



**ZIONSVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
FOR
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023
AT 7:30 A.M. EST
ONSITE MEETING**

This meeting was conducted onsite. All Councilors participated in person.

Council Members Present: Jason Plunkett, President; Brad Burk, Vice-President; Joe Culp, Craig Melton, and Bryan Traylor

Council Members Absent: Alex Choi, Josh Garrett

Also Present: Heather Harris, Town Council Attorney; Cindy Poore, Interim CFO; Jo Kiel, Director of Human Resources; Jarod Logsdon, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; Amy Lacy, Municipal Relations Coordinator; and other Town Department Staff

OPENING

- A. Call meeting to order**
- B. Pledge of Allegiance**

Plunkett Good morning. I will now call to order the Tuesday, January 17, 2023 Town Council meeting. If you would please, stand and join me with the Pledge of Allegiance.

All Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE MEMORANDUM OF THE JANUARY 3, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

Plunkett Up first on the agenda is the approval of the memorandum of the January 3, 2023 Regular meeting. A copy has been posted. Are there any questions or discussion from Councilors? Otherwise, I will entertain a motion.

Melton Motion to approve.

Burk Second.

Plunkett First by Councilor Melton, second by Vice President Burk. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett All those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

APPROVAL OF THE 2022 YEAR-END CLAIMS

Plunkett Up next is the Approval of the 2022 Year-End Claims. You guys will remember we had those continued from the last meeting. Are there any questions from Councilors?

Traylor Just a second. I had a question. I can't remember if it was on, which set of claims it was on. Give me just a sec here. It's a general question essentially anyway so maybe I can ask it before either set. So we had, I made a note here that we, our engineering budget on the 101, 43, 120 line item were currently for 2022 were over budget by about \$300,000 and we've got in these claims we've got about \$45,000 of additional engineering from that line item. I didn't see that in the reappropriation for 2022 so I was just curious how that gets cured up at the end.

Poore I'd have to take a look. I don't have that –

Traylor Okay.

Poore In front of me. I'd have to take a look at it.

Traylor All right, all right. Well, I mean, Yes –

Poore Yes.

Traylor And I appreciate the appropriation schedule as well. That was very helpful. I am curious – are we on, are, are we on the new system now?

Poore Not yet but Boyce is coming back today and I'm hoping that with today, tomorrow, the next couple of days that we'll start inputting the 2023 claims in that, so.

Traylor Thank you.

Poore Yes.

Plunkett Thanks Cindy. Any other questions from Councilors? I'll make a motion to approve 2022 Year-End Claims.

Culp Second.

Plunkett Was that you Joe?

Culp Yes.

Plunkett Second by Councilor Culp. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett All those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 17, 2023 CLAIMS

Plunkett Up next would be the Approval of the January 17, 2023 Claims. Are there any questions from Councilors? This one was pretty short it looks like. Any questions from anybody? I'll make a motion to approve those as well.

Melton Second.

Plunkett Second by Councilor Melton. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett All those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

REQUEST TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEM

Plunkett Up next is a Request to Speak on Agenda Items. Amy, do we have any requests to speak?

Lacy No, we do not.

MAYOR/ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Plunkett Very good. Up next would be Mayor/Administration Update and I did not get anything from the Mayor or the Administration.

TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE

Plunkett Moving on to Council Update. Are there any updates from Councilors?

Traylor Yes, I did have a discussion with the Deputy Mayor regarding the \$19,000 that was spent from the Food and Beverage Fund on a non-profit in Lebanon. Essentially, they and I also have some email correspondence but what I was told is the Administration Mayor or, I'm sorry, the Administration attorney feels like this does qualify for the Food and Beverage Fund, however, I greatly disagree. The Food and Beverage Fund is only to be spent for the promotion of, of Zionsville and the businesses involved and in the Enrichment Grant website they

state something completely different than what is allowable in the, in the ordinance for the Food and Beverage Fund for the town. So, at this point, I think we have put in place the guardrails to keep this from happening in the future by essentially making sure that everybody that gets a Food and Beverage Fund grant comes before the Town Council in the future so that we can keep this from happening again, but they disagree and that's where we stand. So that's all I've got on that one.

The other is I still have not received anything back from my public records request looking for information on the VanGorder insurance claim nor have I gotten any update on where we stand on that so if anybody has one, I'd love to hear it. Thus far, I keep beating my head against this wall and I'm getting no information and the phrase "I don't know or I can only send you what I'm allowed to send you" was brought up and that was a little concerning to me that I'm a Town Councilor, I should have access to this information. So, I have nothing on that, unfortunately. So, if there's any update, I'd love to hear it.

Plunkett Well and for what it's worth – Heather, if I start to speak out of line, if you would reign me back in. So, having heard nothing myself and having invited the counsel from who was representing Zurich and the town, I reached out to them on Friday to, to the adjuster and was told that he has a report and that he would be reaching out to the Fire Chief's legal team and the Mayor's legal team this week. Now, with that being said, I will also say that I've asked that particular attorney to show up to the last two Town Council meetings and those emails have gone ignored. So, at, at this point, I don't know if we call an executive session. I don't know that he'll show up but I'm getting the same type of response Councilor Traylor's getting in that whenever I ask questions, I get communication that they're talking to the attorney "attorneys" but we're not getting communicated with at all.

Traylor Yes.

Plunkett So, am I out of line in saying that or communicating that at all?

Harris No. No, not at all. And I know that Councilor Plunkett also reached out to Mark Crandley, who is a partner of mine, who worked on this originally and I believe Mark is also looking into it and trying to reach out to the attorney to see if we can have attorney to attorney conversation as well. I followed up with Mark last night on that so –

Plunkett Yes I think the troubling part for me, and maybe this is where you should reign me in if I get going too far is, is I don't believe that this is being handled in good faith.

Traylor No, I don't either.

