

**THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CIVIL CITY OF NEW ALBANY,
INDIANA, HELD A REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBERS AT NEW ALBANY CITY HALL ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023
AT 7:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council Members: Mr. Dickey, Mr. Phipps, Mrs. McLaughlin, Mr. Turner, Mr. Blair, Mr. Aebersold, Mr. Applegate, Mrs. Griffith and President Collier.

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Stein, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Glotzbach.

CALL TO ORDER: President Collier called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

MOMENT OF REFLECTION:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

APPROVAL OR CORRECTION OF THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

Mr. Phipps moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for September 21, 2023, Mr. Dickey second, all voted in favor with the exception of Mrs. McLaughlin and Mr. Turner who abstained.

COMMUNICATIONS – COUNCIL:

Mr. Dickey stated that he wanted to thank Blessings in a Backpack because this past week several of the members were able to join them for a packing exercise at Fairmont Elementary School, and of course, he always enjoys doing that and getting to see in first person how the program can make an impact on students' lives. He then said that he just wanted to remind folks with the sun going down earlier, to be mindful and careful. He stated that obviously there are still folks out and about doing things in the evening, but it is a lot easier for folks to be missed, and we don't want to have any safety issues. He said please be mindful and slow down on streets, particularly on residential streets where individuals may be out in traffic, and to keep that in mind as we go into Halloween and trick-or-treating and those types of things.

Mr. Phipps stated that he wanted to add to what Mr. Dickey said because Harvest Homecoming is coming up and there will be a lot of pedestrians downtown, so slow down and watch for people in the crosswalks. He said that is his chief issue that he has been harping on for 11 years, so be extra cautious around Harvest Homecoming.

Mr. Turner stated that the Charlestown Road project in the 5th District looks really good and he has gotten a lot of feedback about the two-way left lane, and he feels that it will be really beneficial to get people in and out of there and that it is a huge upgrade. He said that there were a couple of little issues that he has gotten with the city engineer on to get corrected, and he thinks that he is going to follow through on getting some of those things done. He stated that there are some manhole covers that are a little low, and on Ormond, there is a huge pothole that is right next to the new asphalt that they could get in there and fix pretty quickly. He said that it does look good and it is very nice to see some progress there. He then stated that on October 10th we have All in for New Albany Town Hall with Hoosier Action at 7:00 p.m. at Park Christian Church. He said that it is a chance to get to know some of the candidates and some officials that currently hold offices. He stated that last Saturday he had his Mission 22 event where they walked 23K through the city and they raised a pretty good amount of money. He said that they had a bunch of veteran's resources available for people to get access to. He also said that there were a couple of places that he thought were really neat and one was a place called Paul's Ability, which services southern Indiana. He stated that if you know any veterans that need a service dog, they have them right now for people applying to have a service dog. He said that the dog is completely trained that you get, so that is a place that he is going to let some of his fellow veterans know about. He stated that someone from PGA Hope was there and they

gave some free memberships to the New Albany Golf Course to people that were able to putt and hit the hole, which was pretty cool. He said that Harvest Homecoming booths will run from Thursday, October 12th through Sunday, October 15th. He stated that Thursday is noon to 9:00 p.m., Friday is 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Saturday is 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Sunday is noon to 5:00 p.m. He said that he looks forward to seeing everyone at Harvest.

