

**LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL**  
**CAUCUS MINUTES**  
**May 12, 2021**

Council President Paolone called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M., noting that the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act. And read the following statement: Tonight's City Council meeting is being live streamed through Zoom. Instructions on how to attend the meeting via Zoom are posted on the City's website.

1. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Darren Matik; Councilwoman June Byrnes; Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis; Councilman Eric Ford; Councilman Todd Gordon (via live stream); Councilman Matt Levinson; Councilman Todd Michael; and Council President Ralph Paolone.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Joseph L. Youngblood, Jr., City Solicitor; Jen Heller, Engineer's Office; Anthony Strazzeri, CFO; Deputy Chief Jason Weber, Police Department; Lieutenant Steve Cunningham, Police Department; and Leigh Ann Napoli, Municipal Clerk.

2. Approval of Minutes Without Formal Reading

Councilman Ford motioned, seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenicis, to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2021 Caucus meeting without formal reading. All members of Council were in favor. Motion was approved.

3. Mayor's Report

A. The Mayor met with members of the Police Department and City Council regarding electronic bicycles on the bike path. They are permitted in accordance with State law. It was determined that it would be difficult to enforce speeding. Lieutenant Cunningham proposed a "Share the Path" campaign that will be promoted throughout the City. The campaign identifies Do's and Don'ts and asks users of the bike path to be courteous to other travelers. There was also discussion on widening the bike path and the feasibility of adding bike lanes to Wabash Avenue.

4. Councilwoman Byrnes

A. Neighborhood Services

1. Councilwoman Byrnes announced the upcoming lunch for Senior Citizens on June 14 at the Country Club.

5. Councilwoman DeDomenicis

A. Public Works

1. Councilwoman DeDomenicis announced the upcoming free community shred event at the Public Works yard on June 5 from 10am to 1pm.

2. Councilwoman DeDomenicis announced that May 16-22 is National Public Works Week. There will be a luncheon this week at the Public Works garage in appreciation of the Department and recognizing them for going above and beyond.

6. Councilman Ford

A. Planning, Engineering, & Development

1. Councilman Ford advised of an Ordinance on the agenda for final reading amending Chapter 263, Vehicles & Traffic to add stop signs at the intersections of Belhaven & West Wabash and Morris & West Wabash.

2. Councilman Ford discussed the location of a crosswalk in front of Belhaven School near the bike path & Belhaven Avenue. A new flashing pedestrian sign was just installed there. The crosswalk needs to be relocated behind the sign.

Councilman Ford

A. Planning, Engineering, & Development (continued)

3. Councilman Ford advised that crosswalks will be added for pedestrian safety at Kirlin Avenue and the bike path.

7. Councilman Gordon

A. Planning, Engineering, & Development

1. Councilman Gordon advised of a Resolution approving a Change Order-Final with Charles Marrandino, LLC with regard to the Wabash Avenue Widening project located in front of Belhaven Middle School.
2. Councilman Gordon discussed a Resolution authorizing participation in the CDBG program. This program has assisted the City with ADA compliance.

8. Councilman Levinson

A. Revenue & Finance

1. Councilman Levinson advised of a Resolution on the agenda awarding a Professional Services Contract for the electronic drafting and recording of property record cards for the Tax Assessor.
2. Councilman Levinson discussed a Resolution authorizing the refund of a tax overpayment for 502 W. Sterling Avenue.
3. Councilman Levinson advised that Council passed a temporary budget at the last meeting because the City was waiting on the Local Finance Notice from the State on how the City is permitted to use the COVID relief funds. The City Auditor believes the notice should come soon. Councilman Levinson is hoping to adopt the 2021 budget at the next meeting.

9. Council President Paolone

A. Administration

1. Council President Paolone discussed a Resolution on the agenda establishing rules of order and conduct for all City Council, Caucus, and Special Meetings in the City of Linwood and establishes a limit of five minutes for each member of the public wishing to speak.
2. Council President Paolone advised of a Resolution on the agenda appointing Shantal Swaby as the Deputy Municipal Court Administrator. The prior Deputy resigned. The position was advertised and interviews were held. Ms. Swaby has worked part time in Linwood's court for over a year now. She is enrolled in the required court certification program. Council President Paolone is happy to promote within.
3. Council President Paolone advised that the Mayor, Councilwoman DeDomenicis, and himself have met with Hamilton Township representatives regarding a shared municipal court. Northfield is on board as well. The current cost of the court is \$150,000 a year. On average, the revenue is about \$105,000 (prior COVID). Hamilton Township is offering a cost of \$80,000 per year to Linwood. The cost is taken out of the revenue received. Anything above \$80,000 is split fifty-fifty with Hamilton. This would be a savings for Linwood. The County is also working on a county-wide shared court that could start by January 1, 2022. State legislation must be approved for the County plan. It could be approved this term. The County's proposal is a cost of \$56,000 for Linwood and the City can keep all the revenue over \$56,000. Councilman Levinson asked if the City should wait to see what happens with the County's plan. Council President Paolone indicated that there is a possibility the legislation will not pass this year. He is proposing to move forward with Hamilton now. Introduce the Ordinance tonight with a final reading on June 9. If the legislation for the County court passes prior to that date, the Ordinance can be pulled. If the legislation does not pass, then the City goes with Hamilton. The agreement with Hamilton Township contains a 90 day out clause should the County program come to fruition. The County plan does include a lot of beneficial programs for individuals that do not exist now. The Courts also anticipates court remaining virtual as things move forward.

Council President Paolone

A. Administration (continued)

4. Council President Paolone indicated that there is no noise Ordinance on the agenda to vote on tonight, just discussion on the matter. He went to the Linwood Country Club last Friday to hear the levels of the band playing. He thanked the Chief and all the officers involved who helped monitor the levels with the decibel reader. Council continues to do its due diligence. There was a sound check at 6:00 pm and the Police took readings from Carol Road and Country Club Lane. They would relay the readings to the Manager at the Country Club. 95% of the readings were below 50. The music was heard at Councilman Levinson's house. Council President Paolone discussed going down to a decibel level to 40. He also discussed possible back boards to absorb the sound. Council will meet with the owners of the Country Club to discuss other ideas. The Mayor discussed the upcoming lifting of the COVID restrictions. Council discussed the different levels and time limits for outdoor music. Councilman Ford wants to be careful not to enact any legislation that will prohibit the Mainland Band from performing or outdoor sporting events from occurring. Council President Paolone announced that Council will continue to monitor and discuss possible solutions for all involved.
5. Council President Paolone discussed that the Public Safety Committee will soon be meeting to discuss the legalization of marijuana and how Linwood intends to govern the subject. Council will consider allowing it to be sold in Linwood and a possible ban on smoking on public grounds. The committee will then make recommendations to the full Council. He discussed combining members of the Revenue & Finance Committee for the possible impact on revenue. A committee was formed consisting of Councilmen Levinson, Michael, and either Councilwoman DeDomenicis or Council President Paolone.

At 6:44 P.M., Council President Paolone called a recess.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC  
Municipal Clerk