Plunkett At all. And that's where I have a problem and when I communicate with someone, with the insurance company or with our insurance agent, with the insurance company or with the person handling the claim and I'm told that everyone is congruent in wanting to get this settled and the reality is, we all know

that we're not all congruent in wanting to get this settled and I would like to have that done as quickly as possible, so.

Traylor Yes and based on, well, I think at some – I mean, we keep getting told the same thing every week is that somebody's going to talk to somebody's attorney or has been talking to somebody's attorney and yet this is the fifth meeting, I think, or Yes, fourth or fifth meeting in a row that we've had no update.

Plunkett So maybe the – and I'm just thinking this through, Heather. Maybe the answer is we just put this on the agenda. Whoever. The Fire Chief's attorneys, Mr. McLaughlin, whoever. Put everybody on the agenda.

Harris Yes, I saw your follow-up note as well. I mean, we can reach out again to see if they would attend an executive session since that's an allowable exception is, in negotiating settlement or –

Plunkett Okay.

Traylor I feel like we are intentionally being left out of this. I mean, quite frankly.

Harris Okay. I'll follow up with Mark. I'll try to get a communication, Bryan, and I'll include you as well.

Plunkett Specific to the other item that Councilor Traylor brought up, this Food and Beverage, I mean, I've seen the emails back and forth as well and I've looked on the website of this particular organization and it says nothing about Zionsville at all. It doesn't say anything about promoting Zionsville. It doesn't say anything about having anything in Zionsville. It, are, do we run, Heather, the risk of, I mean, if the ordinance only allows for money to be spent for the purposes that Traylor's mentioned, do we run the risk of, of having – would the State Board of Accounts not like this? Would DLGF not like this? Like who, who would – is this something we need to rectify?

Harris Yes, so typically it is an allowable expense under the statute but the statute allows for the town to be more restrictive and so the ordinance is more restrictive than state statute so we're not running afoul of any state statute per se. I did have an opportunity to talk with Amy Nooning who is counsel to the Mayor's Administration on Thursday or Friday of last week about this. She did share with me that they were, this organization, is actually doing some programming in Zionsville Schools including a play or a theater performance in one of the elementary schools that's set for this spring. I've not seen any further details other than that conversation and I was under the impression maybe that was being shared back with Councilor Traylor or maybe had been at some point about what the actual expenditure was for. I would say I don't think we need to do anything further at this time in terms of any kind of claw back. I do think we need to probably ask all of our recipients and perhaps they're already doing this, to document their expenditures so we can, in fact, see how they are supporting the community and if that money was given to that organization, that we have that documentation on a go-forward basis that those expenditures align to whatever programming is being offered in the Zionsville community or expansion of programming and then we did also talk about on a go-forward basis

making sure even if the committee is making recommendations for specific grants, those actual approved expenditures of grant amounts do need to come back before the Council for approval as part of our claims process and so making sure that process is tightened up so we have that next time. That would give public transparency into the decision making and then also a level of accountability for the organizations to be able to explain that purpose in advance of the money being spent. So, that's kind of recommendations – I don't know that we need to claw back or do anything from that perspective.

Traylor Now the expense was for microphones. Just for the record. I'm fully aware of what the expense was. They, they got \$19,000 for microphones and their theater is in Lebanon. It draws people to Lebanon. I guess and I know that we can't do a claw back or we won't do a claw back but it's, the claims process is good but we, we will have to have the presenters here so we can ask them questions but then also before it takes it to the claims, the Mayor is obligating the town through a grant contract that she is signing before it gets on the claims.

Harris That should happen after the claim has been approved.

Traylor Oh, I know.

Harris Yes.

Traylor I'm aware it should happen after but I'm curious how that impacts our claims going forward if we're already obligated legally by contract then we, we deny the claim how that, how that works so. I don't know it's, it's a mess.

Melton Quick comment, Bryan.

Traylor Yes.

Melton So, just again, I want to reiterate that Zionsville needs to get internal controls put in place where the Town Council will approve these and that's fine. That's what we need to do but I just want to reiterate that this organization does serve Zionsville through, through my neighbors. My neighbors go to this organization and so you said they serve Lebanon. It's in Lebanon, it's located in Lebanon but it does serve Zionsville residents. Zionsville residents are some of the actors and actresses so I just want to reiterate that and then back track to we need internal controls to stop the Administration from signing this contract and then moving it forward and I agree with that.

Traylor So, I'm curious – because I asked the Mayor's attorney this question and she couldn't or wouldn't – she hasn't responded but there's two criteria for the Zionsville Food and Beverage Fund that have to be met. It, the only thing these funds can be spent for is public facility or infrastructure improvement in the Town of Zionsville –

Melton Okay.

Traylor Would you agree that this does not meet that?

- Melton I, yes, I agree that it is –
- Traylor Okay.
- Melton Located in Lebanon, Indiana.
- Traylor All right, so it does not meet that criteria. The second criteria is fund initiatives intended to promote the town and its businesses and then it goes on to say these are the only two criteria. So, how does it meet the fund initiatives intended to promote the town and its businesses?
- Melton So, again, in this particular case, I agree with you solely on both of these that it's not meeting these two criteria. The fact that the money has been allocated, the money's been spent. Whose fault is that? It's the Town of Zionsville's fault. It's our fault for letting this Administration get out of hand. It's our fault that we approve claims that are already paid.
- Traylor All right. It just sounded like you were defending the spend so –
- Melton No, no I'm defending the organization. I just feel bad for the organization –
- Traylor I've never said anything derogatory about the organization.
- Melton But they do serve Zionsville is all I'm saying. I have several neighbors –
- Plunkett There's a difference though between serve and promote. The ordinance requires promote.
- Melton I agree. The language –
- Plunkett So that's the language.
- Melton On here and promote is different than, than serving.
- Plunkett Yes.
- Melton So I just want everybody to be clear that's my position. The process is failing. That's my point.
- Plunkett Any other Council Updates? I'll give a brief update – based on the last meeting we had, the last few meetings we've had and really the last three years, I reached out to Baker Tilly and talked to them a little bit about the opportunity to have an independent audit firm or an independent audit team come in and answer to the Town Council. It's their belief that we have the ability under our reorganization to pull together an independent audit team to work with our Finance Department and answer to the Town Council to do just what you were talking about, Craig, answer to the Council specific to processes and procedures and that's something that Heather and I are working on now as it relates to how that gets funded, how that gets, the, it – time and time again we've made comments about the finances in the town and time and time again we've been told by the Administration that there's nothing wrong with the finances, so if we can get a contract from Baker

Tilly, I'm going to forward that to the Mayor and if the Mayor has no problems with it, I would imagine she would sign it. So, the ball will certainly be in her court in that regard, however, from there it's something that, again, my understanding is we can do within the frameworks of our reorg, so.