Mr. Blair stated that last meeting was their budget meeting and he heard from the group that there was a desire to help out our city employees with their payroll situation. He said as you know, we kept their average salary down to a 2% raise and inflation is a lot higher and has an effect of eroding their purchasing power. He stated that he heard from the group that they wanted to do something for them to help them to make up some of that gap, and the one suggestion he had was a one-time payment or stipend, and he thinks that everyone thought that was a good way to proceed. He did email Mrs. Moeller the day after the meeting and asked her for information and a couple of days later he emailed her again. He said that she did confirm that she received his email, but he still has not received any information from the controller to help him figure out the financial impact, if this is something feasible and how much the stipend could be. He said that he thinks this is something that is necessary but he has just not received information yet, which he thinks would be something that would be very easy to produce and provide. He stated that the other thing he wants to talk about are the things that they couldn't talk about in their management executive session. He said that what gives him some concerns is the financial reporting for the wastewater treatment or sewer department. He stated that when he looks back at last year, we have under collected about \$600,000.00, so we are collecting less money than we expected to collect. He said that he knows that in a recent meeting, the council's appointment to the sewer mentioned that we are 7% underbudget, so he is starting to see a trend there where we are not collecting the fees and the revenues that we expected to collect. He stated that his other concern is that they have not received financial statements on a monthly basis, and the only financial statements they have received is January of this year. He said that those are concerns that he has with the sewer billing and other red flags that they need to take into consideration.

Mr. Aebersold stated that when we pave all of those utility things that have the big iron round discs on them, instead of them being like a ½ inch down, now they are 2 ½ inches down. He asked if those can be covered up?

Mr. Thompson stated that they don't cover them but they do go back and raise them.

Mr. Aebersold stated so that is going to happen then.

Mr. Thompson said yes.

Mr. Applegate stated that it is fall break for schools so you will see some kids out and more people out on the street when the weather is nice in the evening. He said to just pay attention because kids may be out later than normal during the next couple of weeks. He stated that at dusk it does get hard to see, especially with little ones running out and playing until later and things like that. He then said that he was disappointed to see in the News and Tribune that someone leaked information.

Mrs. Griffith thanked Mr. Blair for following up on the employee stipends. She said that Linda Drive said thank you for their cut-outs; the whole neighborhood was very appreciative and it is always good to hear that. She stated that she was surprised that no one said anything about traffic calming and that an update on that would be great.

Mr. Phipps stated that he indirectly referred to traffic calming in his comments.

Mr. Turner stated that Mrs. Collier just updated him before the meeting on traffic calming which is why he didn't say anything.

Mrs. Griffith stated that she would like hear that because there are a couple of concerns that were brought up as she was out walking and she is seeing some concerns, so that would be great to know so she can pass that information along.

Mrs. Collier stated that in regards to traffic calming, she did check and there hasn't been anything presented to the board of works yet, so she is going to try to see where that is in the pipeline. She said that the Mrs. Griffith has requested from Ms. Johnson a DORA update and she knows that Ms. Johnson responded to her.

Mrs. Griffith stated that she did this evening.

Mrs. Collier stated that Mrs. Griffith had brought up to Ms. Johnson that there are some establishments that may have concerns and she said that anyone that does reach out to us with concerns, she encourages them to reach out directly to Ms. Johnson to get those addressed. She said that the city is actively working on the DORA to collaborate with relevant parties and the city is diligently working with local churches to obtain their letters of consent for the DORA, and that the city understands the importance of their input and support. She stated that the city is making progress in this regard and that the administration has also held discussions with both Harvest Homecoming organizers and Develop New Albany. She said that when the DORA receives approval from the state, the city will work on a public information campaign, which will give clear guidelines and rules for the DORA to ensure that the public is well informed about its purpose and the proper usage. She then stated that she wanted to remind everyone that early voting starts next week on Wednesday, October 11th at the 4-H Fairgrounds.

Mr. Dickey stated that something that he thinks they all neglected but should note for the record is that this past week Mr. John Rosenbarger retired. He said that Mr. Rosenbarger has been involved for many decades in our planning and redevelopment departments, and he thinks they would be remised if they didn't add that to the proceedings tonight, and recognize him for his hard work for the city for all of those years and just congratulate him on his retirement.

Mrs. Collier stated that she agrees and apologized for not having a note to recognize him. She thanked Mr. Dickey for remembering. She also distributed a letter that Ms. Amy Stein sent her and said she just wanted everyone to have a copy.

Mr. Dickey asked if the letter also went to the administration?

Mrs. Collier stated that she does not know that but she can find out.

Mr. Dickey stated that a lot of this, in his opinion, would have to be produced by the administration so he would just refer to them.

