

Index Town Council
Monthly Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2009

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Index Town Council was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Bruce Albert.

COUNCILMEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

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| Bruce Albert | Sean Horst |
| Bob Hubbard | Lisa Stowe, Clerk Treasurer |
| Dean Johnson | Bill Cross, Maintenance Supervisor |
| Karen Sample | Kim Peterson, Water Distribution Manager |
| Patrick Woods | |

This meeting is dedicated to the memory of resident Kurt Steves, who will be missed.

Minutes from the October meeting were read. Sample moved to accept the minutes as presented and with a second by Hubbard the motion carried.

Stowe read the October warrants, numbered 2695 through 2716. Payroll and tax warrants totaled \$5071.98 and all others were \$7849.68 for a grand total of \$12921.66. The warrant to the City of Everett is for water testing. The warrant to the State Auditor is for audit assessments for '06, '07, and '08. The warrant to Utilities Underground is for a 'paper invoice' fee they now charge for mailing out bills. The warrant to Albert is reimbursement for parts during recent water repairs. Hubbard moved to pay warrants as presented and with a second by Horst the motion carried.

During public comments Albert thanked Sgt. Martin for attending. Hubbard asked Sgt. Martin if he was aware of a call regarding vandalism in the park, but Sgt. Martin was not. Sgt. Martin handed out monthly statistics.

Peterson reported on the Shoreline Management Plan. She had an interlocal for review and Mayor signature. The grant gives Index \$40,000 which will be going for staff time and mapping. Seventeen residents signed up to be on the committee. At the first meeting nine showed up and at the second only two. Peterson will be holding public community meetings in February and March to review the plan.

Sample asked if this was redoing a previous plan. Peterson said this was the third since 1972, and this one has significant changes based on a lawsuit. Multiple agencies have to plan together this time in order to reduce or eliminate conflicts between agency rules and regulations. Hubbard asked how this would affect the Critical Areas Ordinance. Peterson said the plan and the CAO cannot have any conflicts. If agencies find conflicts those will have to be resolved.

After further discussion the Council had no issue with signing the interlocal.

Peterson has been working with Bonneville Power Association regarding cutting trees in the town watershed. She had a photo of which trees have to be removed and which can be cut but allowed to live. The trees have the potential for arcing to major power lines. Peterson also talked to BPA about using herbicides. The town already has an ordinance in place that does not allow spraying in the watershed.

Albert said it is paramount no work done on trees above the streams and vaults for the water system results in destabilizing the soils. Peterson said BPA is willing to mitigate with plantings. Albert recommended allowing Peterson to work out what she feels is best for the water system, and that herbicides will come up as a separate issue. This is acceptable to the Council.

The water system includes a vault in the pavement near the Sportsmen's Club that is made from an old septic tank. Recently there was a break in the pressure relief valve in the vault and repairs were difficult due to access difficulty. Peterson would like Council approval to have a lid made out of galvanized steel and concrete that will allow safe access to the valves. The cost for the lid will run around \$1700. Albert said there is money in the

budget this year and while it's a chunk of money, safety is a priority. The Council agreed and Peterson will move forward with the purchase.

The water line that runs from Hunter's to Kenney's was put in eight years ago using plastic line. Recently that line has had two breaks. A contractor can replace the line for \$4500. Sample asked if the work could be done with the backhoe. Peterson said she and Cross are not water system installers, and the work wouldn't be efficient or safe and the town is better off hiring a legitimate installer to do the work. Sample asked if there might be grants available and this will be researched, although there aren't as many as there used to be.

Under council comments Horst visited the Shoreline Plan meeting and got new insights for future flood prevention. He also said the Hoedown was a success. Albert asked if he was interested in continuing as the Disaster Coordinator, which he is. He will get current contact information to Stowe and Albert.

Hubbard will be starting an inventory of town trees and their health. This will assist Albert as he researches the use of undeveloped streets and alleys and town right of ways.

Sample continues to work on the internet question. There will be no DSL lines coming to Index. The Fire Department may be involved in a grant bringing fiber optics, but those would only come to the café and the town would have to pay for the remaining distance. Research with Verizon shows the town has three T1 connections available. The town could purchase them for \$4,000 each, with another \$3,000 each for antennas, plus \$815 a month for each connection. Sample thought the hookups could be sold to residents for around \$40 a month and could possibly run a bond to cover costs. The problem is finding out if it's legal for the town to sell services. Albert will contact the town lawyer.

