

In the Council Chambers of the Showers City Hall, Bloomington, Indiana on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 6:30pm, Council President Isabel Piedmont-Smith presided over a Regular Session of the Common Council.

COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION
24 January 2024

Councilmembers present: Isak Nti Asare, Matt Flaherty, Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Dave Rollo, Andrew (Andy) Ruff, Hopi Stosberg, Sydney Zulich
Councilmembers present via Zoom: Shruti Rana, Kate Rosenbarger
Councilmembers absent: none

ROLL CALL [6:30pm]

Council President Isabel Piedmont-Smith gave a land and labor acknowledgment and summarized the agenda.

AGENDA SUMMATION [6:31pm]

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded to suspend the rules to consider the minutes for approval. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [6:31pm]

April 19, 2023 (Regular Session)
May 3, 2023 (Regular Session)
May 17, 2023 (Regular Session)
June 7, 2023 (Regular Session)

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded to approve the minutes of April 19, 2023 (Regular Session), May 3, 2023 (Regular Session), May 17, 2023 (Regular Session), and June 7, 2023 (Regular Session). The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Zulich discussed an upcoming event for Downton Bloomington, Inc.

REPORTS

- COUNCIL MEMBERS [6:35pm]

Rollo discussed proposed legislation at the statehouse that allowed building on slopes up to 25% instead of the 15% that was currently allowed under the Bloomington Municipal Code. He said the change was not for increasing supply or affordability, but for development interests. He said he would produce a letter to the state senate and Governor if anyone wanted to join him in protesting the legislation.

Rana discussed the events over the last week that commemorated the racially motivated bus stabbing of the IU student, the Hoosier American Power event, the Roe v Wade anniversary, and other upcoming events.

Asare announced his constituent meetings and discussed the need for the council to review their meeting processes.

Stosberg spoke about education and local educational updates.

Piedmont-Smith gave an update on the regional transit summit that was held to discuss strategies for developing and improving public transportation in the county.

Mayor Kerry Thomson announced the upcoming State of the City address to be held on April 9, 2024, a planned financial audit, a review of pending litigation, advisory teams related to Showers West and Hopewell, and an upcoming removal of a homeless encampment.

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES [6:55pm]

There were no council committee reports.

- COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Marc Haggerty, Greg Alexander, Trin Piedra, Kyle Haberson, Sam Dove (via Zoom), and Thomas Schwandt (via Zoom) offered comments to the council.

- PUBLIC [7:09pm]

Zulich moved and Rollo seconded to make the following appointment(s):

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS [7:32pm]

For the Historic Preservation Commission - To approve the following mayoral appointments: Ernesto Castenada, Ashley Johnson, John Saunders, and William (Bill) Fulk.

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Rollo moved and Zulich seconded to make the following appointment(s):

For the Bloomington Arts Commission - To reappoint Rob Shakespeare to seat C-1.

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Asare moved and Ruff seconded to make the following appointment(s):

For the Animal Control Commission – to reappoint Sita Cohen to seat C-1.

For the Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission – to appoint Autumn Crisovan to seat C-2.

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

LEGISLATION FOR SECOND READING AND RESOLUTIONS [7:37pm]

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded that Appropriation Ordinance 2024-01 be read by title and synopsis only. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. Clerk Nicole Bolden read the legislation by title and synopsis.

Appropriation Ordinance 2024-01 - To Transfer Funds from the Motor Vehicle Highway Restricted Street Fund into the Motor Vehicle Highway Fund and to Additionally Appropriate ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Expenditures Not Otherwise Appropriated for 2024

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded that Appropriation Ordinance 2024-01 be adopted.

Margie Rice, Corporation Counsel, presented the legislation. Rice noted that the presentation that evening was a public hearing, and explained that the appropriation was meant to correct an accidental closing of a purchase order that was meant to provide 1.5 million dollars in ARPA funding to the United Way that the city had agreed to give during the COVID pandemic. She said the city planned to amend the original agreement to include more details. Rice also discussed the transfer of funds in the Motor Vehicle Highway Fund.

Asare asked for more information on the additional agreement.

Council discussion:

Rice noted that the original agreement was very broad, and the revised agreement would have more details about programs, timelines, restrictions, risk assessments, and financial audit information.

Appropriation Ordinance 2024-01
(cont'd)

Asare asked what kind of control the city would have over the funds if the appropriation was approved.

Rice said the appropriation was permission to spend the money, but it would not actually be spent until after the agreement was signed. She noted that an amendment was passed at the end of 2023 that froze the remaining \$700,000 in their bank account, and she did not want to wait a long time to release those funds.

Stosberg asked if the United Way representatives would give a brief overview of funds already spent and future spending plans.

Mary Morgan, director of Heading Home of South Central Indiana, discussed the mission of the organization (to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-repeating). She said they had been working on a data dashboard and were trying to solve some technical issues. Morgan also gave an overview of the other projects the organization had been working on.

Rollo noted that most of the programs Morgan discussed were targeted toward long-term needs, and asked what, if any, programs were targeted toward emergency or immediate needs.

Morgan said United Way did not do emergency response, and that the focus was on long-term solutions to alleviate the need to address the short-term crises.

Rollo asked if Rice could address a comment that came up during public comment.

Rice noted that she nodded her head to indicate she would pass the question on to Mayor Thomson.

Zulich asked that any further information sent to the council be posted on the city website so that the public could see the information as well.

Piedmont-Smith said that she and Zulich had talked to Stephen Lucas, Council Attorney, the previous week related to adding a spot to the council web page for follow-up information.

Rollo noted that the opportunity for public comment on this item constituted the statutorily required public hearing on this appropriation.

Thomas Schwandt asked questions about the legislation.

Piedmont-Smith noted that the questions Schwandt asked were for the administration, and asked that the answers be shared with him.

Public comment:

Asare noted that many of the long-term investments made by Heading Home had led to the ability of the city to respond to emergencies more effectively. He pointed out the harmony that was created by the natural tension of long-term versus short-term investments.

Council discussion:

Piedmont-Smith asked the administration to share their responses on how the funds were spent and the effectiveness of the funding so they could be shared on the website.

Stosberg underscored the importance of transparency and having information available.

Rice encouraged Schwandt to reach out to the Legal department if he had more detailed questions. She said answering how the money was spent was the easy part but answering how it was effective was more difficult.

Piedmont-Smith clarified that two council members were asked to attend a meeting related to encampments by the mayor and that it was not a committee meeting.

The motion to adopt Appropriation Ordinance 2024-01 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to adopt Appropriation Ordinance 2024-01 [8:09pm]

There was no legislation for first reading.

LEGISLATION FOR FIRST READING

Josh Monteg and Clerk Nicole Bolden offered comments to the council.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT [8:09pm]

Lucas reviewed the upcoming council schedule.

COUNCIL SCHEDULE [8:13pm]

Piedmont-Smith adjourned the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT [8:14pm]

APPROVED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana upon this ____ day of _____, 2024.

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Isabel Piedmont-Smith, PRESIDENT
Bloomington Common Council

Nicole Bolden, CLERK
City of Bloomington