

**TOWN OF CEDAR LAKE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**



January 7, 2025

**Public Meeting Advertised for 7:00 PM
Conducted at the Cedar Lake Town Hall
Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence**

Roll Call:

Present	Robert H. Carnahan Council Member	Ward 1	Present	Mary Joan Dickson Council Member	At Large
Present	Julie Rivera Council Member	Ward 2	Present	Richard C. Thiel Jr. Council Member	At Large
Present	Nick Recupito Council Member	Ward 3	Present	Jennifer N. Sandberg, IAMCA, CMC, CPFIM Clerk-Treasurer	
Present	Chuck Becker Council Member	Ward 4	Present	Jeff Bunge Town Manager	
Present	Greg Parker Council Member	Ward 5	Present	David Austgen Town Attorney	

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. Town Council President

Robert Carnahan made a motion to elect Nick Recupito. A second was made by Greg Parker. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

2. Town Council Vice President

Robert Carnahan made a motion to nominate Greg Parker. A second was made by Mary Joan Dickson. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

Mr. Recupito introduced Terry Conley as the new Planning Director. He welcomed him and thanked him for his service. Mr. Conley thanked him for the opportunity.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Minutes:** November 19, 2024, Special Consolidated Meeting Minutes; December 3, 2024, Meeting Minutes

A motion to waive the reading of the minutes and accept the consent agenda as listed was made by Mary Joan Dickson with second by Chuck Becker. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

1. Ordinance No. 1504 – Lamb Public Way Vacation

Mr. Recupito stated this is the adoptive reading. He asked Mr. Austgen if the legals were in order. Mr. Austgen stated legals were in order. The second, adoptive reading is tonight. Mr. Parker read Ordinance No. 1504 by title only. Mr. Recupito opened the floor for remonstrance. No remonstrance received.

A motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1504 was made by Richard Thiel with second by Chuck Becker. Roll Call: Carnahan – No, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 6 – 1. Mr. Austgen stated it requires recordation. His office would handle.

2. Ordinance No. 1507 – Parks & Recreation Activities Fees

This item passed at the Park Board meeting on January 2, 2025 with a vote of 4 to 0. Mr. Parker read Ordinance No. 1507 by title only. Mr. Recupito asked Mr. Austgen if the legals were in order. Mr. Austgen stated the legals were in order and the Superintendent is here to explain. Mrs. Ray reported they had to go back to the drawing board and create a process for adopting the fee schedules. The fees are the same as last year. The only difference is a discount in the Clubhouse Rental. It was a \$50 rental rate for non-profits. It will now be 25% of the rental fee for non-profits.

A motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 1507 was made by Mary Joan Dickson with second by Julie Rivera. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

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A motion to suspend the rules and allow for a second reading by title only was made by Robert Carnahan with second by Richard Thiel. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

Mr. Parker read Ordinance No. 1507 by title only.

A motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1507 was made by Julie Rivera with second by Chuck Becker. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

3. Ordinance No. 1508 - Dog Park Fees

This item passed at the Park Board meeting on January 2, 2025 with a vote of 4 to 0. Mr. Parker read Ordinance No. 1508 by title only. Mrs. Ray explained the fee schedule is being amended to include a 7-day pass for the Dog Park. It is a 7-Day pass for one dog at \$20 or 7-day pass for two dogs at \$25. A brief discussion continued.

A motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 1508 was made by Mary Joan Dickson with second by Chuck Becker. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

A motion to suspend the rules and allow for a second reading by title only was made by Robert Carnahan with second by Julie Rivera. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

Mr. Parker read Ordinance No. 1508 by title only.

A motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1508 was made by Mary Joan Dickson with second by Julie Rivera. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

4. Resolution No. 1366 – Temporary Loan 2017 A, B, & C Bonds

Clerk-Treasurer Sandberg explained this is a recurring item each January and June. It is a timing issue with the tax collection and lease rental payment due date. Upon receipt of the fall settlement received at the end of December, Resolution No. 1355 was repaid. That left a shortfall in the fund and unable to make the January 15th lease rental payment due. This request is for a temporary loan from Fund 633 Wastewater Treatment Plant Special Fund to Fund 412 2017 RDA A, B, & C Bonds Fund in the amount of \$297,761.50. The temporary loan will be repaid upon receipt of the spring settlement anticipated before the end of June. Mr. Parker read Resolution No. 1366 by title only.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 1366 was made by Robert Carnahan with second by Richard Thiel. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Board of Safety recommendation to hire Samuel Iurillo as a Part-time Emergency Medical Technician contingent upon the transfer of his credentials from Illinois to Indiana

This item received favorable recommendation with a vote of 5-0 at the December 16, 2024 Board of Safety meeting. Chief Wilkening explained they want to hire the individual full-time but until his Illinois certifications get switched over to Indiana, they want to work him part-time. He said it takes a little time. He will be the next full-time hire and number 16 for the department. Temporarily, they want to work him as an EMT on the ambulance. With their approval, they can get the paperwork started to get him in as a part-timer until the certifications are switched over. Mr. Recupito asked if there would be another process once everything gets switched over. Chief Wilkening stated he has been approved by the Board of Safety tentatively, based upon whether his certifications get switched over. He stated they will have to have the Council approval. He stated they are still waiting for one of the full-timers working part-time to complete the PERF process. He is working out of the part-time budget full-time. That should come back pretty quick.

