were some changes to the Proposed Project for 2024 (Capital Improvement Planning Document for the next 1-5 years). He also completed the schedule that showed the five-year history of the tax increments. He further stated that he had reviewed the Annual Report provided by Cender Dalton and all was in order and consistent with state statutes and will be uploaded into the DLGF Gateway System for the public to view along with the Parcels for anyone who needs to identify the TIF reviewer.

He stated he met with Andy Maletta, Executive Director of the Portage Economic Corporation regarding the proposed development of Dayton Street Partners on the land that is located off I 94, is stalled. He stated that there is a potential for another prospect to use this site and would be looking for potential development if not this year, then early next year to open in 2025. He further stated that he and Mr. Maletta met with the IEDC member **Matts Otanovich**, and they are putting together a team of individuals for this project to work towards a tax incentive similar to the DSP project.

He stated there are three requests he would like to touch upon that are reflected on the agenda. The first being Butler, Fairman and Seufert, Inc., who met with the City to propose preparing Safe Streets for All Grant. He stated is a United States Department of Transportation Grant. He informed the Commission that it is a program that has a billion dollars set aside annual for Cities to prepare action plan documents for roads, bicycle, traffic, and vehicle safety throughout the City identifying any areas that may need improved or need safety improvements. He stated it is the grant to prepare the action plan, which could run approximately \$300,000 - \$400,000 of which the City would be responsible for 20%. Once this is completed and the capital improvement areas have been identified then the City can submit additional grants for those projects.

The second is the requests from Amereco for the closure of a well system at 5439 Central Avenue. He stated this is in the Southport Allocation Area and it needs to be completed in relation to the West Central Avenue Project.

The last item he identified is a request for appraisals for property that is for sale on the northside of the City to make a reasonable offer to the current owner of the property. Mayor Bonta stated that it borders land owned by the Port Authority and is near land currently owned by the Redevelopment Commission. Discussion was held.

Director Botich presented the Redevelopment Commission Budget for 2024. He reminded the Commission that the budget is not based upon a tax levy or tax dollars received, but is based upon funds that are available through sale of property or interest. He explained the 2024 Working Budget Summary for the General Fund outlining the revenue and expenditure categories. He stated that in the General Fund there has been a recommended Capital Reserve of \$500,000 to be rolled over into next year's balance and one for 6100 Southport Road (NIRPC Building) of \$150,000. He stated this is good practice for the purpose of any future costs. He stated the total expenditure be \$1.7 million. He stated it is a little short, but they are doing projects from the General Fund. He stated the intent is to have a \$1 million rollover each year, but it can be changed if they choose. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Ambler asked what comprised the other revenues. Director Botich stated they would be bank interest, tax abatement fees, utility reimbursements and miscellaneous funds.

He then presented the 2024 Working Budget – Summary for Allocation Area. He began by stating that there was a rollover of \$7.5 million into this year. He stated that the total estimated Revenues were \$19,618,174 and that the total expenditures were \$13,416,678. He stated that estimated rollover would be \$6,201,496 which does not include the Debt Service payments due in January of \$2,179,822 leaving the Fund balance as of January 31, 2025 to be \$4,021,674.

He further stated that he wishes to have the budget updated monthly to show the budgeted amount and what has been expended to date.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to adopt the budget. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.
5 yes 0 nays

Commissioner Vazquez asked about the Portage Township Schools will be receiving \$100,000 for technology. Director Botich verified that it is a budgeted item for this year. He stated what needs to be done is for the Schools to make a formal request via a letter requesting the funds along with a list justifying the equipment or programs to be funded through the grant. We need to insure the funding requested is used within the allocation area. Discussion was held.

Attorney Bartnicki stated that the World's Finest Chocolate subcommittee and negotiations are moving forward. He has been in contact with their attorney as recently as two hours ago. He further stated that all three leases for 6100 Southport have been concluded. He noted that there are a few landlord watch items for the staff to keep an eye on. He stated that he has received an in-the-works management agreement with Holladay Properties, who manage our holdings at 6100 Southport Road. He stated this is a proposed revision from 2022 that was never signed. He will be providing legal guidance on this issue moving forward.