Burk Are they not responding to you?

Plunkett Who?

Burk Baker Tilly.

Plunkett No, we had a conversation. We've had a couple of conversations about it and I think we're just in a spot where we've got Heather and I have to figure out the contract and figure out what we're looking for and how that would work. Yes, certainly.

OLD BUSINESS

Consideration of Approval of Job Descriptions (Director and Deputy Director of Finance & Records)

Plunkett All right, up next is Old Business. The first item on Old Business is a Consideration of Approval of Job Descriptions. This is for Director and Deputy Director of Finance and Records.

Kiel Good morning. Jo Kiel, Director of HR. This is, I don't know, third or fourth time we've talked about this. It's basically the rewrite of the job description going from a CFO function to a Director of Finance function.

Plunkett Jo, the questions that I have on this – the Director, who would the Director ultimately report to in this, in this, with this job description?

Kiel The Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Plunkett And is the, is the Director considered a department head?

Kiel Yes.

Plunkett Do our other Directors report to the Deputy Mayor as well?

Kiel Yes.

Plunkett Okay. So it's within whatever job descriptions we have of the Police Chief and everyone else that they would report to the Deputy Mayor as well? I know that, Heather, you'd looked at this –

Harris Yes.

Plunkett Ordinance. Would you like to offer up just some thought about next steps here specific to the existing CFO position as well as where we are here?

Harris Yes. Yes, so one of the things that we in reviewing this and we've talked about this in the, previously is that we'll want to go in and create, likely at our next meeting we'll have a first reading of a proposed ordinance which would basically reestablish the position in an ordinance as well as the Deputy Director position right now. In our Salary Ordinance in 2020, we created the position of CFO. We transferred some of those duties to the Municipal Relations Coordinator and so we would just want to make sure we're carrying out the spirit of the reorganization and so just for the public, the reorganization eliminated the role of the Clerk-Treasurer which was an elected role. Under the Government Modernization Act, you have to assign those duties to another individual who is going to lead those responsibilities. So, in our reorganization, those actually get assigned to the Mayor and then there's mandatory language that the Mayor shall assign the duties of the Clerk-Treasurer to the Director of the Department of Finance and Records.

So, we had that initially with the reorganization in our Mayor with Mayor Papa and then with Mayor Haak then when we had Mayor Styron come in we actually created the position of CFO. In that position, those duties were assigned to the CFO for oversight and then some of the duties were assigned to the Municipal Relations Coordinator, just to make it clear as mud. So we just need to go back and just make sure all that aligns back to the reorganization and I think the best way we handle that is just create an ordinance that would basically set out the Department of Finance and Records clearly which we, we do have but currently it then references the CFO in a number of places and we would just realign those responsibilities to the right person. So, I'll be drafting that for your review and consideration. I'm also going to be sending it to Amy, Jo to you and just to make sure that as we create these new positions we're getting the right duties to the right person and have that well articulated. So there are some things in the duties for the Clerk-Treasurer that are not specifically delineated in the job description. That is not, I think, unique. I mean you don't always put all the statutory obligations in a job description but we will want to include those when we do the ordinance. So, I will pick that up and those are, and we'll make sure that we have a clear alignment of who is responsible in this new structure or newly reestablished structure of, of Director of Department of Finance and Records. If that makes sense.

Plunkett Yes, so I mean I think to Jo's point, I mean, we've seen this 3 or 4 times and obviously, Heather's weighed in on it. Understanding that we are going to need to establish an ordinance and make some modifications there, my personal thought, Councilors, is, is I know that Jo needs to post this job and needs to get these things moving forward and that was certainly our objective was to move forward without the CFO position and that's going to be modified in our Salary Ordinance that we still have to finalize as well.

Kiel The Salary Ordinance has the Deputy, has the, excuse me, the Director position, not the CFO position.

Plunkett Okay.

Kiel The current one –

- Harris Yes.
- Kiel That was, the most recently approved –
- Plunkett The one we just recently did.
- Kiel One.
- Harris Right, Yes.
- Plunkett So I would like to see these positions move forward and then at the next meeting, to Heather's point, we establish an ordinance that cleans up some of the language and just clears up, clears up the direction there, so.
- Burk Yes, I think we'd all like to expedite this hiring and I know you've waited a long time for this. You were ready to post this at the, before even the kind of Christmas break. These are, the job description and the ordinance are clearly correlated. You have to do the ordinance or, to Jason's point, can we pass this job description and get her going on this and then come back to the ordinance or it is dependent on the ordinance passing first before we can pass the job description?
- Harris Well, Yes. We definitely can go ahead and pass this. Like I don't see any issues or concerns with us doing this today. I know that's a priority for everyone to get those positions posted and filled and I know that the team in the Finance Department is short staffed still and I'm sure they would be grateful to have an additional person there to help them. So I don't see any issues with that. I think going back to kind of our bigger picture project for the year, really going into all the ordinances and cleaning up old references, for better or worse, we still have references in the ordinances to the Department of Finance and Records and the Director, so it's just getting everything realigned and making sure that we're working with Jo and her team to know where who is doing what duties and what positions to hold them so we can clearly establish that.
- Burk Yes, I know there's more –
- Harris I don't have any issues or concerns with moving forward.
- Burk And would your advice be then, I know there's, there's lots of things need to be cleaned up but maybe get this posted but before a hire that we have this ordinance cleaned up so?
- Harris Yes, I don't think you have to tie them that closely together. I think you're okay. As long as we're getting them done timely so that there's clear authority for the position. We also have the positions in the Salary Ordinance so those positions have already been approved and posted publicly and have –
- Burk Good.
- Harris A public hearing and –

