

THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CIVIL CITY OF NEW ALBANY, INDIANA, HELD A REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING IN THE THIRD FLOOR ASSEMBLY ROOM OF THE CITY/COUNTY BUILDING ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2014 AT 7:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Council Members, Mr. Coffey, Mr. Phipps, Mrs. Benedetti, Mr. Blair, Mrs. Baird, Mr. Gonder, Mr. Zurschmiede and President McLaughlin. Mr. Caesar was not present.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Lorch, Police Chief Knight, Major Whitlow, Colonel Pennell, Mr. Hall, Mr. Robison and Mrs. Glotzbach.

MOMENT OF REFLECTION:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

APPROVAL OR CORRECTION OF THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

Mr. Phipps moved to approve the Public Hearing Meeting Minutes for January 6, 2014, Mrs. Baird second, all voted in favor with the exception of Mr. Caesar who was not present.

Mr. Gonder moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for January 6, 2014, Mr. Coffey second, all voted in favor with the exception of Mr. Caesar who was not present.

COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC:

COMMUNICATIONS – CITY OFFICIALS:

Mr. Robinson stated that he was told that the weather sirens are now installed and they are waiting for power source from Duke Energy.

Mr. Phipps asked if they went up today.

Mr. Robinson replied yes.

COMMUNICATIONS – MAYOR:

Mr. Hall stated that the mayor wanted to invite everyone to the Celebration of Unity in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day at Griffin Center at 6:00 p.m. on Monday. He said there was a speaker in today at the library and he talked about walk ability, urban sustainability, pedestrian accessibility, etc. He stated that it was a really nice conversation and a lot of people in the community showed up and are interested in this topic. He also said that a gentleman was there actually filming it on his camera so he is supposed to send the You Tube link once it is finished. He said that he will pass that on to the council once he receives it.

APPROVAL OF CF-1 FORMS:

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS: READING

A-14-01 Appropriation to Provide Funding to Haven House for Gonder 1&2
the Provision of Homeless Services

Mr. Gonder introduced A-14-01 and moved for the first and second readings, Mr. Coffey second,

Mr. Coffey withdrew his second.

Mr. Gonder introduced A-14-01 as amended for first and second readings, Mr. Coffey second, all voted in favor with the exception of Mr. Caesar who was not present.

Mr. Gonder stated that he spoke with Mrs. Anderson and discussed the general programs and in a case of poor timing there was an article in the Tribune today about the \$50,000.00 past due sewer bills. He said that she was quoted as saying she would never pay a sewer bill. He then said that he had some proposed language to add to the therefore section of the ordinance. He stated that it should say that when this money is granted to Haven House it is understood that these funds will be used only for operational expenses and delivery of needed services to the homeless. If these funds are known or found to be used for past due sewer bills, this council will not consider funding Haven House in the future. The Executive Director will provide reporting of how funds are used.

Mrs. Anderson stated that she welcomes that because it is very seldom that they get money for operations. She also stated the \$50,000.00 is in a lien and it was made clear to her that the lien would be there until they sold the building and would be collected at the time of sale. She said that the current sewer bills have all been paid through the Jeff Cares Fund and they are actually paid ahead about \$2,600.00. She added that she has always been clear about the fact that if they can provide sewer to animals then she feels that they can provide sewer to people.

Mrs. Benedetti stated that the Humane Society is paying now.

Mrs. Anderson stated that they are paying now but they weren't until two years ago but the city pays that as well. She also stated that they don't get allocations from the city of Jeffersonville and that is all she has ever asked for is sewer and police and fire protection. She added that they do a wonderful job with the police and fire protection.

Mr. Zurschmiede asked if he heard her right in that the city of Jeffersonville doesn't provide any funding at all.

Mrs. Anderson stated that they not an entitlement community so there are no human services dollars that go out in Jeffersonville. She said that she knows that the Jeffersonville Council supports them because they raised about \$17,000.00 for them in the Jeff Cares Fund in about a 4 week period to pay the sewer bill ahead.

Mrs. Benedetti asked if they have a board of directors and if so who serves on the board.

Mrs. Anderson replied yes and stated that they are Sue Colin, Susan Davenport, Martha Hacker, D.L. Motley and Laura Harprene.

