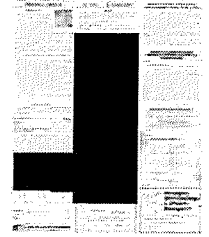


Title: City approves financial emergency declaration

Author: BY TAINA COPELAND taina@indydailyreporter.com

Size : 72 Inches Sq Independence,KS Circulation: 5989

Keywords: League of Municipalities



City approves financial emergency declaration

BY TAINA COPELAND

taina@indydailyreporter.com

Following approval of the meeting agenda, Consent Agenda and a mention of open city board appointments, the Independence City Commission held three public hearings to consider condemnation of structures Thursday evening followed by a resolution adoption to declare a financial emergency due to the sub-zero wind chills experienced last week.

Commissioners adopted a resolution, which declared a financial emergency in relation to anticipated high utility bills due to the

extreme winter weather the area recently suffered. City Manager Kelly Passauer said administrative staff met with Rick Whitson, Montgomery County Emergency Management director, where they watched a live video from the League of Kansas Municipalities regarding the potential for higher rates than normal for natural gas and/or electricity. The league recommended adopting a resolution to declare a financial emergency. It was noted Montgomery County passed a declaration Feb. 22. Passauer advised the attorney from

❖ See **EMERGENCY**, page A2

• Emergency declaration

Con't from **Page A1**

the league is who actually drew up the declaration.

"It seems like a fairly rational preliminary step in preparation for what might be coming," Commissioner Dean Hayse stated. "I know there have been significant cost impacts for communities and it's going to be

Title: City approves financial emergency declaration

Author: BY TAINA COPELAND taina@indydailyreporter.com

Size : 72 Inches Sq Independence,KS Circulation: 5989

Keywords: League of Municipalities

a while before we actually understand how impactful this cold weather has been to us.”

Commissioner Leonhard Caffisch asked if the city would administer funds if they are released and Passauer replied, “So far, all the finding we have gotten through things like this is kind of filtered through the county, I don’t know if that’s how it would [work] on this.” Commissioners approved the resolution.

Tyler Henry, building inspector for the City of Independence, told commissioners the owner of the structure at 801 E. Birch has given him a timeline of repair and requested the hearing be adjourned for 120 days. Commissioners approved the request and set June 24 at 5:30 p.m. as the next public hearing date for 801 E. Birch. Commissioners approved the condemnation request for the structure at 1020 W. Myrtle St. as Henry said the owner, Paul Borovetz, has not responded to any correspondence. The public hearing for the structure at 2009 1/2 N. Penn Ave. was adjourned until June 24 at 5:30 p.m. as the owner is being cooperative with repair and timelines.

A demolition bid for 201 E. Main St. was awarded to G&G Dozier out of Caney at a maximum of \$43,200 following discussion and a request from James Beachner of JRB Industries in Parsons to reconsider the bid. Assistant City Manager David Cowan told commissioners the building has been inspected and the city was told it could come down at any time. Cowan said as the building is in the historical district, whoever the commission awarded the bid to, it is subject to state historical society review and approval prior to demolition and may require “further action” from the commission.

Beachner asked the city to not award the bid to G&G Dozier because his bid was \$41,000 and asked if G&G’s bid included removal of floor slabs. He spoke of additional fees from G&G for removing wythes, which would increase their bid. Beachner noted he offered discounts bringing his bid down from \$49,500 to \$41,000. He requested further review of the bids or even a rebid if things are clarified more. Commissioners thanked Beachner and awarded the bid to G&G Dozier following discussion.

The commission approved the location of the statue of Remington, the town’s beloved fire dog, at the northwest corner of Penn Ave. and Laurel St., adopted a charter ordinance to exempt the city from certain statutory provisions in relation to Municipal Court, as well as Ordinance 4351, which provides for substitute provisions for Municipal Court procedures.

The Independence Public Library Board of Trustees annual 2020 report was accepted, as was the Jan. 20 meeting minutes of the library trustees. It was men-

Title: City approves financial emergency declaration

Author: BY TAINA COPELAND taina@indydailyreporter.com

Size : 72 Inches Sq Independence,KS Circulation: 5989

Keywords: League of Municipalities

tioned applications are being accepted until March 5 for positions on the Tree Board and the Independence Historic Preservation and Resource Commission; visit the city's website, independencesks.gov, to fill out an application online.

Prior to the commission setting March 17 at 9 a.m. as the date for a special meeting to discuss city facilities, resident Andy Taylor spoke in regard to rehashing the phases of renovation for 1916 City Hall. "This is an issue that baffles me," began Taylor. "Several months ago this body voted 2-1 to proceed with the Phase 2 City Hall workspace plan." Taylor said he felt the decision took much too long to render and said the decision was partly based on the previous recommendation of the City Hall Taskforce. Taylor called out Hayse as the one commissioner who "seemed to believe they have a better idea." His concern was the city already cast a public decision and, although it may not be a perfect plan, it is a roadmap for future use of 1916 City Hall.

"Why are we now taking time to revisit this process and look at ideas that should have been discussed during the taskforce process?" asked Taylor. "Why is this body unable to move forward with this original plan, the Phase 2 plan?" He added they are not showing good leadership and said it almost bordered on "silliness." Taylor mentioned his patience, and that of other citizens, is wearing thin. "Commissioner Hayse, let me be honest with you. I am at a loss to understand your argument, sir," Taylor commented. "One month it's, 'let's stay in Building D' and the next month it's, 'let's fit our offices in Memorial Hall.' I don't get it."

Cafisch assured Taylor and citizens that the city is still moving forward with the current processes and are awaiting a timeline from Treanor, LLC. The special meeting will hold discussion on alternatives and ROP to market Building D.

A 30-minute executive session was held with client/attorney privilege and no action was taken up return and the meeting adjourned.