Mr. Blair added or the board and the animal shelter.

Mr. Dickey agreed.

Mrs. Collier stated that she will make sure that they get a copy of it and will forward it to them.

COMMUNICATIONS – MAYOR:

Mr. Thompson stated that the mayor would like to invite everyone out to the Harvest Homecoming Parade on Saturday that starts at 3:00 p.m. and they expect that it will kickoff another amazing festival. He then informed Mrs. Collier that she may want to check with Mr. Larry Summers on the traffic calming because he believes that is who was starting to look at what needed to be done in order to put that request out. He stated that he knows that there was some talk about some message boards and some other things that Mr. Summers was working on, so asking him where he is on it may be the place to start.

Mr. Turner asked Mr. Thompson if he knows if Mr. Summers put a bid out?

Mr. Thompson stated that he doesn't think so because he was looking at what was supposed to be in that requested proposal.

Mrs. Collier stated that she will double check that because she thinks there is an actual RFP out.

Mrs. Griffith stated that she didn't think that was for the traffic calming study but for the public transportation. She said that there are two different studies out there.

Mrs. Collier stated that she would get with Mr. Summers.

COMMUNICATIONS – OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS OR CITY OFFICIALS:

REPORTS – COMMITTEES, BOARDS OR OTHER OFFICIALS AS REQUESTED BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE COUNCIL:

APPROVAL OF CF-1 FORMS:

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

READING

COMMUNICATIONS PUBLIC: A-23-08 Blessings in a Backpack

COMMUNICATIONS PETITIONER: A-23-08 Blessings in a Backpack

A-23-08	ORDINANCE FOR APPROPRIATION OF RIVERBOAT OR EDIT MONEY FOR BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK	Dickey/Phipps/ Applegate 1&2
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Mr. Dickey introduced Bill A-23-08 and moved to approve the first and second readings, Mr. Phipps second,

Mr. Phipps withdrew his second.

Mr. Dickey reintroduced Bill A-23-08 as amended and moved to approve the first and second readings, Mr. Phipps second, all voted in favor.

Mr. Turner moved to strike EDIT and take the appropriation out of Riverboat, Mr. Blair second, all voted in favor.

Mr. Dickey stated that most of them are very familiar with Blessings in a Backpack and the program that they do. He said that the program provides for students to receive meals, particularly on the weekends, when they are not in school and thus able to receive other programs that are in the school. He stated that this ensures that they are able to get nutrition and able to be in good order in order to function and carry through. He said that Blessings in a Backpack is present tonight and he would like to have them come forward because they have a video and some other testimony that they would like to give to this item. He stated that then they can enter a conversation about the specifics of the ordinance request, which is to allocate \$30,000.00 to help with their program and fund the specific food packets that the students receive.

Blessings in a Backpack presented a video to the council about their program and passed around the packets of food that they distribute to the students for the council to see.

Ms. Anna Kordsmeier introduced herself and stated that she is the Chair of the Board for Blessings in a Backpack.

Ms. Katie Stein introduced herself and stated that she is the Secretary for Blessings in a Backpack.

Ms. Kordsmeier stated that they are 100% volunteers coming through and putting this program together. She said that they have 1,829 students now which is an increase and is the highest that they have ever had. She stated that their costs are \$150.00 per year for each student and those costs keep going up. She said that in New Albany they have 1,588 students that are receiving their program and because the costs and the need keeps going up, they wanted to come before the council and ask if they would support them and help with the mission of feeding hungry kids.