- Burk That's what I was hoping.
- Plunkett Yes.
- Harris Yes.
- Melton Heather, Jo – we have a redline version. Have, have you seen the redline version, Jo?
- Harris Yes, it's actually Jo's document.
- Kiel I created the redline version.
- Harris Yes.
- Melton You created the redline?
- Harris Correct, yes.
- Melton Okay. Fantastic then. That's great.
- Plunkett Any other questions from Councilors? I would make a motion to approve the job descriptions of Director and Deputy Director of Finance and Records.
- Traylor Second.
- Plunkett Second by Councilor Traylor. All those in favor signify by saying aye.
- All Aye.
- Plunkett All opposed same sign.
[No response]
- Motion passes 5 in favor, 0 opposed.
- Kiel Thank you.
- Plunkett Thank you, Jo.

NEW BUSINESS

Matt Row, District Director for Congressman Jim Baird Presentation

- Plunkett Up next is New Business. The first item of New Business is Matt Row, District Director for Congressman Jim Baird. Morning Matt.
- Row Good morning. How are you guys?
- Plunkett Good, thanks. How are you?

Row I'm good. I was joking with Amy that this will probably be the quickest and hopefully smoothest part of the agenda all day and when talking about Congress that's not always the easiest thing to do, so. Again, Matt Row, District Director for Congressman Baird and as of a couple of weeks ago, Zionsville is now in the 4th Congressional District so we welcome you guys. Anything we can do of service to you, the town, the citizens, obviously, let us know. I'll leave my cards here with Amy. I'm always available. I think my cell phone might be on the back of, of some of these so, seriously, if there's anything that we can do, just let me know.

Culp Great.

Burk Thank you.

Plunkett Thanks Matt.

Traylor Thank you.

Plunkett That was quick.

Park Department 5-Year Master Plan Presentation

Plunkett Up next is the Parks Department 5-Year Master Plan presentation. Parks Director Jarod Logsdon.

Logsdon Good morning Town Council. Jarod Logsdon, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation. Last year the Zionsville Parks and Recreation Department embarked on a comprehensive vision, an update to our park system with the assistance of Rundell Ernstberger & Associates. The 5-Year Master Plan is a roadmap to capital and operational improvements within our parks and invites public input, stakeholder opinion, community polling and ultimately adoption by the Park Board, Plan Commission and Town Council as it is an update to our Town's Comprehensive Plan. I should also mention that this 5-Year Master Plan is required for several DNR grants which we have been recipients of in the past and this would be the update to 2023 through 2028. Today's presentation is a, is comprised of the findings and recommendations of this next plan and we welcome any feedback and discussion before we begin the adoption process. So with me this morning is Tricia McClellan of Rundell Ernstberger & Associates to discuss those findings.

McClellan We will not be the quickest presentation today. I do have a high-level presentation for the Master Plan. We can answer any detail that we need to – let's see, I'm going to have to find out. Get us on the right screen – here we go. We have plenty of detail so feel free to stop us and I'll have Jarod jump in if I miss anything.

As Jarod mentioned, this is a, a 5-Year Plan. So we update the plan every 5 years. Today we're going to talk a little bit about what the process was, the public input, all the engagement that we had, key takeaways that we heard from that engagement. We did take a detailed look at staffing for the department and then a priority action plan for capital projects and improvements to the parks, a detailed

ADA assessment was done and then the next steps for the process. I will say – this is a 5-Year Plan. It's unusual. The amount of detail and study that was done – it really is creating a comprehensive plan which not all parks departments do. A lot of times they're just meeting the minimum requirements for DNR and this one does go above and beyond. The staffing study and that ADA assessment, that detailed assessment, really are above and beyond what's required. What that gives you is a comprehensive plan so you're seeing, all of the projects and all of the costs associated with the department and maintaining and operating it to the level that, that citizens have come to expect and that Zionsville is known for quite frankly.

So the process was a 4-phase process, included just inventory and analysis, visioning where we worked through what the Parks Department wants to achieve in the next 5 to 10 years, frameworks for how we're going to achieve that and then the action plan – the actual roadmap for how we get there.

Public input – there was a lot, a lot of different options and a lot of different ways for people to give us their input. We had a Steering Committee which had a couple of members from the Council here on the Steering Committee and we met throughout the process and they provided oversight for that process. We had three public open houses here at Town Hall with a total of 72 attendees. We were at the Farmer's Market which was very successful. A whole lot of people stopped by the booth. Mindy and her crew had the Creekstomper and the bubble blower going so that helped us to attract people over to our booth. We did have a virtual open house for the first and the second meeting. The first meeting had over 7,000 views with over 2,500 unique users. Of those, people were hanging out on the website about 30 minutes so that tells you people were, were checking out the plan and offering their input for what they wanted to see. Part of that was a community survey and you can see there the responses that we had. We had actually 571 responses. We also did three short surveys to some particular groups just to get their thoughts and opinions. And then our second virtual open house along with our second open house was presenting the proposed recommendations and getting people's thoughts and then also trying to establish priorities for what people wanted to see happen next.

Key takeaways from all of those – there are some common themes that seem to rise to the top from all the public input and that was more trail connections to the Big 4 Rail Trail. You guys have never heard that before I'm sure. It seems to come up in all the public engagement. More trail connections to parks. There is still a demand for a community center or some kind of an indoor aquatic center, Carpenter Nature Preserve lots of support for the potential of Carpenter Nature Preserve but then also more basic amenities in parks like restrooms and drinking fountain, drinking fountains and just seating and shelters. Still a high demand for natural areas and preservation which is interesting because that's, Zionsville has a lot of that. People enjoy that and they still want to see more of that. People also recognize that there are areas of town, especially out in the north and then out in the Perry Township area that don't have parks and that we need to be looking for how we're going to incorporate parks into those areas.

