

City of West Point Council Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2024

7:00 p.m.

A regularly scheduled City of West Point Council Meeting was held Monday, January 8, 2024, at the West Point Independent School building, 203 N. 13th Street, West Point, Kentucky.

Call to Order:

Mayor Ciresi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Mayor Ciresi led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Prayer:

Annette Baker led in prayer.

Roll Call:

Presiding Officer: Richard Ciresi, Mayor

Council Members: Annette Baker

Amy Bickel

Kevin Duke

Hanna Duvall

Jo Sabol

Absent: Chris McVey

Recording Clerk: Ashley Gates

Approval of December 18, 2023, called meeting minutes:

Jo Sabol made a motion to approve December 18, 2023, called special meeting minutes with corrections made to include the time at which the meeting concluded. Seconded by Kevin Duke and carried unanimously.

Approval of financial report for period ending December 31, 2023:

Annette Baker made a motion to accept the financial report as presented for period ending December 31, 2023. Amy Bickel seconded the motion. Roll call vote passed unanimously.

Second reading of Ordinance 2023-07 Franchise agreement with Hardin County Water District No.

1:

Amy Bickel read the second reading of Ordinance No. 2023-07. Annette Baker made a motion to accept the second reading of Ordinance No. 2023-07; Hanna Duvall seconded the motion. Roll call vote; Motion passed with unanimous approval.

Second reading of Ordinance 2023-08 Franchise agreement with Republic Services:

Amy Bickel read the second reading of Ordinance No. 2023-08 and proposed its acceptance; Hanna Duvall supported the motion. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion received unanimous approval.

Amendment to Ordinance 2011-04 setting stormwater rates and first reading of Ordinance 2023-09:

Jo Sabol made a motion seconded by Annette Baker to amend Ordinance 2011-04, which had initially established the rates for stormwater. Amy Bickel presented the first reading of Ordinance 2023-09. The

proposed ordinance would increase the stormwater fee to \$3.50 per ERU which would expire in three years. A second reading of this ordinance is to be held on February 12, 2024.

Mayor's Report:

1. Resolution to close the bank account associated with the 1995 Bond Issue Depreciation Reserve Fund. \$28,996.47 ending in 8481.
2. We are currently undergoing a bi-annual review by the IRS regarding the approximately \$267,000 we owe them due to the former city clerk's failure to make tax deposits. This amount continues to increase due to the monthly additional interest which is more than our \$1,300 monthly payment. This audit/review may result in higher monthly payments being required. Depending on the outcome we may attempt to negotiate a different settlement.
3. Flood Insurance – We have recently learned that the flood insurance for city hall lapsed in 2022. The current premium is estimated at \$3,400 per year. My recommendation is to forgo flood insurance due to the reduced risk and our reserve fund. A budget amendment will be offered at the next council meeting to restrict \$3500 each year to build a flood repair fund.
4. We have received a grant from the USACE for specific flood plain studies of West Point. This grant will provide professional Hydraulic, Hydrological, mitigation and management information for West Point and the areas being considered for development. The result of the studies provided by this grant will be additional successful opportunities for flood plain management grants.
5. Status on the movie being made in West Point. A group of roughly 50 people will be in town from late January to mid-February. They will be renting the school as a base of operations. The movie will be shot in several locations around town but primarily at 1208 Main St. Several residents and the city will benefit financially from this endeavor along with the public notoriety.
6. Reminder – City Hall hours have changed to 9-2 Monday through Friday with appointments available at most any reasonable time including evenings and weekends. We believe this schedule is the most efficient and allows all citizens access, at their convenience, to city services while reducing costs.
7. A mention of appreciation for our newest city employee, Cody Boling. He is doing a great job cleaning up the city streets and sidewalks, maintaining city equipment, and makes maximum effort every day.
8. We have received the remainder of the \$25,000 restitution from the former city clerk.
9. We have received our first payment (\$44,163.80) on the sale of the Water/Sewer facilities from Hardin Co. Water No. 1 These payments continue quarterly for three years.
10. We have started cleaning up abandoned properties. Our costs will accumulate and eventually will become a lien on those properties.
11. Code enforcement has only 20 open cases due to the brief sabbatical taken over the holidays. Vigorous code enforcement will begin again in the coming weeks, focusing on vehicles improperly stored, safety issues and the most egregious offenders.
12. We have someone interested in leasing the school for a drug rehab center. This would involve patients living in the school during treatment. I do not believe this is the best use of the facility to serve all citizens of West Point.
13. Interest in our 58 Acres continues to be strong. We have a consultant's estimate of value of near \$1,000,000 and recommendation for its use, density of housing etc. and a recommendation for developer. We're showing the property again this Saturday.
14. The \$35.00 returned can fee suggested for the return of a trash can after being removed due to failure to pay the bill, will need to be done by ordinance presented at the February meeting. The return cart fee would help offset any losses experienced by the city from those that fail to pay.
15. Facebook. After a series of city Facebook pages being either set up incorrectly or not having access, we are enlisting the help of a professional using money in the development budget. A new, public page will be established and operated in the same manner as other surrounding cities.