A motion to approve the Board of Safety recommendation to hire Samuel Iurillo as a part-time emergency medical technician contingent upon the transfer of his credentials from Illinois to Indiana was made by Robert Carnahan with second by Richard Thiel. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

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2. Board of Safety recommendation to hire Michael Mallee and Brandon Zimmerman as volunteer firefighters

This item received favorable recommendation with a vote of 5-0 at the December 16, 2024 Board of Safety meeting. Chief Wilkening explained they have a total of four volunteers that have been approved. These two are the last two. They are currently signed up to go into the academy. One is in EMT school. They will have four in the next six months. By mid-year, they should have three volunteers on the street. By the end of the year, they will have a total of four. He stated they are still taking applications. He stated they have received more applications since they announced the increase of the part-time pay. There are people interested and have been reaching out. He stated they should be seeing a few people coming in soon.

A motion to approve the Board of Safety recommendation to hire Michael Mallee and Brandon Zimmerman as volunteer firefighters was made by Robert Carnahan with second by Richard Thiel. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

3. Extension of Y2025 Contract for Town Manager

Mr. Parker stated Jeff wants to depart at some point this year. He stated he believes it is a safe manner to try and keep him around until at least June so they have some sort of transition for a new town manager. Mr. Parker stated he and Nick have talked to him and he is willing to stay beyond that if necessary. He asked Mr. Bunge if six months would be good. Mr. Bunge stated it would be.

A motion to extend the contract until the end of June 2025 was made by Greg Parker. Mr. Recupito asked if that included the same parameters from 2024. Mr. Parker stated yes. Mr. Thiel asked what if they did happen to find someone sooner. He asked about the overlap, knowing what the funds available are and how that would work. Mr. Parker stated the budget is around \$130,000 for the Town Manager now. He stated they are not going to a new Town Manager if he starts in the fourth or fifth month. He stated that still leaves room to cover Mr. Bunge's salary. Mr. Thiel discussed applicants and timing. He voiced concerns on finances and supporting the two. Mrs. Rivera stated she is also concerned until June. She voiced concerns with paying two town manager salaries for two, possibly three months. Mr. Recupito asked Mr. Bunge if he would be okay with a 30-day notice. Mr. Bunge stated that was something they had discussed last time. Whatever they think is a comfortable transition. Mr. Recupito stated he discussed some of these concerns with Mr. Bunge. They discussed a 30-day notice. Mr. Thiel asked Mr. Parker if his motion was up to six months and then depending on how the application process goes. Mr. Parker stated his concern is he has not seen the application processes go smooth. He stated he would rather be looking at him than looking for him. Mrs. Dickson discussed having up to June. Mr. Thiel stated if they do not have any qualified applicants, in June they can extend again. Mr. Bunge stated he would be willing to have that discussion. Mr. Thiel stated he would second the motion. Mr. Recupito confirmed there was a motion by Mr. Parker with a second by Mr. Thiel to extend the contract for Town Manager, Jeff Bunge, to the end of June 2025. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

4. Update to Town Manager's Job Description

Mrs. Dickson discussed the job description that was submitted. She stated she spoke with Jen and she would like to have the word assist added for assistance with the town budget. She discussed updating it to read, to attend Town Council, board, and commission member meetings. Before it just said commission. Also, to include a bachelor degree in finance, accounting, public administration, or related services as well as at least five years of experience. Mrs. Dickson stated Mr. Carnahan was concerned at the last meeting regarding the State statute. Mrs. Dickson asked Mr. Carnahan if he wanted the statute within the job description or if he wanted it to read to refer to the statute. Mr. Austgen stated they could refer to it. Mr. Carnahan stated to refer to it. He stated he likes what the state has as guidelines. Mr. Parker asked what if they got someone that had ten years in the private sector and management. He asked if they would be excluded. Mr. Parker stated there have been great successes in other communities where somebody applied to be a town manager that came from the private sector. Mr. Thiel asked Jen if it was posted as required or recommended. Ms. Sandberg stated that is completely up to them. Someone stated desired. Mr. Recupito noted that the job description states must possess. It was discussed to change it to desired. Mr. Bunge stated he spoke with Mr. Austgen about the matter. Being that the way it is listed, the job description is by Town Ordinance. Mr. Bunge stated his understanding is if they are going to amend the job description, do they not have to do so by amending the ordinance. Mr. Austgen stated the ordinance should match what they are requesting. Mr. Bunge stated he does not know if

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there is a lead time for all of the recommendations. They will need time to develop the verbiage to amend the ordinance. Mr. Carnahan stated they need to direct the attorney to prepare an ordinance to include this information. Mr. Parker stated that is a good idea. A brief discussion continued.

