

UTILITY BOARD/COMMON COUNCIL

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

5:30 P.M.

The Common Council and Utility Board of the City of Huntingburg met in joint session on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at the hour of 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Huntingburg City Hall at 508 E. Fourth Street, Huntingburg, Indiana. Members Kissling, Wehr, Bolte, McPherron and Bounds were physically present. This meeting was opened to the public, and made available to members of the public and the media streamed through the City of Huntingburg's YouTube channel accessed via the City of Huntingburg's website. Also present were Mayor Elkins, City Attorney Schneider and Clerk-Treasurer Dippel.

Mayor Elkins called the meeting to order.

A motion was made by Kissling, seconded by Bounds and carried to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2025 regular meeting.

A motion was made by Wehr, seconded by Bolte and carried to approve the claims as presented.

Water Superintendent Austin addressed the Board about the leak issue in filter cells at the water treatment plant. He noted the efforts to find the leaks in the filter cells have been fruitless. He introduced John Wetzel, Engineer with Commonwealth Engineers, previously with Midwestern Engineers, to discuss the plant's history and alternatives to fix the leak at the plant. Wetzel presented data and a report; City of Huntingburg, Water System Improvement, Preliminary Engineering Report, Water Treatment Plant-Filter Cell Leakage, Investigation and Corrective Alternatives dated February 2025. He led a discussion and noted that whatever alternative was selected the cost will be approximately \$1.2 Million. There was discussion on financing alternatives. Financing alternative will need to be evaluated and information brought back to the Board for action.

Attorney Schneider noted that this is the date, time and place for a public hearing on the proposed gas rate increases, as previously introduced in Ordinance No. 2025-04.

The Mayor opened the public hearing.

O.W. Krohn, the City's Utility Rate Accountant, from O.W. Krohn and Associates C.P.A., presented information about the City's Gas Utility and proposed gas rate increases. There was discussion on the makeup of the rate increase as to the need for the entire previously recommended rate, and whether the increase should weigh more heavily on the monthly service charge or the gas usage charge. Krohn was directed to increase the monthly service charge and decrease the gas usage charge, and to refigure the new proposed rates to present to the Council at the next meeting. There was discussion of not adopting the introduced ordinance. Also discussed was the need to have sufficient rates to keep the gas utility solvent.

The Mayor asked for comments from the public. Janet Schnell and Rick Mundy commented, noting that a 'phase in' of rates would be better than a large single rate increase and the concern of the effect on people on fixed incomes.

The Mayor closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Kissling, seconded by Wehr and carried to reject Ordinance No. 2025-04 entitled:

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2013-36 AND
ORDINANCE NO. 2022-22 ESTABLISHING A NEW SCHEDULE OF RATES
AND CHARGES FOR NATURAL GAS AND SERVICES RENDERED BY THE
MUNICIPAL NATURAL GAS UTILITY OF THE CITY OF HUNTINGBURG,
INDIANA**

Krohn was directed to increase the monthly service charge and decrease the gas usage charge, and to revise the proposed rates to present to the Council at the next meeting.

Attorney Schneider summarized the proposed hoarding ordinance introduced previously. There was discussion on the topic.

A motion was made by McPherron, seconded by Bounds and carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2025-06 entitled:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTERS 150 AND 34 OF THE CITY OF HUNTINGBURG CODE OF MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES RELATING TO HOARDING

Upon call of roll for the adoption or rejection of Ordinance No. 2025-06 the vote being 5 ayes, 0 nays, in favor of adoption, Ordinance No. 2025-06 was duly passed and adopted this date at the hour of 7:36 P.M.

Clerk-Treasurer Dippel presented a proposed resolution allowing the transfer of surplus earning from the Electric Utility (\$225,000.00), Natural Gas Utility (\$225,000.00) and Water Utility (\$50,000.00) to the City of Huntingburg General Fund as included in the City's 2025 Civil City Budget.

A motion was made by Kissling, seconded by Bolte and carried to adopt Resolution No. 2025-07 entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE UTILITY BOARD OF THE CITY OF HUNTINGBURG AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF SURPLUS EARNINGS OF THE ELECTRIC, NATURAL GAS, AND WATER UTILITIES TO THE GENERAL FUND OF THE CITY OF HUNTINGBURG

Dippel presented a report from the Huntingburg Redevelopment Commission to the Council with a letter to the Executive (Mayor), Common Council (Fiscal Body), Huntingburg Redevelopment Commission and Huntingburg Redevelopment Authority of all receipts and disbursement activity in each Tax Increment Finance Areas (TIFs) for the year 2024, along with other required wage, bond, parcel data and other information.

Dippel presented a report with TRECS collections for the last 6 years in the total amount of \$72,767.55. He informed the Board that over the last 6 years the City has written off Utilities' bad debts in the amount of \$82,776.53 in the same time period.

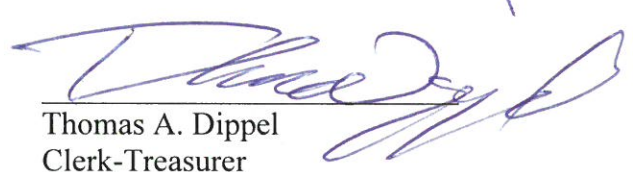
Janet Schnell addressed the Council and thanked them for passing the "Hoarding" Ordinance and listening to citizen's concerns. She also informed the Council of the donation from "Survivors of Suicide" of a "Buddy Bench", which identifies the crisis line, to be installed at the City Park.

There was discussion on the need for signage review on Hwy. 231 going North about the overpass existence/location.

There being no further business before the Council, a motion was made by Bolte, seconded by Wehr and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 o'clock P.M.



M. Neil Elkins
Mayor



Thomas A. Dippel
Clerk-Treasurer