

REGULAR MEETING OF THE MISHAWAKA COMMON COUNCIL

June 6, 2011

Be it remembered that the Common Council of the City of Mishawaka, Indiana met in the Council Chambers of the Mishawaka City Hall on Monday June 6, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was called to order by President John Gleissner and all were asked to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chief Deputy Clerk Hazen roll call showed the following; 

Dale “Woody” Emmons 1st District Councilman – Present
Mike Bellovich 2nd District Councilman – Present
Ross Deal 3rd District Councilman - Present
Marsha McClure 4th District Councilman - Present
Michael Compton 5th District Councilman - Present
Ronald Banicki 6th District Councilman – Present
John Gleissner, Councilman At Large – Present
Gregg Hixenbaugh, Councilman At Large – Present
John J. Roggeman, Councilman at Large – Present
A quorum was obtained.

Others present; Deborah S. Block, City Clerk Absent; Mary Ellen Hazen Chief Deputy I, Linda Dotson, Chief Deputy II , and Council Attorney Mike Trippel absent.

The minutes from the May 16, 2011 meeting were approved as received from the Clerk’s Office.

Chief Deputy Clerk Hazen presented the following petition to the Council, who referred them to the Plan Commission for their recommendation.

PETITION NO. 2011-11 Rezone from R-1 to C-1 Relocation of Moose Lodge
Facility -123 Bain Avenue

The following proposed ordinances were given first reading, assigned to committee, and set for public hearing at the next regular meeting.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2011-07

**AN ORDINANCE DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND
DETERMINING THE EXPENDITURE OF ADDITIONAL
FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2011**
(Additional Funds – Public Safety Fund \$394,173 (Upgrade Motorola)
Assigned to Budget and Finance Committee

PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2011-08

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND DETERMINING THE EXPENDITURE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2011

(Additional Funds –MVH \$350,000 (Salt Barn)
Assigned to Budget and Finance Committee

PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2011-09

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NUMBER 5233 APPROVING THE CITY OF MISHAWAKA INDIANA COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCOME TAX CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(Amendment to the CEDIT Plan 2011-2012)
Assigned to Budget and Finance Committee

PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2011-10)

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND DETERMINING THE EXPENDITURE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2011

(Additional Funds – CEDIT - \$200,000)
Assigned to Budget and Finance Committee

Chief Deputy Hazen read **PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2011-06** opening it for public hearing.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2011-06

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND DETERMINING THE EXPENDITURE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2011

(Additional Funds - Public Safety Fund \$946,000)

Mr. Bellovich reported the Budget and Finance Committee recommended this proposed ordinance should be adopted and moved for acceptance of same, upon a second by Mr. Compton, the motion carried.

Dale Freeman Fire Chief said, two fire trucks are coming off of a five year lease purchase agreement, at a cost of \$46,000.00 in interest. He said the cost for a new truck would be \$945,695.00 at a 4.92% interest rate would save the city \$139,000.00 in a five year lease contract. Chief Freeman said the new truck was a 100 foot ariel combination demo truck this would be a wise purchase at a savings of roughly \$125,000.00. He said this truck was needed to reach higher places and would have a platform on the ladder.

Mr. Deal asked if this new truck would be an additional truck or a replacement. Chief Freeman said it would be an additional they have recently put \$30 thousand dollars in the engine of their truck and would not be able to get the money out of it at resale so they would have it in reserve. Mr. Deal asked where the new truck would be stationed, Chief Freeman stated Downtown Station one.

Mr. Gleissner said they are now where they want to be in regards to trucks and would be planning to get a new Ambulance in 2012. He they were due for a Long Range Planning meeting in June and Chief Freeman concurred.

Question was called for at 7:14 p.m. on **PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2011-06** with the vote being 9 to 0 in favor thus it becomes **ORDINANCE NO. 5304**.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

James Elliott, President of Local Mishawaka Fire Fighters presented the following to the Council.