A motion to direct the Town Attorney to amend the ordinance including the job description at a draft and if they see anything to be corrected, they can amend it at that point in time, was made by Robert Carnahan with second by Greg Parker. Mrs. Dickson stated she wished to emphasize that they are a growing community with water problems and sewer problems. That is what she is looking for. She discussed getting someone with professionalism and experience. Mr. Parker stated there are problem solvers in all areas of business and finance. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0. A brief discussion continued on the job description and position.

5. Approval to advertise for Town Manager position

A motion to defer to January 21st was made by Julie Rivera and second by Greg Parker. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

6. Y2025 Professional Services Agreement with Christopher B. Burke Engineering

Mr. Recupito stated inside their packet was a proposal form Christopher Burke Engineering. He stated it looks like they are still getting a discount. This is for the term of January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. There will be an increase in the schedule of charges for outside charges to the town to match their 2020 standard charges. They are getting a five-year discount and town charges are discounted further from their 2020 standard charges offering the town a significant reduction. Mrs. Rivera stated she has been happy with their work. Mr. Thiel agreed, especially with all of the work related to water.

A motion to accept the professional services agreement with Christopher B. Burke Engineering was made by Julie Rivera with second by Richard Thiel. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Thiel – Yes, Parker – Yes, Recupito – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

REPORTS

- 1. Town Council** – Mr. Carnahan read a letter from NIRPC. He stated he attended every meeting last year. He stated they will have four official full commission meetings. He stated he tries to attend as many executive meetings as possible. He discussed representing all of the citizens of Cedar Lake. Mr. Carnahan stated the Chamber of Commerce will have a luncheon every two months. The next luncheon will be on February 14, 2025 with Jeff Bunge as the guest speaker. It will be at Harry O's. No price determined yet. It is open to the public. A brief discussion continued on Chamber events. Mr. Thiel reported he sent to the Council the 2024 Unsafe Building Department Annual Report. Five structures were demoed by the Town. Five other structures were demoed by property owners. Two of which were by issue of emergency action. The unsafe ordinance was updated and the creation of the non-reverting fund. Mr. Recupito asked if they were doing more outreach to communicate with property owners before they get before them. Mr. Thiel stated yes. There has been discussion with Mr. Conley on basic letters and information. Mr. Carnahan added that the Chamber is working with the DNR. They are taking 75 of the Christmas trees, they are stored at Public Works, they will place them in Cedar Lake. It is for habitat for the fish. He thanked Kevin Toth for spearheading that initiative. Mrs. Dickson thanked Carl for the information on the electrical bike ordinance. She stated she would like to see if they can direct Mr. Austgen to create that before the warmer weather starts. Mrs. Dickson asked Mr. Austgen if he got a copy of that. He stated he did not. She asked Carl to forward it.
- 2. Town Attorney** - None
- 3. Clerk-Treasurer** – Ms. Sandberg requested Council to set a date for the annual Board of Finance meeting. She stated it needed to occur before the end of the month. Last few years they have had it the last week of January. She stated as far as she is aware there are no other meetings. Mr. Recupito asked if she would like the Town Manager's office to work on scheduling. Ms. Sandberg stated if they could please. Mr. Bunge stated yes.
- 4. Town Manager** – Mr. Bunge stated he had no report but appreciates the confidence they have in him.
- 5. Director of Operations** – Mr. Kubiak report that Lift Station 1 in South Shore Subdivision has a pump out. It has been sent in for service. It is currently running on one pump. Hopefully, it will be back up and running before the thaw. He stated they are

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hoping to get the pumps at Lift Station 3 serviced. The mechanic is doing well. Hopefully, he will be able to start on oil changes and such soon. Mr. Thiel asked if the crew worker has started yet. Mr. Kubiak was unsure and asked Ms. Sandberg. Ms. Sandberg stated they are working on onboarding and hopefully everything will be in place for a Monday start.

