

**TOWN OF
DARMSTADT, INDIANA**

SETTLED 1822

INCORPORATED 1973

**Minutes of
June 9th 2020**

These minutes are not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

TOWN COUNCIL

Paul Freeman, President
Aaron Kendall, Council Member
Ken Godeke, Council Member
Ray Engler, Council Member

CLERK-TREASURER

Mallory Lowe
P. O. Box 20
Darmstadt, In 47618

Board president, Paul Freeman, called the town meeting to order at 7:30pm. In attendance were President Paul Freeman, Clerk-Treasurer Mallory Lowe, council members Aaron Kendall, Ken Godeke and Ray Engler. Also present was Superintendent Jeff Goerges and attorney Jason Spindler.

Kendall made a motion, seconded by Engler to accept the minutes from last month. Motion passed 4-0 voice vote. Godeke made a motion, seconded by Kendall to approve last month's financial report. Motion passed 4-0 voice vote. Kendall made a motion, seconded by Engler to approve the accounts payable claims. Motion passed 4-0 voice vote.

CLERK-TREASURER'S REPORT: Lowe completed and submitted the "Pre"-Budget Worksheet by the May 31st deadline on the State's Gateway program. We will be receiving our first property tax levy payments this month, along with any paid sewer liens. We receive a settlement from the county twice a year in June and December. The town receives about \$93,000 a year from property taxes. We received 30 of our 97 monthly Vectren Bills almost a week late in the mail. The 30 bills were due by May 10th, we received them in the mail on May 15th. Luckily, I had already pulled up the Vectren bills online and paid them all for the month. All the Accounting work is now beginning for our Municipal Bond with BOK Financial. I've been keeping in contact with their vice-president Mark Hudson. He has set up our online portfolio along with training videos on navigating the site, our account and how to manage the data downloads. I've also been working with Mason Cochran from the Reedy Financial Group; he has been assisting us on keeping within requirements for our state reporting. Helping with our Debt Management report to the State in the Gateway program and submitting our New Debt to the State. This is very important as if it isn't done correctly and submitted correctly, we will not receive our tax levy to make the bond payments. So, we are still working on that now, I've got more questions and I believe Jason is also going to help and contact Mason about it. This is the first time Darmstadt has ever been in debt. This requires much more paperwork and submissions to State throughout the year, along with the payments and tax levies. Hopefully, The Reedy Group will help to ensure that we are doing all our accounting correctly for this new debt. The Indiana State Board of Accounts just released a new 'Best Practices' Memo for all State units to update our Internal Controls procedures and make sure we are putting them in practice. That means things like Superintendent reviewing and signing off on timecards, signing off of bills received, council members signing off on bank reconciliations, bills reports, etc. We need to designate a council member to sign off on bank reconciliations, it can be someone different each time, but I need someone to sign off on the first batch. Engler volunteered.

In the Utility Department: We've had 7 people call filling their pools for one-time adjustment and 3 call watering gardens for summer averaging. I have been speaking to Keystone about reviewing our summer averaging feature in our software. I have been having to make the averaging adjustments by hand every month. I am getting with them to make the repair to the software program. I've got a house at 2100 W BNH that reached over 20k usage for over 4 months and their bill is now over \$2,000. They have not called or contacted us about any leaks so far. Their usage was as high as 56,000 in one month.

In General Town Items: I've also been working on getting insurance on the new house and property, I spoke to Glen Stover our insurance agent from Torian. I've got the house and property covered as of our closing date in May. He is currently working with the underwriters to see if they are providing replacement costs coverage or only cash value coverage since the property is vacant, he'll get back with me.

Our other tenants in the bank building did not pay their April rent, they did send their May rent. We are still paying all their utilities and having them reimburse us which is a pain. In the contract they were to pay their own utilities in their name. I'm making copies of the water, sewer and Vectren bills each month and mailing to them. They only send reimbursement check about once every 3 months. I've emailed them about April rent and have not heard back. I will call or stop by this week. All of this extra work of being a landlord is new to me.

Our budget workshop will be coming up soon. I'm still working on budget for 2021 and will have a video conference with Robert Norris, our rep from Department of Local Government Finance. Which I will also be speaking with him about the levying the taxes for the bond to make sure we are getting it submitted correctly since our first bond payment of \$74,600 is due July 2021.