Members of the Mishawaka City Council,

As you begin to discuss the 2012 Mishawaka City Budget, I would like to call your attention to a long time overlooked and ignored staffing problem within the Mishawaka Fire Department. As you all know, the City of Mishawaka has had tremendous growth over the past 20 years. From all of the commercial properties along the Grape Rd/Main St. corridor, to the new St. Joseph Regional Medical Center and surrounding medical complexes, to the numerous nursing homes and retirement centers in this great city. We often hear a stagnant city is a dying city. Well, Mishawaka is definitely is alive and well and has truly become one of the greatest hometowns and a world class city within the state of Indiana. With all of the growth in the City of Mishawaka, the run volume within the Mishawaka Fire Department has grown tremendously also. In 1991, Mishawaka fire Department made approximately 1200 runs. Now in 2010 the Mishawaka Fire Department made nearly 6000 runs. However, with all of the growth in the City of Mishawaka, the Mishawaka Fire Department has not grown at all. Actually for the past several years the Fire Department has reduced staffing by 2 through attrition and taken our 2 Assistant Chiefs out of our daily riding schedule so they can perform administrative duties. So essentially the Mishawaka Fire Department has been operating with 4 less firefighters all while increasing our run volume by 500%. In 2011, 2 firefighter positions were added back into the budget to begin addressing this issue, however to date those positions have yet to be filled. Currently we are operating with 4 less firefighters than budgeted for in 2011 and soon to be 5 less with the pending retirement of one of our senior firefighters later this month.

In March 2011, the Mishawaka Fire Department added a long overdue and much needed 3rd Paramedic ambulance. This was not accomplished by adding staff but by removing staff from our front line engine companies, thus creating a potentially unsafe and dangerous situation for the citizens of Mishawaka and the members of the Mishawaka Fire Department. This also was a direct violation of our mutually agreed upon Collective Bargaining Agreement that took effect in Jan. 2011. The reason this is potentially unsafe and dangerous is because we now staff our front line engine companies with 3 firefighters, down from 4. There was a recent study conducted by the US Department of Commerces' National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). That study consisted of 3 and 4 person firefighting crews performing 22 essential firefighting and rescue tasks. That study concluded that 4 person firefighting crews are 25% faster and more efficient as

completing those 22 essential firefighting and rescue tasks than the 3 person firefighting crews. Just to refresh everyone's memory, fire has the potential to double in size every 30 second, so time is very important in completing firefighting and rescue tasks. I can provide that study to anyone who is interested in reading it.

Now what is it going to take to resolve this staffing crisis we have within the Mishawaka Fire Department? In the very short term, we need to add 12 firefighters. This will bring us to safe and efficient staffing levels and allows us to continue to provide the services demanded by the citizens of Mishawaka. Currently we operate with 102 firefighters, not including our Fire Marshalls and Chiefs. That equates to a staffing level of 27 firefighters per day. In order to operate safely and efficiently while continuing to provide the services the citizens have required, we need 114 firefighters. That would staff all 4 of our front line engine companies with 4 firefighters, the 3rd Paramedic ambulance, and continue to staff our fire command vehicle. This would equate to 31 firefighters per day.

I know that sounds like a lot of staff that needs to be added in the very short term, but had the staffing issues been dealt with over the past 20 years along with the tremendous growth in the City of Mishawaka, we would not be forced to deal with it now. It is not the fault of myself or any one council member that we are in this current crisis, but it is our responsibility as the current elected leaders to address it and correct it.

I am sure everyone is now wondering how we are going to fund this desperately needed increase in staffing. That is a very difficult question to answer. It costs approximately \$75,000 annually per firefighter including wages and benefits. Adding the 12 firefighters we desperately need would cost roughly \$920,000. An estimated 10% increase in the budget for the Mishawaka Fire Department. Spreading that out over 2 years, which I feel should be the maximum amount of time we spread it out, would be an increase of 6 firefighters per year at approximately \$460,000 per year. The funding for this will have to come from numerous resources. First being the County Option Income Tax (COIT), which by law has to be used for Public Safety. Second, we need to redirect the increased revenue we have captured from the increased ambulance transport fees back into the fire department. That is projected to be over \$900,000 in 2011. Third, we need to continue to lobby our legislators to allow local governments to generate income as they see necessary. One such legislation that was discussed during the 2011 Legislative session is the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). That would allow local government to capture income from non tax paying agencies such as Universities and Health Care Facilities. And fourth, we need to apply for the many grants available to assist with staffing and other needs within the fire department. One such grant is the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. This grant provided over \$800 million dollars in 2010 and has already been approved to provide at least \$400 million dollars in 2011 with more funding being currently discussed in Washington.