Mr. Gonder asked how old the Haven House is.

Mrs. Anderson stated that it is 30 years old and they are the only emergency shelter in southern Indiana and a 14 county region. She said that tonight she has 88 people that range in age from 7 months old to 75 years old and a good portion of them are from New Albany. She added that the staff is totally volunteer and unpaid. She said that every Friday they have an open meeting at 9:30 a.m. with all of their residents and encouraged the council to attend.

Mr. Zurschmiede asked if there is a limit to how many occupants can be taken in.

Mrs. Anderson replied that she has a 60 bed limit with overflow capacity and right now it is white flag which means that you don't want anyone to freeze so you go above that capacity just to keep people off of the streets.

Mr. Blair asked how people are transitioned out of the shelter and how long that usually takes.

Mrs. Anderson stated that the average stay is usually 22 days but there is a core group of people that will take a longer time and they are usually mentally ill or physically ill with no income. She said that those that are new to homelessness or new to unemployment move up and out faster. She added that for the chronically mentally ill and the very seriously physically ill it will sometimes be 2 years because there is no place for them. She stated that we really need affordable support of permanent housing and that means access for people with disabilities and people onsite that can help guide them through their days. She said that right now she has 15-20 people who could not make it in their own in their own apartment but could certainly make it in a supportive housing setting.

Mr. Gonder stated that he works at Riverside Recycling and he asked her if there would be any people in the home that could take jobs like that and Mrs. Anderson told him that there would be 5-10 at a time maybe. He explained that he inquired at work about this and it is a possibility but there is a lack in getting transportation.

Mrs. Anderson stated that is a huge issue.

Mrs. Benedetti asked where the bus line drops off here for them.

Mr. Gonder stated that there is not a bus line from there to here that is a real good fit so he is looking at alternatives like there is a friend of the shelter that drops people off for doctor's appointments and other things. He also stated that there is a charge in the Haven House.

Mrs. Anderson stated that the charge is \$5.00 per day and if they cannot afford that then they can work 5 hours a week at a non-profit if they are physically able to do so. She said that last year there were \$179,000.00 for payments and all of that came from donations and service fees. She added that if residents all paid their rent and food bills then they would garner about \$186,000.00 a year. She stated that last year they gathered \$17,000.00 from the rents and another \$9,000.00 from food bills.

Mr. Phipps asked what the food bill runs per day per person.

Mrs. Anderson stated that they were approved by the USDA for food stamps so they charge \$1.20 for breakfast, \$1.60 for supper and they do not turn people away. She said that if the residents can't pay, they simply run their food bill until they can and often times it has to be written off. She also said that they cannot force the issue with food stamps and if they refuse to pay then they cannot be forced to.

Mrs. Benedetti asked how much on average would someone would receive in food stamps.

Mrs. Anderson replied \$189.00 per month and a food bill at our placed would run about \$69.00 per month.

Mr. Zurschmiede asked what percentage is mentally or physically handicapped.

Mrs. Anderson stated that about 20% are mentally ill and physical illnesses have skyrocketed within the past few years.

Mr. Zurschmiede asked if they work with other organizations like Volunteers of America.

Mrs. Anderson replied yes and said that you work everywhere trying to get them placed on a permanent basis. She explained that permanent housing is a real issue and we need it in this area. She said that Life Spring will be getting the first permanent supportive housing grant in the area. She also said that there is a waiting list right now and it will officially start on February 1

and that will be about 20 units. She stated that they are also working on a bigger project that would supply some housing for both physically and mentally handicapped people.

Mr. Gonder stated that the Tribune mentioned that there are other homeless shelters in the area.

Mrs. Anderson stated that they are in Louisville.

Mr. Gonder stated that the mayor was quoted as saying that there are plenty of other places for the homeless to go.

Mrs. Anderson stated that she thinks that he meant across the river and they not only lose their jobs but they lose their food stamps, Medicaid and all other benefits if they move across the river.

Mrs. Benedetti asked if a voucher program would work if you could contract with one of the hotels.

Mrs. Anderson replied that it would be very costly and she would rather see the money that you would pump into that used to build two complexes with mixed income people or a single room occupancy building.

Mrs. Benedetti stated that there are homes in New Albany that rent rooms out.