Ms. Stein stated that their advisory board meets once a month and they are community volunteers that out of the goodness of their heart enjoys Blessings and like what they do, so they come together. She added that they do pay board dues so that is what they use for their stamps or any of the signage that you may see at their events. She said that all of that is purchased with their board dues, so the donations that they receive from grants, the community and different events that they have truly does go directly towards the cost of food. She stated that they have been able to work with the New Albany Education Foundation and they pay their national fees. She said that all of the work that the volunteers do, such as their 5K that they are doing in November, all proceeds go to the cost for dues. She stated that they really have seen that sharp increase across all levels. She said that a couple of years ago they were able to bump up to 5th grade because they recognized that they have students in middle school who are very hungry. She stated that they were able to bump up to 6th grade with the idea that they would love to keep going because they know they have 7th through 12th grade students who are also hungry, but they just have to make sure that they can sustain it. She said with the rising cost of food and the number of students that they have in their buildings, they just want to be careful with how much they bump up, so as of right now, they are pre-k through 6th grade and she thinks that is pretty amazing that they are able to sustain that as a volunteer group. She stated that any amount that the council would be able to pledge would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Dickey stated that they obviously have worked with Blessings in the past, and he would go on to say again, they are very familiar as council members with the program but he wants to pepper a couple of questions out there because he wants them on the public record, so that folks understand the program and understand what they are doing. He mentioned the nutritional standards and stated that obviously it's one thing to give food, but it is another thing to make sure that it is good quality food. He asked them to talk about how the national program works in that regard with them and makes sure that the nutritional standards are on par?

Ms. Stein stated that the national office which is actually located in Louisville, Kentucky works with dietitians, so they order from a set menu that comes from national and they make sure that it is ready-to-eat, shelf stable and easy for students to open because maybe their parents are working on the weekends. She said that the national office does work with dietitians to make sure they are providing well rounded food for the students that is nutritious, so when they come back to school on Monday, their bellies are full and they are ready to go.

Mr. Applegate stated that he has known quite a bit about the organization over the last few years and it amazes him how many people are involved to help such as teachers, principals and event students. He said that they make sure that everybody helps and feeds kids whenever they are not in school because we know there is a direct correlation between not having the nutrients their bodies need and learning. He stated that he thinks a lot of stuff that they talk about throughout time such as mental health and other things, and there is so much more that goes along if you can't learn from an early age. He said that if you are not at certain levels at an early age, by the time you are 18, 19 or 20 years old, you are so far behind, and with this program, they can literally offer and give money to this program. He stated that the program is set up and run very well with how these packs are put in the bins that are there and how those are even distributed, as well as being conscious about what kids get them and what kids don't. He said that he just thinks with the leadership and organization that they have, he just wants to make sure that people realize how important that part of it is because without that part, it doesn't work.

He stated that he wanted to thank them for what they do, and from the council's standpoint, he thinks this should be a very easy item to look at because it is a monetary thing that they can give and know that it goes directly to the kids. He said that being an entitlement community in New Albany, our housing authority does a great job with programs and different things to help the families with self-sufficiency programs. He also said that Blessings works with our parks department and sets all of these things up and our school system worries about these kids, which otherwise may not have just the simple thing of something to eat when they are not at school. He stated that when you look at fall break, it's double the food or more because they are just not going to be at school to get the regular meals and he thinks those are so important. He said that he thinks he can do better and he thinks that everybody here can do better. He thinks that our community can join programs and look into what you all are doing because there are a lot of great non-profits and everybody needs money and help. He stated that everybody needs volunteers and so on but he thinks that if people look at a lot of the base and the young age that we are helping, with the help that they get, now they may not need help as they get older. He said that he just wants to say thank you all for being because money is one thing and then if there is anything that the council can ever do to help or anything else, please let him know. He stated that you all just do a great job and everything is extremely well run and he is proud to even be here to talk with you to help and to be able to offer up some funding as a sponsor of the bill.

Mr. Phipps asked if the package they sent around is a one-day package or a two-day package?