6. **Police Department** – Chief Brittingham reported they are taking applications. They have a vacancy for one position. They will present the letter of retirement at the next Board of Safety meeting. They need at least one person immediately.
7. **Fire Department** – Chief Wilkening reported they are hoping for a good year. A pole fell on the ambulance. The pictures were sent out to them all. Mr. Carnahan asked how much damage. Chief Wilkening stated they do not know yet. It has two good size holes in the roof. It will take a while to get it in. Chief Wilkening stated they had a total of 2182 calls for service for the year. The year end report will be ready by the next meeting. Mr. Thiel asked about the repairs for the ambulance and if that would be an insurance claim against the truck driver. Chief Wilkening stated yes and all the paperwork has been turned in. A brief discussion continued.
8. **Parks Department** – No report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

1. **Building Department Report** – Mr. Recupito stated the December report is in the packet.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah Miller, 6224 W 136th Avenue, asked about initiatives from the previous Council. She asked about the sidewalk on Lake Shore and 133rd. She stated she was told they might be talking about that in February and possibly have an engineer available for questions. Mr. Recupito stated yes. Mr. Parker stated they just talked about that in executive session. Mr. Bunge stated that is a program that the engineer programmed into something for future funding. They found a niche for it in a funding category. It may not happen until 2030. He stated as for planning they have a little bit of work to do. Mrs. Miller stated so it is not cancelled. Mr. Recupito stated they have VS Engineering. Mr. Bunge interrupted and stated they were discussing the sidewalk from Faith Church to the corporate boundary by Robin's Nest and Lake side. Mr. Carnahan stated they are also discussing going from the Chamber down to Constitution. He stated VS Engineering will be at the next meeting to talk about that. Mrs. Miller stated that would be great. She discussed people walking in the street. She stated she knows the dredge is done. She asked if there were any further initiatives to clean the lake. Mr. Carnahan stated the dredging project was not to dredge the whole lake. The project was only to dredge 20% of the lake. He stated they did about 69.2% of the 20%. He stated they accomplished a lot. He stated they had taken \$4.4 million out of the sewer fund. He stated they had to put \$2.1 million back into the sewer fund. He stated they needed those funds for the sewer. He stated Kirsten Smith tried to find everywhere possible to find funds so they would not have to stop it. Mrs. Miller asked if there were other programs beyond dredging. Mr. Carnahan stated they do not own they lake. He stated it is owned by the State of Indiana and they should be fixing the lake. The State needs to step up to the plate. Mrs. Miller asked if they are talking with the State. Mr. Parker stated they have. Mr. Recupito stated his opinion is that a lot of things in the last year have been left behind and a lot of things needed to be corrected. A brief discussion continued on infrastructure issues in Town that are priority.

Cheryl Parker, 7227 W. 136th Court, asked about the public safety buildings and a status update. Mr. Carnahan stated they are still waiting on IDEM to approve the permit. Mr. Parker stated it would be a while. Mrs. Parker asked if they are still liable for paying the five grand each month until occupancy. Mr. Recupito stated yes, that is his understanding. Mrs. Parker asked if that was budgeted. Mr. Recupito stated it is in the owner's contingency. Mrs. Parker stated she is now on the Park Foundation. She stated she has some possible grants to apply for but she does not know the status on the whole thing. She stated they now have a Park Board and a five-year plan. She asked about the status of the foundation and what happens if they want to pursue grants and whatever they can get. Mr. Carnahan stated they are still looking for applicants. Mrs. Parker stated so at this point they are not doing anything and she cannot fill out an application for a grant or anything. Mr. Austgen stated it is a legal entity that is validly in existence. There is a need for another board member. Mrs. Parker stated nothing can be done. Discussion continued on the need for another board member. Mrs. Parker discussed the Town Grounds property and ideas for the future. Discussion continued.

Angie Mikolajczak, 12806 Lee Court, asked if they could be more proactive on getting dogs registered in Town. She was surprised registration was not mentioned in the January newsletter. Mrs. Ray discussed seeing more enforcement in the past year since the opening of the Dog Park. Discussion continued on the matter.

ADJOURNMENT President Recupito called the meeting to adjournment at approximately 8:16 PM.

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COUNCIL OF THE CIVIL TOWN OF CEDAR LAKE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA

Robert Carnahan, Ward 1

Julie Rivera, Ward 2

Nick Recupito, Ward 3

Chuck Becker, Ward 4

Greg Parker, Ward 5

Mary Joan Dickson, At-Large

ATTEST:

Richard C Thiel Jr., At-Large

Jennifer N. Sandberg, IAMCA, CMC, CPFIM
Clerk-Treasurer

The Minutes of the Cedar Lake Town Council are transcribed pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-4(b), which states:

(b) As the meeting progresses, the following memoranda shall be kept:

- (1) The date, time, and place of the meeting.
- (2) The members of the governing body recorded as either present or absent.
- (3) The general substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided.
- (4) A record of all votes taken by individual members if there is a roll call.
- (5) Any additional information required under section 3.5 or 3.6 of this chapter or any other statute that authorizes a governing body to conduct a meeting using an electronic means of communication