The Planning Commission had no quorum. Albert asked for a timeframe on having a draft Comprehensive Plan available for review and Stowe feels they should be able to create one by spring.

Cross researched the cost for a drinking fountain, and the cheapest he could find that might be vandal proof is \$550 not including plumbing. Stowe said there is still roughly \$1000 in the Wojnich fund. Since the work wouldn't be done until spring, a decision will be delayed until then.

Albert presented the Department of Emergency Management Interlocal. The cost for 2010 will be \$164, and the town gets good value for that, through materials and assistance. Sample moved to enter into the interlocal and with a second by Hubbard the motion carried.

The three rocks required by FEMA were placed in the river so that work is completed.

After the number of promises by the Department of Natural Resources Reiter Foothills group to keep the town involved in the planning process, their plan will be coming out with only a three week window for review and comment. If this time frame does not encompass a Council meeting and the comment period cannot be extended, Albert may have to call a special meeting of the Council.

Stowe has contacted Allied Waste because they have continued to overcharge the town for services. Allied has agreed to refund the overcharges.

The Burlington Northern invoice for the exorbitant water line rental fee is due in December. After last month's meeting, Stowe left a message telling them it has been a year since the town initiated contact with concerns about the size of the bill and ownership questions. She has not had any response and asks the Council to think about how they want to handle the invoice next month.

There were no business or land use applications at this time.

Stowe presented Resolution 09-09 relating to property taxes for 2010. Sample moved to accept the Resolution as presented and with a second by Johnson the motion carried.

Stowe presented Resolution 09-10 relating to property taxes and the dollar amount of any increase. Even though revenue is down, the Council prefers to continue with the symbolic gesture of not increasing taxes.

Because of that Sample moved to accept the Resolution with a 0% increase and with a second by Johnson the motion carried.

Stowe presented Ordinance #406 relating to salaries and wages for 2010, for a first reading. Because of the economy and decreased revenue, there will be no cost of living increases for employees and wages will stay at the 2009 level. The Council can elect to increase salaries mid-year up to 10% without having to create a budget amendment. Wording has been added to the ordinance relating to bonuses.

Stowe presented Ordinance #407 relating to the budget for 2010 for a first reading. Historically the town has had budgets with expenditures over-estimated and revenue under-estimated, resulting in a budget that does not balance at the beginning of the year, but does at the end. After discussion with Albert, Stowe decided to try for a balanced budget. This has resulted in serious cuts in expenditures such as water and flood emergencies. The Council will have to decide whether to continue with what has been done in the past, or adopt a balanced budget that may have serious problems balancing during the year.

Peterson said the town has done the budget the way it has because of the cost involved in creating budget amendments throughout the year.

Albert suggested a compromise where Stowe will have specific line items available next month that can be added in if the Council wishes to continue doing the budget as it has been done. As Albert said, the costs of maintenance for things such as the town hall cannot be put off indefinitely. He also pointed out the revenue estimate is conservative and could improve by mid-year.

Sample asked if the need for a balanced budget was just to keep up with the Jones's. Stowe said she has never had an auditor comment on the town budget. Albert said what the town spends has to be equal or less than what comes in. In the past the town has budgeted for more than what comes in but careful management results in spending less. The town has learned to live within its means.

Sample likes having a cushion and would like to see a budget similar to what has always been done. Albert reminded the Council that once a budget is adopted, a mayor or clerk could go out and spend every last nickel of what was budgeted without further approval. While it's unlikely, it's also not inconceivable that a mayor could spend budgeted expenses and the Council would have no choice but to allow it. He's not saying someone will do this, but the Council should be aware of the potential.

Cross said the budget has worked in the past because the town has a small, visible, and manageable budget where larger entities chase the expenses.

The budget and salary ordinances will be presented for action next month.

Sample moved to enter into the Shoreline Management Plan Interlocal. With a second by Horst the motion carried.

As there was no further business Horst moved to adjourn. Johnson seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Adopted by the Index Town Council this 7th day of December, 2009.

Signed: _____
Bruce Albert, Mayor

Attest: _____
Lisa Stowe, Clerk/Treasurer