Bill Rathjen with McColly Bennett Real Estate stated that he has been asked to initiate the process to provide value to a ¼ acre piece of property on the Northside which was previously discussed. He stated it is required by law as a public entity is to obtain two independent appraisals for the property and pay no more than the average of those two appraisals. He is seeking approval tonight to seek authorization of the execution of the two service agreements for the appraisals, tentative to the attorney's review in the amount of \$4,000.00.

Commissioner Ambler made a motion to approve the authorization to obtain the two appraisals in the amount of \$4,000.00. Commissioner Jozwiak seconded the motion.
5 yes 0 nays

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consideration: Development Economic Finance consulting LLC – Dan Botich

Director Botich stated that this is his agreement to provide administrative as well as economic development financial services to the RDC. He will also be working with City staff as well as Cender Dalton on their reporting and other individuals and engineers. Attorney Bartnicki stated that he had reviewed the document and found no legal objections.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve Development Economic Finance Consulting's Service Agreement. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.
5 yes 0 nays

TABLED: Landscape Maintenance Items 8.3 through 8.8

- 8.3: Phragmites Control at 6100 Southport Road
- 8.4: Landscape Maintenance - Burns Parkway
- 8.5: Landscape Maintenance - City Hall
- 8.6: Landscape Maintenance - Downtown Community Park
- 8.7: Landscape Maintenance - Founders Square
- 8.8: Landscape Maintenance – Garyton Center

Commission Lach made a motion to table Items 8.3 through 8.8 to allow the City the opportunity to maintain these locations themselves. Commissioner Jozwiak seconded the motion.
5 yes 0 nays

Award: RFQ for Ecological Maintenance – Restoration

Asst. Director, McDaniel stated that they had received a recommendation from the Department of Planning & Community Development to award the project to Davey Resource Group in the amount of \$32,400.00.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve the contract. Commissioner Ambler seconded the motion.

5 yes - 0 nays

Open: Quotes for Northside Trail Maintenance

Asst. Director, McDaniel informed the Commission that the City had received two quotes for this project. She proceeded to open them as noted:

Lakeshore Landscaping- Valparaiso, IN	\$37,454.57
Beary Landscape Maintenance– Lockport, IL	\$15,845.00

Asst. Director McDaniel recommends taking them under advisement.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to take the quotes under advisement. Commissioner Ambler seconded the motion.

5 yes – 0 nays

Consideration: General Service Agreement with B F & S

Phil Gralik with BF & S stated that what they have before them is a General Service Agreement so all the legal terms are in place for any services the Commission may need. Director Botich stated that he would make a recommendation for the Commission to approve not only the General Services Agreement but also Task No. 1 for the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Grant. Attorney Bartnicki stated that he has reviewed the contract and found no objection.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5 yes – 0 nays

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve Task No. 1 Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Grant. Commissioner Jozwiak seconded the motion.

5 yes 0 nays

Consideration: 2024 Landscape Maintenance for 6100 Southport Road – Lakeshore Landscaping

Commissioner Lach made a motion to table this item. Commissioner Ambler seconded the motion.

5 yes 0 nays

Other Business

Consideration : Well Closure at 5439 Central Avenue – Amereco

Attorney Bartnicki stated that he did have the chance to review and found no objections.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve the Well Closure at 5439 Central Avenue. Commissioner Jozwiak seconded the motion.

5 yes 0 nays

Jake Monhuat with Portage Recovery Association stated that he is before the Commission requesting to tour the Garyton School Building with members of the Redevelopment Commission to outline his organizations desire and plans for the building and their program. Discussion was held. Mayor Bonta asks about forming a subcommittee.

Commission Ambler made a motion to form a subcommittee. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.
5 yes 0 nays

The Subcommittee members were noted as Mayor Bonta and Commissioner Ambler. Attorney Bartnicki will get back to Commissioner Vazquez as whether she can be part of the subcommittee with her not being a voting member.

With no further business to become before the Commission, Commissioner Lach moved to adjourn.
Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.
5 yes 0 nays



Austin Bonta, Mayor



Sonya Lindgren, Recording Secretary