

**PORTER TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2004
PORTER TOWN HALL**

President Jennifer Granat called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. immediately following Redevelopment Commission meeting.

Present were Sandy Snyder, Paul Childress, Sandy Boothe, William Sexton, Jennifer Granat, Clerk Treasurer Carol Pomeroy, Attorney David Hollenbeck, Chief of Police John Lane, Fire Chief Louis Craig, Superintendent of Public Works Scott Guy and Building Commissioner Dave Babcock.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Granat asked for a motion to approve the minutes as written of the January 27, 2004 meeting. Sexton made the motion and Boothe seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

Granat asked for a received a motion to approve the minutes of CEDIT Workshop on February 4, 2004. Motion was made by Childress. Snyder made the second. Motion carried 4-0 with Granat (who was absent at the workshop) answered present.

CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS

Claims were presented for the period of January 24-31, 2004 totaling \$12,348.48. Childress made a motion to accept and Sexton made the second. Motion carried 5-0.

Payroll claims were presented totaling \$51,678.61. Childress motioned and Snyder seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Rita Newman of 315 Franklin asked the Council to look into the white fence on the corner of Francis and Franklin. People have said that it obscures vision when cars come to the intersection.

Richard LaHayne of 601 Wagner spoke on the upcoming smelt season at Porter Beach. He would like a sticker indicating that vehicles are there only during the smelt season, which is March, April and May. He feels that with fisherman should not be compelled to buy a Parking Permit for the entire year when they will only be at the beach during the smelt season. Sexton requested that the matter be put on the agenda for February 24, 2004 meeting.

REPORTS FROM TOWN OFFICERS & DEPARTMENTS

Clerk-Treasurer Pomeroy presented the Sewer Department Claims – Childress had a question on the lift station expense dated December 22, 2003. He was told this was a carryover from the previous council. The total claim was \$35, 029.54. Sexton made a motion to accept and Boothe seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Pomeroy brought up the 2003 Final Report, compared to the un-approved the 2004 Budget. Due to the extreme emergency condition of the Town's finances, Pomeroy recommended that the Council revert to the previous 2003 Budget. The 2003 Budget was for \$1,500,000.00 and the

2004 budget is right at \$1,900,000.00. They basically need to trim nearly \$400,000.00 from the General Fund. This does not included the \$300,000.00 transferred to the General Money. Granat explained that although the money was not there, the previous council did not stop the spending.

The attorney was asked on how to handle reverting to the 2003 approved budget.

To be fiscally responsible, he said it would be appropriate to put the matter on the February 24, 2004 agenda.

Then the Council should go about building a new budge with the figures that will actually be available. Childress added that there will be a major cash flow problem and it will continue to exist until the next cash draw. Sexton requested that all department heads receive a copy of the 2003 budget to know where the cuts need to be made. The Fire Department is \$60,000.00 over.

Pomeroy was thanked for the shirts she had made for the Council with the town logo on them.

Childress asked why the balance of the Riverboat Revenue had not yet been transferred to the General Fund.

After checking on the legality of it, Pomeroy said it would be done quickly. This cannot be transferred to the Police or Fire fund.

Discussion concerning the deficiency in the Park Board fund followed. Snyder addressed the current Park Board President and explained the negative balance and the fact that the Town Council wants to work at getting the balance back in the black. Jim Miller has done a good job of watching his spending. Last month, the Park Board had been in the red in the amount of \$2,546.94 and with revenue of \$1,770.00, expenditures were \$4,304.90 so there is now a deficit of \$5,081.19. The council asked that money from the donation fund be transferred to the Park Board. The council asked for a larger amount but Tilden said all he was authorized to transfer was \$2,546.29. Sexton made a motion to transfer that amount and Boothe seconded. Under discussion before vote, Childress asked Tilden to have Purchase Orders for Park Board purchases. Vote was 5-0.

ATTORNEY The final Real Estate Property Tax will go to the County Auditor and then to the State to approve. Hopefully, checks will be issued on Wednesday February 11, 2004. He explained that because mistakes were made in the Property Tax Replacement Program on how credits to the surrounding towns, many (14) were overpaid. Porter has a bill of \$848.00 while neighboring Burns Harbor owes \$1,3 million. No money could be distributed until all fourteen had repaid.