Staffing study – I’m going to show a whole lot of data to you. Hopefully you’ve had a chance to kind of look at this because it is a lot to take in. The basis for the staffing study – we looked at benchmark cities or towns that were similar to Zionsville and then we also looked at NRPA metrics to get an idea of how Zionsville compares in terms of, of staffing and I don’t think there will be any surprises here but definitely stop me if you have any questions. So these are the towns that we looked at and you can see the population. Westfield is a little bit higher there but, for the most part, pretty even in terms of population. Number of parks, again, a pretty, pretty even mixture. It’s hard to get an exact match when you’re talking about parks. That is one thing that NRPA says – parks are very unique and they’re very unique for residents and what they want and topography and all those things add into it. Total park acreage – again, you can see Zionsville and Goshen are higher with Valparaiso a little bit higher even yet. Interesting I think because it breaks down per population, acreage per 1,000 of population. Pretty even. You can see Merrillville and Westfield, they’re quite a bit lower than what Zionsville is. This is important to look at because when, again, we’re talking about staffing. How many people does the town have – the Parks Department have to maintain their parks and trails?

So the number of FTE employees per acre. FTE is full-time equivalent so we take full time and part time and average it all out to a full-time equivalent and this is looking at it, again, per acre of park just keeping in mind that that’s, that gives you a metric, not exactly, because facilities are different between the parks, but it gives you an, an interesting metric to look at in terms of how many people are maintaining our acres of park versus how many people are maintaining acres of park in other towns and cities. Zionsville, and this, this particular example, is at the lower end of that. And, again, just interesting to see operating budget per capita because it helps us to break it down per population and you can see Merrillville and Brownsburg are a little bit lower but really Zionsville and Westfield those are all pretty, pretty even.

Back to the FTE – this is a NRPA data that came, that comes from them. NRPA I will say we have to just keep in mind take it with a grain of salt. This is based on parks departments that report into NRPA. It is not an exhaustive list of parks departments across the United States. It is pretty extensive, a lot do report in, but just keep in mind that this is those that are reporting in and this is based on across the nation parks departments that are maintaining 251 to 1,000 acres in their parks and you can see the lower end is 23.1, middle it’s about 48.4 and then the highest end of, of those departments is 94.7 FTE per acre of park. Zionsville’s or FTE – Zionsville’s is 12.75, so not even half. Kind of that, that lowest number there from the NRPA. This is just a, a breakout of how we came up, how

you get to that FTE equivalent for Zionsville. Again, 30 employees but it equals 12.75 full-time equivalent employees. That FTE is very similar to what it was 5 years ago and even similar to, to 5 years before that and this is just kind of a list of – so on the left side is those that are, have come online or are coming online here very soon and then the other list is potential. These are the ones that we proposed as a part of the next 5 to 10 years. To keep in mind that those additional parks and additional acreages and amenities are coming online and that's additional areas that the Parks Department will be maintaining and operating and also programming. Programming is another important thing to consider. In the last 5 years just think of the number of programs that have been added for the town with the Parks Department. It's, it's a lot. And there has been additional staff but just to keep the, I think the number of programs that have been added are even exponential to the number of staff that have been added.

So this is an overall next 5 years is what we're shooting for, what the goal is of proposed staff and I'll show you here how, how we're proposing to do that but that will get Zionsville Parks and Recreation Department up to 48.4 FTE which is still in that mid-range for the NRPA average. And, again, looking at sort of the bar graph to see how that would make Zionsville's staff compare with other cities and that would have us up with Brownsburg and above Merrillville, Valpo, Westfield.

So how do we do that? This shows you next year's already been budgeted so we, we skipped over next year and went to 2024 and this is a proposed roadmap to get us to that, that additional staffing with the department. That bottom line is a range. This is just an average of salaries. We know salaries are dependent on position and skill level so this is just a range there at the bottom but you can see at the bottom of 2024, '25, '26 and '27 the averages for what that would increase the budget for the Parks Department to add that number of employees each year. So the first year is 16, second year is 20, the next is 16 and then 10 and that 2025 is anticipation. You can see Carpenter Nature Preserve has its own staff so if Carpenter comes online, gets the amenities that we have proposed, then these are the additional staff that we see that will be needed. Any questions? I blazed through that. Okay, I'll keep rolling.

I did submit along with the packet some renderings. I'm just going to give you a, the action plan basically for the capital projects so if you need to reference those renderings, I have copies too that I can grab if anybody wants a, a hard copy. So this is looking at capital projects and, again, projects that are improvements to existing parks. Each year it's a mixture of new projects and new amenities to existing parks along with the, those smaller projects. For instance, in 2023, an improvement to the canoe launch there at Elm Street Green. There used to be a, a downed tree that was there that kind of helped in that location and it has since washed away

so that made this rise to, to be more of a priority and then also ADA improvements. So part of the ADA assessment there's a database that Jarod will have to make those improvements so you'll see I left the ADA line blank because that will be equally divided over the next 5 years so we just left that out so that you can see we're trying to keep an even progression of proposed projects and even a lot of those we're calling long term so they'll be outside of that 5- to 10-year range. Now keep in mind –

Plunkett Tricia. Tricia, excuse me. I just have a question. The – before you move off of this – I noticed that it says Carpenter Nature Preserve land purchase at \$5.5 then estimated cost \$6.5. Do we have the appraisals for that back yet or no?

Logsdon Yes. We requested an updated appraisal in October and received that in November so the updated appraisal was slightly more than from 2021 as you can imagine so it was originally \$5.6 and the new appraisal was \$6,022,000, so with the bargain sale price on that of \$1.5 million, we're looking at \$4.5 and \$22,000 for the land acquisition of that.

Plunkett Thank you.

McClellan And if you check my math, you'll notice I left that out of the total –

Plunkett Yes.

