

Minutes of June 4th, 2024 Wakarusa Town Council Meeting

PRESENT: Rocco Rigsby, Carl Gilbert, Randall Mitschelen, Annette Brown – Town Council,
Holly Landis – Town Manager, Katie Fromer – Clerk-Treasurer, Charlie Zercher – Town Attorney
Absent: Phil Klotz

President Rigsby called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Councilman Gilbert made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the May 7th, 2024 Council meeting. Councilwoman Brown seconds. Approved.

Councilman Rigsby welcomed any visitors who wished to address the Town Council.

Tessa Parshall asked for an update for those living in a flood plain. Town Manger Landis stated Elkhart County's new ordinance in relation to flood plain areas was effective June 1, 2024.

Troy Schwartz, owner of Schwartz Electric, The Garage Coffee Shop, and Larimer Furniture provided a letter to the Council addressing some challenges of business owners, property owners, and building owners. Schwartz stated businesses all want a community that they want to live in and support business. Schwartz hopes the Council will be open to sitting down with businesses and having open dialogue to face some challenges that affect many businesses. Schwartz addressed the trash dumpsters for downtown businesses and provided a few possible solutions. Council President Rigsby suggested solutions to consider for dumpster arrangement around Town. Councilwoman Brown stated that she is always open to conversation and the Council is open to hear from anyone.

Schwartz addressed the issue of the water that comes across the business's roofs starting at Cook's Pizza moving west to Pro-IT and running off the roof into the alleyway and into W Waterford Street. Jeff Burden, owner of Cook's Pizza and Burden Family Dentistry expressed his same concerns with ice in the alley beside Pro-IT. Brown stated there is no storm line in front of the businesses on W Waterford St, only in the back. Brown discussed the process and expense that is involved in adding a storm line in the alley. Darell Schwartz, property owner suggested getting a price check from another engineer. Hass Hakim, owner of Seifert Drug questioned if a grant would be a possibility. Town Manager Landis stated that alleyways are not eligible for grants. Scott Farney, owner of S&S Automotive asked what the current plan for the alley was. Rigsby stated the Town Engineer is looking into solutions. Burden inquired when business owners might receive an update on the water run off issue. Rigsby stated the Town anticipates having some solid numbers by next month's Council meeting. Public Works Supervisor Mikel stated that adding a storm line should be an affordable project and could be done in a reasonable amount of time. Monte Holdeman, owner of D&M Automotives asked if the storm system could handle the additional storm runoff. Mikel provided an explanation of a potential solution that could fix the water run off issue. Troy Schwartz stated there were many businesses represented at tonight's meeting that want to succeed and want our community to succeed and asked for collaboration and cooperation in coming up with solutions to these challenges and maybe not even consider them challenges, but rather opportunities. Brown acknowledged the alley got put on the back burner and apologized. The council will continue to work with businesses to find solutions.

Tim Reece, owner of North American Pump and Liberty Safe recognized a tremendous amount of caring people represented at tonight's meeting. Reece shared his concerns about the water supply to the Town and to businesses. Reece explained that his business hasn't had sufficient water pressure to run his business since day one. Reece inquired about getting boosters to help with the water supply. Public Works Supervisor Mikel explained that the Town is building a new water treatment plant, however the

new plant or an additional tower will not fix the issue of water pressure as the height of the Town's water towers set the system's pressure. Once the new water treatment plant is complete, the long-term plan is to look at zones throughout Town where boosters could be placed to strengthen water pressure as needed. Darrell Schwarts requested a letter be sent out with information on the upcoming water rates. The Council confirmed the information is being drafted and will be provided soon.

Brock Rose, Wakarusa's Chamber Director, stated he recognized Wakarusa is full of genuinely concerned people who care about their Town and not just for their own agenda. Rose stated Wakarusa has something very special. Rose stated he is proud to represent the businesses here in Wakarusa.

Lyle Martin, VP of Southwest Welding inquired about tax incentives for businesses. Martin stated his business has 100 employees and additional fast-food options or an additional bank would be beneficial to employees.

The Council thanked everyone for attending.

Councilman Gilbert made a motion to suspend the rule and pass Bond Ordinance 2024-4 for the Water Treatment plant on the second reading. Councilwoman Brown seconds. Approved.

Councilman Gilbert made a motion to pass Bond Ordinance 2024-4 for the Water Treatment plant. Councilwoman Brown seconds. Approved.

Councilwoman Brown made a motion to introduce Ordinance 2024-5 amending the Town's water rates. Councilman Mitschelen seconds. Approved.

Councilman Gilbert made a motion to approve Council President Rigsby signing the Redevelopment Commission (RDC) Certificate Regarding Tax Increment Replacement Amount stating the RDC will not seek a tax increment replacement levy in 2025. Councilman Mitschelen seconds. Approved.

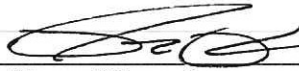
Councilman Gilbert made a motion to approve pay Application #1 from Beer and Slabaugh, Inc. for the new water Main on S Spring St providing water to 3 homes that didn't previously have access to Town water in the amount of \$111,541.64. Councilwoman Brown seconds. Approved.

The Council reviewed Department Reports.

Councilwoman Brown made a motion to approve the claims and adjourn the meeting. Councilman Gilbert seconds. Approved.

Next Work Session: July 8th, 2024

Next Council Meeting: July 9th, 2024


President of Council
Clerk-Treasurer