Ms. Kordsmeier stated that is a one-day pack and they did go on fall break on Friday, so each of their buildings handed out three packs to cover the three weekends. She said that where she thinks their program is really unique is, not only does their chapter cover the entire county, you will get the mobile to cover certain schools, but we cover the nine elementary schools and the three middle schools. She stated that they also make sure that they cover the breaks which are the two weeks in the fall, two weeks in the winter and two weeks in the spring. She said that they send extra food home for those students and even over the summer because they have leftovers at the end of the school year and the buildings push those out, and we have had some leftover food that we were able to donate to New Albany High School for their summer school students or they donate it to the parks department for their students who go to the eating sites. She stated that with their awareness on their social media, they make sure that anytime there are food sites, especially with New Albany Floyd County over the summer, they share that out with their families so that they are aware of what is available in the community. She added that not only do they want to provide food on the weekends to students, they also want to just make sure that the community is aware of the amount of food insecurity that we have in our county and New Albany. She said that their chapter is kind of twofold with awareness, but they also want to feed the students, and it has really been a pleasure to be involved with the organization and she feels that they are pretty unique in their chapter. She stated that national is actually looking at their chapter because they have been able to put such a strong board together and work so well with the community and raise the funds, so they are looking at helping other chapters to model what they are doing because it is working here.

Mr. Turner stated that it is concerning to him to think that New Albany is really growing less than what the state is and the need is expanding. He wonders what the root cause is and it makes him question how you fix this. He said that he knows this helps definitely but how do we correct course? He stated that is for another day, but it is very eye opening to him. He said that the statistics say 1 in 6 in Floyd County and asked if there is any way they could tell him how many in New Albany?

Ms. Stein replied 1,588 and asked Mr. Turner if he wanted that broken down?

Mr. Turner replied yes.

Ms. Stein stated that if he has a specific school, she has that. She added that she is happy to send out the numbers broken down by school so that the council can see that. She

added that Mt. Tabor, Fairmont and Green Valley are the biggest ones but she feels like they have seen an increase across every one of their buildings. She stated that they are seeing more and more students come in that not only qualify for the program, but need the program. She said that since the pandemic, they have really seen that increase and in terms of what they do to address the problem, they are feeding them while they are building that foundation of their education and that can be so preventative because they are making sure that their bellies are full and they are coming to school ready. She stated that they are seeing less behavioral issues and attendance is up, and to her as a social worker, she sees the benefits of this program first hand because she sees the students coming in ready to learn and they are engaging with their classmates and teachers, and that carries on through elementary, middle and high school. She said that they have actually been able to have some high school students sit on their board and they have talked to students that are now in high school that participated in their program when they were in elementary school, and just getting that feedback and how appreciative they were for the program just really motivates them and keeps them going. She stated that they have seen that there is a purpose in their program.

Mr. Turner asked what their projections look like budget wise as far as are they going to be short or on track?

Ms. Kordsmeier stated that they are hoping not to be short but is it a challenge with the numbers going up. She said that this year they are raising their expectations and they hope they will make it, but that is not guaranteed.

Ms. Stein stated that they really do try to diversify their funding so they are always looking for different ranks to rise to. She said that they do have their signature fundraising event which is the Blessings in a Backpack 5K, they have Hoops for Hunger with the New Albany and Floyd Central boys' basketball teams and they have Pics for Kids, so you will start seeing their kids out at different area businesses and that's a collaboration with artists and businesses to raise money. She stated that they are creating a new Strike Out Hunger with girls softball this year, so their board really is trying to get creative in ways to find different funding streams because when they look at the cost of food versus what their budget is, they always aim to raise what the cost of the food is because they don't get any money from national. She thinks a couple of years back with the Buffalo Bills, Blessings in a Backpack National got a lot of money from that but they didn't see any money from that because they are their own chapter. She said that she thinks there is a lot of misconception that because they are so close to national that they get money from them but they don't; they have to raise the money themselves every year. She stated that they have a great group of volunteers that get very creative but they are always open to other ideas.

Mr. Turner asked if there is any concern with the kids not having the food on the weekends and parents eating it? He said that he has heard that.

Ms. Kordsmeier stated that she has not heard that but once they pass the food over to the kids, it is out of their hands at that point.

Ms. Stein stated that she has heard from some bus drivers that the kids open them on their way home. She also stated that she has worked with some students that if their sibling is absent on a Friday, they ask if they can get their package because they want to make sure that they are looking out for each other.

Mr. Blair stated that he just wanted to thank them for volunteering because it truly takes a community to raise a child and they get it and he really appreciates what they are doing by giving back and getting involved. He said that it is a really great gesture and thanked them for it.