McClellan There at the bottom. Again, that kind of, it kicks it into a new category. We were trying to get an even progression of improvements over the 5 years.

2024 – so you'll see there at the bottom of the sheet we're talking about what these proposed improvements are. That includes additional parking, additional paving out at Starkey Nature Park to improve and expand that parking lot, additional pickleball courts and restroom building out at Mulberry Fields and this would be a year-round so it wouldn't shut down in the winter like the current one does there at the splash pad and then Zion Nature Sanctuary. The pavilion that is out there needs some repairs. It's been there for a while and it's just getting to the point that it needs repairs to extend the life of that. And that gives us with a total of around \$2.2 to 4.5 million for that year. The range is because, as we've seen in the last couple of years, prices increase, prices can really be all over the board. We also provide a range in case another project at the, closer to the end we have said needs to be done in the fifth year ends up being done in the second year, the budget of that second-year project that then goes to the fifth is going to be on the higher end so that's why you're seeing a range there in terms of, of costs for the projects.

2025 – we have the golf course, the clubhouse and drainage improvements that that's the big project for that year and then Creekside Nature Park some entrance improvements just to open it up, get rid of some of the invasives and just improve that parking lot there at Creekside Nature.

2026 – Holliday Nature Sanctuary getting those improvements done which are, it is going to be a nature sanctuary so they're, they're not – it's a parking lot, shelter and some walking trails that would be occurring there. And then we did propose a new – calling it a trail – it's a mixture of roadside trails and then greenways. The vacant Holliday Road/Pleasant View Road trail that same year and, again, I have incorporation with, in coordination with Street Department and then Turkeyfoot Nature Park bridge repairs. Again, that bridge is, needs some repairs to extend the life on it.

2027 – Heritage Trail Park splash pad and restroom building there too which would give the town a restroom building, trailhead facility at the more the northern end of the Big 4 and then with the completion of the trailhead there at Zionsville Road at the southern end of the Big 4 Rail Trail. Carter Station pathway improvements and then some improvements to the American Legion Crossing which includes a potential digital kiosk which would be a, a memorial there at the Legion Crossing.

And then long term – this is a 5-Year Plan but we always look further out than that. I say 10 years, sometimes it's 20 years. Some of these projects that are listed on here need things like fundraising to be done, some planning that needs to be done in the next 5 years to make it possible to happen in the next 10, 15 to 20 years. So that's why we go ahead and look at these projects and plan these projects out and get them budget. The other example is if a grant, a new grant comes out from the state or the federal government that one of these projects might be perfectly suited for, it gives you the flexibility to already have that plan, tear it out of the Master Plan, show that you've, you've done your work, the justification for why that's in there and submit that project to where it might rise up to one of those first 5 years instead of being one of the long-term projects. Any questions?

So the ADA assessment. I'm not going to go into these but I just wanted to show you an example of how detailed this and, as I mentioned, for each one of these underlying topics Jarod will have a database and he and his crew will just start chipping away at this database. They'll tackle the easy ones that they can do themselves in-house first and then those that – resurfacing a parking lot, re-striping a parking lot – that might need a little further planning will fall a little bit lower on the list but they will be distributed across the 5 years. So this is Elm Street Green and it's a 10-page report of the things that need to be improved to meet ADA

compliance but it's even a step beyond that. There are some things that you can do to make them even more accessible, not just meeting the minimum requirements to make them more accessible. The interpretative sign that's along the side of the trail, adding sound, adding some other cues other than just a sign to read can make that more accessible to people with different disabilities so, flip through that real quick and then that should be – and even spacing of picnic tables.

So next steps – we did submit the first, the first few chapters of the book to DNR for their review. They, they go through just looking for compliance. They do make some recommendations for how to make the plan better which is always great and then final document submittal needs to be done before April 15th. We can do it anytime between now and April 15th. We will have review from the Park Board, Planning Commission and you guys. We'll need to get that final review from DNR before the plan is actually adopted by everybody. Did I miss anything Jarod? Any questions?

Traylor

I've got a couple just – I was on the Steering Committee and thank you for, for all your help on this but I was a little surprised to see the Cato property on there as, as a park just based on our, our meetings that I thought that at the most that might have a, a like a sunflower field or something like that but I just am adamant that we not put anything on that property to attract people. The reason being this particular property is not near the end of the runway, it's at the end of the runway for the airport. I think it's a huge mistake and would only take one accident to make it a, a huge tragedy at that park so I'm, I'm adamantly against anything that attracts anybody to that property. So that's, not really a question but more of a statement.

The other thing is – the, did we, no it's, is it in later the staffing levels that you're or was that – I don't know how – I know we got two PowerPoint slides. I didn't know if you were going to go over both of them or not but the, Yes the staffing levels are a concern for me and I expressed that in our meeting but I just want to do it on public record too – we're talking about going from roughly 12 full-time employees to 48 over the course of 5 years. That's a lot and that's, that's a concern to me so, I don't know if we can make that – like, I guess what, once we put it in the plan my assumption as Town Council, Yes as a member of Town Council, once we put it in the plan my assumption is that next year when we go through the or later this year when we go through the budgeting for 2024, that we would see 16 additional people requested for the budget. I just don't see that happening. I mean, just knowing how, what we go through in the budgeting process so I guess my, my question would be since this is a plan and it's not called a wish list, it's a plan, maybe we should find a way to

make that more of a realistic number that we can actually shoot for. I just don't, my personal thought is it's not realistic.

Logsdon That's a completely fair point and the staffing study was to be an objective look at national standards and then apply them to Zionsville specifically as well as our regional neighbors and where they are in their capacities. A great point that was brought up at the last Steering Committee is the contractual equivalents that we have to equal out some of these staff members. So the town does have a mowing contract so we, we'd contract out those services and certainly there is a FTE equivalent for all those hours in that contract. So we just, I think we just need a better dictate. What that is existing today and how those could be supplemented in the future as well.

