

Royal Center Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 6, 2025 @ 6pm
Royal Center Town Hall

Attending:

Council Members Present: Brandon Schmaltz, Tim Minnick, Teresa Hiatt, Ryan Funk, and Jasmine McMillan.

Others present: Town Marshal - Dale Campbell, Clerk/Treasurer - Carrie McIntire, Deputy Clerk – Gina Kennell, Water/Street Superintendent – Aaron Carlson, Sewer Superintendent – Lucian Eller, Town Attorney - Brad Rozzi, and Fire Chief – Ed Schroder, Rita Dumm, Lorie Solomon, Steve Layer, Mel McIntire, Deb Green, Nicole Grzybowski – Baker Tilly, Matt Colford, Sam Lashbrook, and Don Conn III.

Opening: Pledge of Allegiance led by Brandon Schmaltz.

Minutes: Motion made by Teresa Hiatt to approve December Regular Meeting Minutes and December Special Meeting Minutes, second by Tim Minnick. Motion passes unanimously.

Old Business:

Memorandum of Understanding (RCFD Turn Out Gear) – Brandon Schmaltz, Council President, reads MOU to those present explaining the following details: The total cost of 20 sets of turn out gear is \$63,752.85 and is to be divided in thirds between the Royal Center Fire Department, the Boone Township Trustee, and the Town of Royal Center. Each unit being responsible for \$21,250.95 each and payment being due within 15 days of the receipt of equipment. There are 24 RCFD Members with 21 of them being firefighters. The MOU is signed by all three parties and Carrie McIntire, Clerk-Treasurer, will provide copies to each agency.

New Business:

Election of Town Council President and Vice President – Teresa Hiatt nominates Brandon Schmaltz to retain his position as Council President and Ryan Funk to retain his position as Vice President for the 2025 year. Jasmine McMillan makes a motion to accept Brandon Schmaltz as Council President and Ryan Funk as Vice President, second by Tim Minnick. Motion carries. Brandon Schmaltz and Ryan Funk abstain from voting.

Retain Attorney for 2025 – Tim Minnick makes a motion to retain Brad Rozzi as Royal Center's Town Attorney, second by Teresa Hiatt. Motion passes unanimously.

Park Board Appointment – Brandon Schmaltz, Council President reviews Ordinance 2021-3 regarding the Establishment of a Park Board for the Town of Royal Center. He discusses there are 5 positions on the Park Board, only three are filled. Brandon Schmaltz, Deidre Dodt, and Paige Woodhouse are the current members. Brandon states he is interested in continuing his service but does not know Deidre or Paige's intentions. He also does not have candidates for the other two open positions. One of the positions is normally filled by a Pioneer Youth League President. He has word that Abby Roudebush, the PYL Girls League President may be willing to fill a Park Board position. Discussion is tabled to allow time to find candidates to fill the open positions and to inquire about Paige and Deidre's statuses.

Monthly Transfer Resolution 2025-2: Carrie McIntire, Clerk-Treasurer presents the Town Council with Resolution 2025-2 which gives permission for the Clerk-Treasurer to transfer \$7,000 monthly from Water Operating Fund to Water Depreciation Fund for the entirety of 2025. A motion to accept Resolution 2025-2 was made by Ryan Funk, second by Tim Minnick. Motion passes unanimously.

Public Hearing – Water Rate Increase Ordinance 2025-1: Brandon Schmaltz, Council President, discusses inflation and increases in expenses for the Town of Royal Center over the last 23 years since the last Water Rate Increase in 2002. He notes the last Sewer Rate Increase was in 2018. He informs those present that only the water portion of the bill will increase – the sewer rate will not change. He informs the public of the expected schedule of increases over the next three years. 2025 – 20 % increase, 2026 – 15% increase, and 2027 – 10% increase. Brad Rozzi, Town Attorney, gives a first reading of Ordinance 2025-1 An Ordinance Amending Previous Ordinances and Establishing a Revised Schedule of Rates and Charges for Services Rendered by the Town Waterworks System.

Reports/Updates –

Dale Campbell – Announces he will present the 2024 Year End Report at next month's meeting.

Aaron Carlson – States he and Lucian have changed the equipment (plow and salt) on the trucks and are prepared for winter.

Carrie McIntire – Gives a reminder to the Council Members to please complete the Internal Controls Video and complete the required form.

Comments:

Lorie Solomon – Inquires whether the Town has someone who looks for grants? Ryan Funk and Teresa Hiatt inform her that Christie Householder with the Cass County Economic Development Office keeps us informed of available grants. Many of the grants are matching grants, so we must have money to match the available grant amount. We don't have reserves to match the required grant amounts at this time. We also receive help from Steven Ray with (NCIRPC) North Central Indiana Plan Commission.

Don Conn III – How long do you believe this rate increase will be sufficient as expenses continue to increase? Brandon Schmaltz, Council President, answers that we plan to complete a review each year of revenue and expenditures to determine whether any additional increases are necessary as it is our goal to be able to operate successfully. Attorney Rozzi indicates we are not part of the Indiana Regulatory Commission, so we don't have to go through a formal process to raise rates, but we don't want to raise rates too far in advance because then public comment is cut out. Also, by reviewing annually, we hope to be able to add small increases as needed, so we don't have to approve large increases that are more difficult for citizens to accommodate.

Don Conn III – Is the Town increasing Bulk Water Rates as well? Carrie McIntire, Clerk-Treasurer states she did add a 20% / 15% / 10% increase to the Bulk Water Rates on the Ordinance because it is a Water Rate. The Council discusses whether that increase is sufficient or if it needs to be more. It appears there is evidence that tankers are filling up in Royal Center and traveling to other counties, so the consensus is that our rate must be too low. Council Agrees the rate in Ordinance 2025-1 will be \$100 flat rate for the first 5,000 gallons with any additional amount over 5,000 gallons to be prorated.

Deb Green – Do businesses pay the same amount as residents with the new rate increases? She indicates she is concerned about losing businesses. The Town Council answers that businesses do pay the same rate and the business with the largest water usage (Royal Center Locker Plant) is present at the meeting.

Matt Colford – Can the trash pick up dates be placed on the water bill? Carrie McIntire, Clerk-Treasurer, answers that the text field on the statements is very small, so we put online bill pay information on the bill and shut off dates for water on the bills because those are very important pieces of information. She informs those present that we are working on a website, so we plan to post notices about Holiday trash pick up on

the website in the future, we currently post notices on Cass County Online, and you can go to the Apex website (apexwaste.net) and click on Holidays to see the Holidays they observe. For the Holidays they observe, trash pick up will be pushed to Saturday.

Ryan Funk – What is the start time for trash pick up in the Apex Contract? Carrie McIntire, Clerk – Treasurer, states that Rich told us 6 a.m. would be the new start time, but she is unsure what the contract states. Carrie will research and notify him.

Claims:

Teresa Hiatt makes a motion to accept claims, second by Ryan Funk. Motion carries unanimously.

Adjourn:

Teresa Hiatt makes a motion to adjourn, second by Ryan Funk. Motion passes unanimously.

ATTEST: Carrie McIntire

Carrie McIntire, Clerk-Treasurer

Brandon Schmaltz

Brandon Schmaltz, Town Council President

