

WESTFIELD CITY COUNCIL

The Westfield City Council met in regular session Monday April 26, 2010 at the Westfield City Hall. Members present were John Dippel, Steve Hoover, Bob Horkay, Ken Kingshill, Tom Smith, and Rob Stokes. Also present were Mayor Andy Cook, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Teresa Otis Skelton and City Attorney Brian Zaiger.

Council President called the meeting to order at 7:02P.M.

Mayor Cook introduced Major Tom Sillanpa from the audience who gave an invocation.

Approval of Minutes:

Steve Hoover made the motion to approve the April 12, 2010 minutes as submitted. John Dippel seconded. Vote: Yes-6; No-0. Motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Claims:

Ken Kingshill had basic questions in regard to adjustments and Parks claims. Ms Skelton gave a brief explanation and said that she would confirm the information with an e-mail tomorrow. Ken Kingshill made the motion to approve the April claims. Rob Stokes seconded. Vote: Yes-6; No-0. Motion carried.

Guests:

President Smith asked if there were any guests wishing to address the Council. Major Sillanpa asked about drain issues and where those questions should be directed. President Smith asked Community Development Director Matt Skelton to speak to this.

Mr. Skelton said that those types of questions would be handled through the County and he would be happy to supply the correct contact information to Major Sillanpa.

New Business:

Ordinance 10-06: Water & Sewer Fee Amendment
Introduction-April 26, 2010

President Smith explained that a group of three Council members were formed last year (Bob Smith, John Dippel and Tom Smith) to explore availability.

Deputy Mayor Bruce Hauk was charged with the task of exploring how this could happen and still not be a burden on the taxpayer.

Bruce referred to Ordinance 10-06 and explained that this proposed ordinance is showing a reduction of availability fees.

He gave comparisons from 2004 through 2009. He went on to demonstrate how to enhance the cost per EDU's during a "Big Shift" economy. He described the two revenue streams as :

- Utility Billing
- Capital income (which is being discussed this evening).

There has been a stable to variable affect for the past few years. There have been more customers added and also faced in rate increases. There was also a utility company acquisition that had not had a rate increase for 20 years.

There has been a steady flow of residential development but not as much in the commercial market. We are currently competitive with other municipality rates. We currently base our capital fee with the State Code. Some municipalities have their own Utility Company and are getting returns on their investment through private shareholders.

Steve Hoover would like to know why the current structure is in place we support the capital needed to run the City. Councilor Hoover also asked if our current rate structure would support our dept. Bruce Hauk explained that we broke even in 2009. Before that going back to 2002 there was a surplus. In an effort to reserve money the Rainy Day Fund is up to approximately 1 million dollars.

Ken Kingshill supports encouraging Economic Development and making incentives for property owners. The question is how does this Council do that?

Steve Hoover supports encouraging commercial business for tax diversity but is not sure that residential should be treated the same.

John Dippel appreciated Bruce and the administration coming forward with this. Councilor Dippel has been in support of restructuring the fee schedule for quite some time and feels that this proposed ordinance will enhance economic development as well as stimulate existing development. He also thinks that residential should be included as well.

Ken Kingshill could support a formula change as long as legally we would be in compliance.

Attorney Brian Zaiger explained that a formula change may require some engineering strapulation to support the number for calculation.

Mayor Cook complimented the Utility leadership in forming the current rate structure and he recognized that it as being competitive with surrounding communities.

Economic Development Director Matt Skelton confirmed that through inquiries and incentives this could be another tool to entice developments that may be on the fence.

Citizen Mic Mead addressed the Council. He suggested that the council authorize administration to negotiate each case.

John Dippel disagrees and feels that this needs to move forward as soon as possible.

There was much discussion on when the ordinance could be reviewed and amended along with the manner of payment for commercial availability.

Although a public hearing is not required the majority of the Council would like to include public input to solicit opinions and ideas.

It was decided that this will come before the Council in May for public input and consideration.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

John Dippel mentioned that the Council is still having trouble logging in on the Assembly Room computers.

Ken Kingshill questioned the importance of holding this meeting with one agenda item.

MAYOR COMMENTS:

None

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:15P.M.

An Executive Session was held immediately after to discuss legal issues (I.C. 5-14-1.5-6-1 (b) (2) (B).


Deputy Clerk-Treasurer


President