16. In the last month I have attended on the city's behalf, the following:
- a. 12-11-23 Met with Jim Bradford Asst. Ft. Knox Garrison Commander
 - b. 12-12-23 Hardin Co. Fiscal Court
 - c. 12-13-23 Hardin Co. Chamber of Commerce
 - d. 12-20-23 LTADD Board Meeting
 - e. 01-04-24 Lunch with Congressman Brett Guthrie
17. Why the West Point Community Forum was taken down.

As you have probably learned I have deleted the West Point Community Forum and removed all its members. I felt it necessary to offer this explanation.

The Forum was started to allow citizens of West Point to ask questions about their government and get correct answers without hyperbole or speculation while informing the greatest number of people. It was meant to be a transparent communication tool. That changed.

Since I took office, it has been transformed, by a handful of citizens, to be a place to spew venom, call people names, make random insinuations without merit, and demean the city and its residents. In all fairness, some of this rhetoric came from supporters as well as critics, further confirming the need to close the page. All this hate, negativity, and general rudeness reflects very poorly on our town and its citizens.

My goal in serving this community has always been to return West Point to the vibrant, friendly, historic, prosperous, family oriented little town that it once was. The tone expressed in many of the posts created an obstacle to this goal, as confirmed earlier by the mental health clinic that chose not to come here purely due to this communal negativity.

The larger issue is that members of the forum that were witnessing this fiasco included most of Hardin Co. Government, our county sheriff, many of the members of both the Hardin County Chamber and the Radcliff Small Business Alliance, that includes bankers, developers, entrepreneurs, and real estate professionals. Additionally, there were also much needed investors and members of our state legislature of whom we need to earn their support. This constant negativity created a barrier to gaining these folks' support and investment.

So, after numerous attempts to quiet the rhetoric, it became obvious that the best solution was to simply remove the platform. Going forward, pertinent information about the city will be on the City's face book page and those posts will not allow comments. Questions regarding city government can be asked via email, IM, or in person.

Rest assured, my goal and determination to achieve it has not been changed or been deterred. The new year is shaping up to be replete with continuing improvements, new opportunities, and more success.

Committee Reports:

Fort Duffield: Work on the Pavilion continues. The roof and sides are complete, and the entryway is in progress.

Planning & Zoning: No report.

Board of Adjustments: The next meeting will take place on the first Monday in February. A conditional use permit was granted for Fourth Street and Main and denied for Elm Street.

Fire Department: No report.

Museum: Monie Matthews reported that the museum had a lot taking place in 2023. The museum brochures were created with the help of a grant and the building has been newly painted. Eventually, he would like to install brochure boxes along the historic district in West Point. He has established several partnerships over the past few years and is working closely with the Hardin County Museum. He anticipates more partners to join in the future, to share information and collaborate on projects together,

as well as an increase in visitors this year, which means he will need more help from volunteers. Now, he is collaborating with Chris and Leslie to put together a book containing the names of all individuals who have served in the military or resided in West Point or its neighboring areas. The book will be accessible at the museum to anyone who wishes to access the information contained in it.

Council Concerns:

Annette Baker has begun researching trees that may fall on roads. If a tree falls on the road, the city of West Point is responsible for removing it unless the city sends a notice to the citizen instructing them to fix their tree, so it does not fall on the road. In this case, it is the citizen's responsibility to remove the tree. She reported that Jason applied a topcoat to the tennis courts and has purchased a basketball goal but needs a pole and someone to install it.

Amy Bickel inquired about the progress made on the signage for the city. She also asked if there was anything they could do to help with the process, as currently, there are no signs to indicate when you are driving through the city. The mayor tried reaching out to several companies but unfortunately has not received an executable quote.

Kevin Duke expressed concerns about dogs roaming freely in West Point after two incidents where a dog tried to attack his pet in the yard. The mayor assured him that they would contact Hardin County Animal Control and advised residents to report any loose dogs promptly.

Hanna Duvall had nothing to report.

Jo Sabol inquired whether the HCSO report, which lists all callouts for the month, excludes the minimum of 5 hours per day on average.

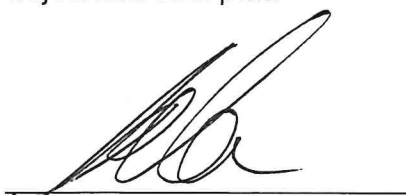
Citizen Concerns:

Donna McCreary introduced Lisa Beard and her husband Mike, who just moved into the new house on Rons Way.

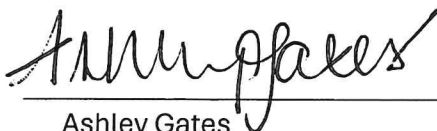
Roszelle Moore asked about the drains on Main Street. Mayor will contact State Highway Department.

Adjourn:

Kevin Duke made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Annette Baker and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned 8:20 p.m.



Richard A. Ciresi
Mayor



Ashley Gates
City Clerk