Traylor Yes, I just don't want, Yes – I don't want to see the 5-Year Plan adopted and then the Council deny the expenditure for the additional full-time employees and point back and say but it was in the 5-Year Plan, Yes, I don't want to see us get in that, that kind of a predicament.

Logsdon That's completely fair.

Plunkett Yes, my understanding was that when we approved the funding for this was that this was so that, obviously, to get a vision and to get a plan but because we would miss out on grant opportunities and I would, I would echo Councilor Traylor's sentiments in the staffing. This is, this is a, this is an aggressive and I feel like aggressive and expensive next, next 5 years for, for the parks. So hopefully a lot of this stuff can come through grants because I mean, if, if, if I'm, to your point, at the end of the year when we're doing budget, I have a really hard time putting – it'll just, it'll just be difficult for me to, to support a lot, a lot of this stuff if it's coming out, out of pocket as opposed to through grants so.

Logsdon And that's a completely fair point as well but to not include – this was the ask of the community. This is their request and it's our privilege to find a way to make that happen. So a good point the last 5-Year Master Plan is when that was adopted in 2018 the Rail Trail project was multiple millions of dollars beyond our cash capacities. That project was bonded by Town Council but, in addition, we did receive a Next Level Trails grant which wasn't even announced when that plan was wrapped up so certainly if, if it's not in the plan we don't have a path forward but we are, we are more than happy to find creative ways and jump on every opportunity to make these projects happen and in every plan there is a project or two that doesn't get completed in those 5 years. The Elm Street canoe launch is a great example of that but, for the most part, this is our roadmap and we, and we work towards those goals.

Burk

I just – thanks Tricia – and I would call out Jarod, parks and the team along with Councilor Traylor, I was able to be a part of this. The process was incredibly diligent, not just strategic in, in the amount of time – you can see everything that went into this and, obviously, it's super robust and super extensive. I don't think the intention or the reality was that every dollar amount that you see was going to come from Zionsville and Jarod, you have been incredible at securing grants and I know there's a lot of money out there so hopefully we'll continue to do that to plug it in but to Bryan's point, is this, how much are we committing to when we put this plan or how much is this is kind of like this would be ideal. We know, we're part of, we're proud of the parks program here. I think it's a strong part of our identity, it's a strong part of the quality of life of folks in Zionsville and they do want this.

I would especially thank you guys, because particularly Bryan and I who were sitting there thinking about the dollars as we were going through this project, and we did ask that as you were getting community input that folks were kind of tasked with how would they prioritize spending? If you remember this – it was kind of like, there was even an exercise where you have so much money – what, where would you spend your dollars? Because my, my experience has been that all of these projects are going to get high scores if you just ask people: Do you think this is a good idea for Zionsville? Sure, it's a great idea for Zionsville and you're going to see high scores but we can't do it all and how would you prioritize ranking these things if you were in charge of the budget? So I thought that was a, it was appreciated that you guys kind of took that on. It was interesting to see where people would spend the dollars if they were the ones kind of behind that but clearly, there's not enough to go around for everything. I do think we have to chase other dollars but they are out there and you're very good at finding them.

So, I was just thrilled to be a part of the process. There's a lot on here. If all this came to fruition it would be incredible – it may not all but when you just kind of sit back and absorb the, this, all, all of these things would greatly enhance Zionsville's brand, our reputation and our quality of life and I hope it all happens – it may not but thank you for just a, a very, very diligent process and I appreciate you saying that not everybody does it this way. This was, this was a very, very, very strategic process and one of the more really robust processes I've been a part of so thank you.

Melton

I just want to make a comment that the Zionsville Parks Department is, is very robust here in Zionsville and it's very important to my constituents even though we're spread throughout the Town of Zionsville, but I want to thank you for this presentation. It was very thorough. I'm of the opinion that I like to protect and improve our current existing assets before we take on new projects but that being said, this, this lays out lots of plans for

advancing current projects like the, I guess the canoe launch. Actually, I had a question about that the canoe launch – is there, so there’s a launch. Is there an exit involved with that, that budget pricing as well?

Logsdon A lot, lot of portaging –

Melton Yes –

Logsdon Along that trail.

Melton Okay, Yes. So, I’ve got constituents that are very interested in that. They love our waterways and to see that on there, that little blip is very important to me as well but to see Carpenter Nature Preserve, the well thought out plan that’s going into that – a little concerned about the permanent staffing or the staffing that’s going to be involved with that. You mentioned hiring the mowing crews and the delta or the way of calculating labor hours. That’s my biggest concern for that but other than that, I think this is very well thought out and I appreciate, I appreciate the Councilors that were involved in that as well and but definitely the staff and I’m friends with Mindy and I think Mindy is a great person for the programming and I’ll look forward to seeing what she can do in maximizing her ability, so. Thank you.

Logsdon You’re welcome. Thank you all.

Traylor I have a question that was actually posed to me by a resident earlier this week and since I’ve got you here I’ll ask you.

Logsdon Alrighty.

Traylor I know that there were a lot of polls and things done for this. The question that I received was if we have done a usage study, like an actual usage study that “more scientific” than just a polling of our parks. Have we done that?

Logsdon I think it’s usually been public polls.

McClellan Yes.

Traylor Public polls?

Logsdon Yes.

Traylor Okay. All right. That was –

Logsdon But we are working towards trail counters because that data is going to be so crucial moving forward so there will be one of those as part of the widening and it might actually be sponsored by a grant from the Pathways Committee. We're working with them. So definitely collecting more and more data to support these initiatives. That's partially why the staffing study was in here as well and just to understand that as we grow, we're, we're, we're going to need more hands on the ground as well and like I mentioned with the contract services but we also rely on our community and in 2022 we had over 2,050 hours – no, no sorry – over 2,080 hours of volunteer hours within our park system so more than one full-time position 40 hours a week in, in a year of our community coming out and helping us in our parks so. We understand it takes a village to make all these things happen, especially when we look in the larger arena of public safety and our roads and all the other departments that also need funding so. We are just happy to keep moving the torch forward.

