

Coffee with the Mayor

Ser 28 (2025-2) Organization

I mentioned previously about the coffee a neighbor provided and which ones I enjoyed. When I asked my neighbor where I could get more of those flavors, my wife revealed, begrudgingly, that she had ordered 2 boxes of each flavor to be delivered to my house. That was unexpected but appreciated! Now I have enough coffee at home to last for a while.

The topic of this Coffee with the Mayor will deal with the city's organization. This may be a confusing topic to understand but I will try to explain some of the details in what I've learned after one year. I'm not sure how widespread this knowledge is but feel it's important to explain the background and the impact to decision making.

Linton is one of the few Indiana Municipalities that own and manage their own utilities from City Hall. City Hall also manages and is responsible for the civic side of the city's organization. It is important to know what the responsibilities are for each and especially where the funds come from to address those responsibilities. The mayor's office is responsible for managing both areas with the city blessed to have a General Utilities Manager who oversees the utility. The Clerk/Treasure and staff directly support both areas.

First, I'll talk about the utility side. As the title indicates, the utility side provides customers mainly with gas, water, electricity, sanitation, street management, utility bill processing and trash pickup. The organization to accomplish this consists of the Gas and Water Department, Street Department, Electrical Department and Utility Processing Department. The revenue to support these departments and the utility they provide comes directly from utility bills paid to city hall. Gas and electricity are procured from outside sources and provided to customers through infrastructure maintained by the applicable department. Water is obtained from nearby wells and pumped into water towers for city distribution through the water infrastructure. Each utility bill presents the amount consumed in each area and the associated cost for that amount. Sanitation and storm water are not based on consumption but are fixed costs. It is this revenue that supports the utility department. The departments mentioned previously are paid for out of this revenue in addition to any updates or improvements. In comparison with other cities, having ownership of the utilities means a lower cost for those utilities to the customer. Utilities are provided to residents outside the city boundary.

Second, I'll discuss the civic side. This part of city management includes the Fire Department, Police Department, Fair View Cemetery, Pool, Parks and Golf Course. The city prepares a budget based on the projected funds expected. The revenue to support these areas comes directly from taxes collected by and distributed through the county. The city receives those funds twice a year in June and December. The Department of Local Government and Finance (DLGF) evaluates and analyzes the proposed budget, makes

adjustments as they deem necessary based on their projections and approves the adjusted budget, if needed, that the city must adhere to. Changes to this budget must be approved by the city council and DLGF. The property tax is the main revenue source for not only the city but other organizations in the community as well. There are other taxes, but the property tax provides the most revenue for the city's civic side. Linton's civic side depends on these taxes paid by residents within the city boundaries only.

As can be expected, there are strict guidelines on the limited transfer of funds the civic side can receive from the utility side. Costs, like payroll, are constantly monitored to ensure the cost comes out of the proper account. The State Board of Accounts monitors these and other transactions on a regular basis to ensure compliance with state guidelines.

It is fitting that special recognition be given to the utilities Electric Department! Very early Saturday morning there was a vehicle accident resulting in the loss of electricity throughout the city! The outage lasted several hours with some areas getting power back before others. Personnel from the department responded almost immediately and were enroute even before notification was made. It did take some time to track down and clear all the resulting issues, making sure electricity was properly restored. They should be commended for a job well done!