Old Business

1. Sewer Rate Ordinance 2020-6

Spindler advised that tonight is the first reading of ordinance to increase sewer rates 15%. Kendall made a motion, seconded by Engler to move forward with the publication of the ordinance.

2. Sewer Inspections/Outflow

Freeman stated that we've been discussing starting a program to inspect sump pumps connected to the sewer system. Freeman noted that we have had a hard time finding a plumbing company that will do the inspections. Freeman advised that we need to inspect especially the older homes which are more likely to have sump pumps. Kendall made a motion, seconded by Godeke to send a letter to residents notifying of upcoming sump pump inspections. Spindler will draft a letter.

3. Update on Municipal Bond

Jason Spindler noted that we have closed on the bond. All is complete, we have the keys to the home. Spindler noted that we will just finish getting the financials entered into Gateway. Freeman stated that Jeff and Aaron went out and mowed the property and started cleaning up the mess on the property around the house.

New Business

1. Freeman advised that we should do a press release about closing on the property and municipal bond.

2. Freeman stated that we put in for 3 grant projects for this year, but in light of the new bond and covid causing some of our tax revenues to drop, we should drop down to accepting 2 of the grant projects to do Boonville-New Harmony repaving on two parts. Godeke made a motion, seconded by Engler to accept 2 of the 3 grant projects.

Superintendent Report

Jeff Goerges stated that they had 15 service calls last month and 6 so far this month. They have been mowing the town. Jeff noted that they have spent quite a bit of time cleaning up the new house property on Old State. Jeff stated that he had Russ Bittner mow the vacant property on Wortman road owned by Chase bank. Lowe will send the bill to Chase, if it goes unpaid, Lowe will file a weed lien on the property.

Fire Dept Report

Not present

Deputy Sheriff Report

Not present

Board member comments

Godeke mentioned that he was contacted by the Civitan Club asking about the playground. Godeke stated that there was two separate substantial sink holes that need repair at several thousand dollars. Godeke mentioned that the 4H center owns the playground privately and they are looking to remove the playground all together.

Kendall stated that perhaps Jason Spindler could give a quick overview of how the bond will affect property taxes. Spindler explained the property taxes will be spread out taking taxes from schools, libraries and other taxes in Vanderburgh county.

Freeman advised that we own that property and can sell it in the future. Freeman also advised that we will make sure we have ordinances in place so that we don't get ourselves in this situation again. Freeman stated that we will do our best to generate an income from this property in the meantime until it is sold.

Attorney comments

No further comments

Resident comments

Phil Sorenson at 2220 W BNH stated that he is unsatisfied with the mowing job that his neighbor did and that he continues to let the property go. Sorenson noted that his property value has dropped living near Mark Davis who has not kept his property mowed and cleaned up. Sorenson noted that there is a section of the backyard that has not been mowed at all. There was much discussion between Paul Freeman and the 10 homeowners who were neighbors of Mark Davis about he overgrowth, the weeds and the rank vegetation on the property.

Freeman noted that the ordinance is for keeping property mowed, if it gets over 9" average, we flag it, he has 7 days to get it taken care of.

Kendall noted that we should be enforcing our ordinance. Kendall stated our ordinance is in place, we need to back it up and enforce it.

Godeke stated if we mowed it and billed him would he pay it? Kendall added that he would have to pay it if we applied a weed lien. Kendall noted the process works.

Eric Gries stated that if the property is visible from St Joseph Ave can that also be included in the enforcement which will raise the cost of paying for it to be mowed. Eric Gries asked if we could use roundup on the property around edges and borders. Gries asked if he could have the logs the town is cleaning up at the 26 acres. Jeff said yes. Gries also asked if the town is up for farmers to farm that land.

Russ Bittner mentioned his ball park estimate would be around \$300 for the first mowing in addition to any town fines.

Spindler asked the residents at the meeting if they have discussed charging the homeowner and keeping the property mowed and taken care.

Engler advised that he agrees it is an eyesore, we should listen to the residents and enforce the ordinance.

Godeke agreed that we have an ordinance in place and we need to enforce that ordinance including any weeds or rank vegetation on the property. We need to continue to flag him when it is due, fine him and hire Russ Bittner to mow if the homeowner fails to keep up to the standards of the ordinance.

Kendall added that we need to leave the homeowner copy of ordinance along with a copy of what it will cost him for the town to have it mowed along with fines on the ordinance.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58pm

Attest:

Mallory Lowe

Clerk-Treasurer