Tax bills will not be going out on time for the May 10th payment. Assessors need to go back to March 2004. Porter definitely has to pay back the \$300,000. by June 30, 2004. The council needs to focus on a plan to repay and still they may have to look at additional tax anticipation warrants. In his opinion, there will be a cash flow trouble through 2005.

Hollenbeck also advised the council that there is a program called “holey moley” which until recently was a volunteer program and is now mandatory one. This program is directed to contractors digging to identify Nipsco, Cable, and Phone lines. A base fee of \$200.00 is charged and a user fee of \$.50 per call. Guy said the town already has a working plan in place. Hollenbeck said it is now being forced by legislation beginning in August 2004.

POLICE Chief Lane reported on his recent attendance at a conference in Indianapolis. Lane said he had decided against purchasing the software that he had received approval for at the last

meeting. Word is now that the State will be taking bids on the program and distributing it at no cost the police departments.

He said that at the Police Commission meeting on February 11, 2004 he is going to discuss two ordinances that he feel should be addressed and then referred to the attorney for wording and legality. Liaison Boothe asked that she be given copies of the ordinances.

Lane had prepared a packed for the purchase of two squad cars. Noting the financial crisis, the council put this purchase on hold.

Snyder thanked Lane for the quick and professional way the department handled a problem in her subdivision.

FIRE Chief Craig said he had nothing other than his written report and the Council complimented him that report. In January of 2004, the department had 24 calls and approximately 80% of them were involving EMS. He hopes to have total figures for January ready for next meeting.

PUBLIC WORKS Supt. Guy stated that because of the financial situation, many of the repairs in his department have not been sent out but done in-house, such as repairing a truck down with ABS. Every Monday, the lift stations are checked. He praised his team of workers. Guy also asked the residents to bring in ideas to him. Brush pick up will be the week of February 16th. – if missed, residents are asked to call the office.

He requested the council look into an ordinance about parking in subdivision cul-de-sacs during snow removal. The council complimented him on the job his department did on the streets of Porter.

BUILDING Commissioner Babcock asked that forty-seven new contractors be approved taking the total to 152. Sexton moved to approve the contractors and Childress seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

He reported on residence on Mineral Springs cannot occupy without permit. With Supt. Guy he will go to the property to designated where the drainage should go.

OLD BUSINESS

Granat recommended that the Hydrant Rental Fee be revisited at a later time due to the finances. If the Council would repeal the fee, it would have to come up with \$60,000.00, which it does not have. She suggested it be looked at during the budget time.

A bill for \$3676.75 was presented from Dune Acres for paving of Mineral Springs Road north of U.S, 12 last year. Questioned, Supt. Guy said there was no agreement at the summer meeting that he attended saying the town would pay this amount. Sexton said he had called Mr. Wilhelm in Dune Acres and asked that he come to meeting. Porter was never notified of this until the bill appeared. There are no records. Childress made a motion to deny payment of this bill to Dune Acres. Boothe seconded and it carried 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

PEDESTRIAN WAY -Engineer John Kremke presented information on the Pedestrian trail – an 8ft wide asphalt or concrete pedestrian way on Waverly Road from Woodlawn/League Lane crossing U.S. 20 to Splash Down

Dunes. The area would make Orchard Apts residents access to Porter Hawthorne Park. Some land acquisitions need to be made. Kremke said there is a federal grant in the amount of \$677,188. The town would need \$169,297 for its share. Childress asked Hollenbeck to research if tax-increment financing funds could be used for the local share. Kremke said time was lost for 18 months and he urged that the council move forward as soon as possible. Sexton agreed that the town needs to proceed.

PCCRVC – Lorlei Weimer made a presentation on the status of the new \$2 million visitor center. She also updated the council on the mission of the PCCRVC and offered to meet with the Council.

CONTRACT APPROVAL JIM MANDON/ CENDER & CO - Sexton made the motion to accept Mandon’s contract and Boothe seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Snyder made a motion to approve Cender & Co contract and Sexton seconded. Motion carried 5-0

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL

The board gave birthday congratulations to Bill Sexton who mentioned that four of the five were also born in February.

Granat recognized two young men (Raphael Aguerro and Joshua Brown) who recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Both are from Porter Troop 928 and are being honored. The entire council offered their congratulations.

Granat the requested persons attending meetings at the Town Hall not park in the Rainboutique parking lot.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Jennifer Granat, President

William Sexton, Vice President

Sandy Boothe

Paul Childress

Sandi Snyder

ATTEST: _____
Carol Pomeroy, Clerk Treasurer