Mr. Turner asked if this is something that we do with CDBG or if we have already done this for this year?

Mr. Dickey stated that the Community Development Block Grant's action plan has already been set, and as such, that won't be open and available again until next year.

Mr. Turner asked what time next year?

Mr. Dickey stated that he wants to say that they start that process maybe in March and try to have it finished in May. He said that is a rough timeline and he would defer to Ms. Johnson for exact dates.

Mr. Blair asked if it would even qualify?

Mr. Applegate stated that it has been used before in different ways. He said the thing is though, the CDBG is only for the students that fit within that so not all schools are even within those areas, so you will still have other areas that need funding.

Mr. Turner asked if the council has always given \$30,000.00?

Mr. Applegate stated that he thinks during Covid, it was \$50,000.00 and there have been different times throughout funding that it was \$30,000.00 or \$35,000.00 from the council and then it moved over to CDBG because we got the state money or the federal money. He said after that it has been where are we at now and what's in the future, so he is glad to see them back here because he would love to have this to where it was a thing that the council looked at every year as something to be in that budget because with CDBG, it will fluctuate and not everyone is handled. He stated plus there is a ton of reporting for those things and he would love to be able to trust in the organization and give them a check, and then they can spread that amongst all of the schools and not have to say what went to which schools and those things because the reporting can be a lot.

Mr. Blair stated that they are making sure that they are in compliance.

Mr. Dickey stated that there are threshold levels that they have to meet and can't go over.

Mr. Applegate stated that also the parks has programs and things for food for summer and other things and he knows that is involved in some of the funding. He said that there are places like the Griffin Center they do fund during the summer and that is why all of these programs work very well together.

Mr. Turner stated that would probably apply with American Rescue Funds as well because his next question was going to be some of that guidance. He said that he does want to offer one amendment to the ordinance. He stated that he would just like to have EDIT removed and he would be completely in support of it if it comes directly from Riverboat because he just has some issues. He said that he knows that it is kind of the same pool.

Mr. Dickey stated that his intent when Mr. Applegate, Mr. Phipps and he got together on this was to not prejudice and wanted to give the council the option. His thought would be that if they want to go ahead and make a direction here tonight, they obviously can strike the fund that they don't want it to come from. He said that the other would be that they could give it to the committee and let them make a recommendation next time, but in his mind, he always thought that would be the council's option to decide what fund is better and taking in other's thoughts on that is always appreciated.

Mr. Turner stated that our taxpayers are very charitable as it is. He said that if they are going to give money, he would prefer that it comes from the boat which is not tax derived and is from the gamblers. He thinks that is a great way to use that money.

Mr. Dickey stated that he doesn't have the fund balance on Riverboat but he doesn't think there is any problem with taking the money from that fund.

Mr. Turner asked Ms. Kordsmeier and Ms. Stein if they could reach out to him at some point because he is an IT and he wants to know from the experts what you guys see to

make himself better out there. He said not on Blessings in a Backpack but just their expertise and input. He then asked the council if they could save them time and just make a unanimous vote to pass the third reading tonight so they don't have to come back to another meeting?

Ms. Amy Stein stated that it has to be advertised.

Mr. Blair stated that they could make it to go to committee.

Mrs. Collier stated that it is about funding so she believes that is council as a whole.

Mr. Dickey said it is under budget and finance.

Mr. Blair stated that it would probably be under health and human services. He said that he is fine to take a hand vote or something to say not take it to committee.

Mr. Turner stated that he has, for the most part, always thought that committees were a waste of time and this is a no brainer.

Mrs. Collier asked Ms. Amy Stein what she thought and if it could be council as a whole or health and human services?

Ms. Amy Stein said probably council as a whole since it is an appropriation.

Mrs. Collier stated that was her first instinct so they don't have to have a separate committee meeting for it.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS:

BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC (NON-AGENDA ITEMS):

ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Jennie Collier, President

Vicki Glotzbach, City Clerk