Burk I think one final comment that I don't know that was super clear in the presentation but I really enjoyed the vision of this and, of course, we have an opportunity out in front of our, our planning, particularly as we enhance and secure new assets but the interconnectivity of these parks and the, and I don't even know if we settled on that but a lot of the conversation as we mapped out where all the assets were to make sure that everything was accessible, at some point how would we connect these with trails so that you could kind of move throughout the parks department all kinda via the trail system and getting out in front of that, particularly even as we think about there's a lot of real estate still in Zionsville how might we want to preserve more park space and, you know, particularly folks who live out west of town – like how do we bring them into this new trail system. So I just thought that the interconnectivity of allowing people to move through the parks department via trails was also just incredibly, a lot of foresight going on there and I don't know if that was clear that there's a lot of interconnectivity in the planning to tie this together and that was, I think, very innovative.

Logsdon Thank you, Yes. I don't believe it was presented today but one of the concepts from the plan was a, basically a park trail so with a couple of roadside pathways and things like that, we can actually make a parks loop to all of our, nearly all of our parks in Eagle Township so that's incredibly exciting to have that new opportunity for the community to get from park to park safely off road by pedestrian or, or cycling.

Melton I will say the Pathways Committee met last night and that is actually an agenda item for 2023 to look at those interconnectivity and maybe we can work with the Parks Department a little closer to see if that, that's something we can help create. It's a little bit of a challenge with regards to roadway pathways versus what's a parks pathway –

Logsdon Uh huh –

Melton In fact, we're working on a bicycle friendly application and I really appreciate your help and Lance Lantz's help with that as well that some of that information is convoluted because some of them are funded by DPW dollars and some of them are funded by Parks so it's a little bit complicated for that, that and we really appreciate your help on that but connecting these parks through pathways is something that we, we – it is our agenda to do that. Very challenging though with regards to private property owners, developers developing land and then, obviously, safety with the DPW and the roads so. Thank you.

Culp I just had a quick question. Could you bring up the 2023 plan? What's going on in the next 12 months?

Logsdon And, again, to reiterate that these were just placed in sequence concerning priorities as well as cost so there's a balance between new and old so all these things are movable so we did receive some feedback that the golf course clubhouse was in 2025 and that, that building certainly is certainly at end of life now so as opportunities come we will definitely jump on those.

Culp Yes, so is there anything on here that we should be prepared for that you're going to ask for?

Logsdon Yes, so tomorrow on the Park Board agenda there will be the agenda item of an update to where the Carpenter Nature Preserve process is right now and within that is a document of the Declaration Resolution for restarting the bonding process. So, the Park Board will vote on that whether they move forward. If they choose to approve, they will have a public hearing in February and upon information collected in that, then it will be before you all at later meetings in March. So we, we are hoping to move forward with the Carpenter Nature Preserve, at least the acquisition, but I have some very exciting news concerning grants to help support that and make our local dollars go much further and we'll have all that information to you shortly.

Culp Great. Just a side note, was Winterfest attended? Did we have a bigger attendance this year than last year?

Logsdon Slightly lower attendance this year, unfortunately.

Logsdon We did miss two of our biggest days when school was out because of the negative temperatures but we're still waiting on a little bit of the invoices

to come in and the credits so once I have that full financial picture, I will present that to you all.

Culp Just curious.

Logsdon Yep.

Culp Okay.

Logsdon But it was very well attended. We had a outdoor makers market which had over 2,000 people show up to support local vendors which that was really exciting. That was our first time doing that. Fingers crossed it went fantastic so – more for that very soon.

Plunkett Anything else Councilors? Thank you very much.

Logsdon All right. Thank you all.

Consideration of Appointments to Various Boards, Commissions and Committees

Plunkett Up next on New Business is a Consideration of Appointments to Various Boards, Commissions and Committees. Councilors, you've received those. I will give you a quick update. We do have one vacancy that we need to fill on the Non-Discriminatory Practices Review Board. That's a one-year term and I have asked a couple of folks to fill that but just timing was such that they couldn't get back in time for this meeting. So as we, we are able to approve this list and then come back and modify it later. I would take a moment just to thank everybody who currently serves who decided to continue to serve. It is sometimes, I mean, we've got 2-1/2 pages worth of appointments here so there's quite a few, quite a few appointments. Vice President Burk and I met to go over these and I appreciate the input from Council as well but, Yes, the folks that, that decided to step up and serve on these Boards and Commissions, certainly appreciate your commitment to the town and for those folks that requested to be appointed to Boards and Commissions and were not appointed, certainly as we have other opportunities come up, we, we go right back to that list first and foremost so I appreciate everybody's interest there. Are there any questions or concerns from Councilors?

Melton I just request that we, we do a hold on the Pathways Committee on their appointments for this as well. If I can just get another two weeks until our next Town Council meeting to get that fully vetted and approved.

Plunkett So we would have – you want to put a hold on everybody on the Pathway Committee?

Melton I would say that's probably the fairest way to do this, yes.

Plunkett Okay.

Melton In this, in this, in this instance.

Plunkett Heather, I'm assuming there's no problem with approving the list with the exception of the Pathway Committee?

Harris There, there is not.

Plunkett Yes, I don't have a problem with that. I mean, Councilor Melton, you're the Town Council Member on that so I have no problem with that. Any other questions or comments from Councilors? Otherwise, I would make a motion to approve the appointments with the exception of the Pathway Committee.

Burk Second.

Plunkett Second by Vice President Burk. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett All those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

OTHER MATTERS

Plunkett Up next is Other Matters. Are there any other matters from Councilors?
Up next I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Culp Second.

ADJOURN

Plunkett Okay, I will make a motion to adjourn. Second by Councilor Culp. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett All those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Zionsville Town Council
January 17, 2023

The next Regular Town Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 6, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the Zionsville Town Hall Council Chambers. Final notice will be posted in compliance with the Indiana Open Door Law. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amelia Anne Lacy, Municipal Relations Coordinator
Town of Zionsville