Mrs. Anderson stated that they do call them when they see them but they run into transportation issues, childcare issues and credit cleanup issues. She then said that they have 88 occupants tonight and the staff is worn out.

Mrs. Benedetti asked how many people leave the shelter and return again.

Mrs. Anderson said that last year it was 9%. She said that even when they find work they sometimes get out, get laid off and then come back. She said that we really need permanent jobs and permanent housing and we need to look for those solutions when we are developing our plans for our community.

Mrs. Benedetti stated that we need to help them get trained for a skill.

Mrs. Anderson stated that training is essential and it would be nice to get people trained for a skill. She said that they do want to go out of business for lack of people not lack of funds.

Mr. Gonder asked if there were any people that she could think of that moved on from the shelter and obtained good jobs and got their life back together.

Mrs. Anderson replied yes and said that two of the people on the board were homeless at one time in their shelter and they now own their own homes.

Mr. Zurschmiede asked Mrs. Anderson what he should tell his constituents because of the negativity in the press.

Mrs. Anderson stated that New Albany doesn't have a homeless shelter and helping with the shelter in Jeffersonville is the logical thing to do since 26% of the population at the shelter comes from New Albany so in any given year she serves over 300 New Albany residents. She also said that she would welcome someone else building a shelter but right now that is not here and she has to address the right now.

Mr. Zurschmiede asked if she has ever applied to the Horseshoe Foundation for a grant.

Mrs. Anderson replied that she has done that in the past and will do that again this year.

Mrs. Baird asked if they would be more restricted if they were funded by the state.

Mrs. Anderson replied that they would have to go by state guidelines and in addition to that the state has very little money for shelters. She also stated that it would cost roughly \$23,000.00 a year to administer a \$10,000.00 grant.

Mr. Gonder asked if the employment situation would require any kind of expenditure on your part to keep up with or would it just be a matter of getting someone to show up for the job.

Mrs. Anderson replied that it would basically just be getting someone a ride to the job. She said that they used to have a van that they would charge \$1.00 a ride but unfortunately when it broke down, they could not afford another one. She added that would be ideal to have their own van at the shelter but it is \$1,400.00 a year to insure a shelter vehicle.

Mr. Zurschmiede asked how people find out about their shelter.

Mrs. Anderson replied word of mouth, local police, local churches, social services, sheriff's departments, etc.

Mr. Blair asked about the homeless task force.

Mrs. Anderson stated that it is for Jeffersonville right now but has the potential to be southern Indiana. She also stated that she wasn't asked to be on their task force but she does intend to attend the meetings.

Mr. Gonder asked if they go down in number around the spring and fall weather.

Mrs. Anderson stated that they didn't last year.

Mrs. Benedetti stated that working toward getting a van is very important because once people find a job they need to be able to get there to save money to get a vehicle.

Mr. Coffey stated that sometimes they could walk.

Mrs. Anderson stated that many of their people do walk.

Mr. Coffey stated that some of the council people have serious concerns after the article in the paper. He said that you can't expect the community to fund your every need and it just seems like the debt keeps getting deeper. He also said that there are people that need to be helped but this is a band aid approach and all groups are going to have to be involved. He said that he was shocked and kind of hurt because she didn't tell him that sewer bills were out there. He said that he doesn't think that what needs to be accomplished is getting accomplished and that we are only perpetuating the system or the situation. He also said that he was shocked to see that Mrs. Anderson was not asked to join the other organization and what he is hearing is that we are not looking at the best interests of the people we are trying to serve.

Mrs. Anderson stated that they waited on an invitation but it never came.

Mr. Coffey stated that if he believes in something then he would be knocking on their door and wouldn't wait on an invitation. He also stated that this is a problem that just keeps getting bigger and asked what we are doing to make it smaller. He then asked if she has spoken with Bob Lane.

Mrs. Anderson stated that she has spoken with the New Albany Housing Authority, Jeffersonville Housing Authority and the Sellersburg Housing Authority and they take her people

Mr. Coffey tabled this item until the next meeting.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:

Mr. McLaughlin called an executive session for 6:30 p.m. before the next meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC (non-agenda items):

IN COMMITTEE:

TABLED ORDINANCES:

ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Pat McLaughlin, President

Vicki Glotzbach, City Clerk