I would also like to add that union officials and management officials met regularly over the past several months as required by the CBA to discuss the possible change to a different platoon schedule. We discussed several different platoon systems including 3 and 4 platoon systems. Our goal was to find a platoon system that would benefit both the firefighters, by reducing working hours thus reducing burnout, and the city, by reducing the amount of overtime necessary. After great feedback from both sides, we mutually agreed that at this time we are better served to stay with the current 2 platoon system we now operate on and devote our time mutually to increasing the manpower within the fire department.

Now looking forward as our city continues to grow, we need to put a plan in place to keep the Mishawaka Fire Department up to date with the growth of the City of Mishawaka. We are not too far from needing to add a 5th front line engine company and a 4th Paramedic ambulance to the Mishawaka Fire Department. To that properly, safely, and efficiently we would need the staffing level to be at 132, again not including the Fire Marshals and Chiefs. That would be 37 firefighters per day and include 5 front line engine companies, 2 front line ladder trucks or quints, 1 heavy rescue truck, 1 fire command vehicle, and 4 Paramedic ambulances. Again, we are not too far away from needing this in our rapidly expanding city. A plan put in place now will prevent us from being in this crisis again in 10-15 years.

Mr. Emmons asked about the increase of employees and the 4 platoon shift. Mr. Elliott stated the need was to concentrate on the man power before the platoon shift change.

Mr. Deal mentioned that South Bend Fire Department got grant money from Federal Government for hiring and asked if Mishawaka had ever considered that. Fire Chief Freeman said Mayor Rea was not in favor of that so they never applied for it, but Mayor Wood was on board with it and has given them permission to go forward with it. Mr. Elliott said they would have to wait until filing for that opened, in September.

Mr. Deal asked if there were any recruits lined up for this hiring process. Chief Freeman stated there were four recruits ready to go for physicals and a decision was made on a fifth one today. He said he was doing everything possible to shorten the time frame of the testing and the process.

Mr. Hixenbaugh thanked Mr. Elliott for all the work he has put into this and for his commitment to the Fire Department. He said the Fire Department was equipment rich and manpower short and the Council was willing to work with the Fire Department on hiring more but for the record he wanted to say that even if all of the Council members voted in favor of this the appropriation would have to come from the administration, the Council can reduce the budget but can not increase it.

Mr. Compton agreed that the baby boomer era has and would be retiring and preparation for new hire was eminent. Chief Freeman stated the drop program has helped with monitoring that and helping the department to plan ahead. He said they had a pool of 8 recruits of which 3 dropped out and 2 took other employment leaving them presently with 5 undergoing testing. Chief Freeman said they were looking at other cities and trying to find a new way of recruiting.

Mr. Bellovich expressed his concern regarding the process of 9 months to get someone on staff being way too long. Chief Freeman stated they can try moving them through the doctor exams quicker but PERF was on their own schedule. Mr. Bellovich asked how much of the 9 month process the city was able to control. Chief Freeman said 6 to 7 months of that. Mr. Gleissner asked if there were recruits waiting to come on. Chief Freeman said that pool had been depleted and went on to say they were looking to recruit already trained paramedics saving the city \$45 thousand dollars in training and if they could find a level 1 or 2 Fire Fighter with paramedic training they could save \$60 to \$70 thousand dollars in training.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Deal said he would be having a Neighborhood Watch Meeting at the Twin Branch Pavillion on June 15, 2001 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Emmons announced his Neighborhood Watch Meeting at St. Bavo School at 7:00 p.m. on June 16, 2011.

There being no further business to come before the Council, President Gleissner adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Mary Ellen Hazen /s/
Mary Ellen Hazen
Chief Deputy City Clerk

John P. Gleissner /s/
John P. Gleissner
Presiding Officer