

in a way that is more compatible with the original vision and with the direction that the community wants to go. With that said, I do support it and the fact that our Plan Commission member supports it also and the Redevelopment Commission supports it unanimously weighs heavily in my decision on that as well.

**Thomas called the question.**

**(Stonecipher called roll)**

**Thomas – yes**

**Kelson – yes**

**Hawk – yes**

**Lesh – yes**

**Henegar – yes**

**McKim – yes**

**Motion passed.**

## **VIII. LEGAL DEPARTMENT**

### **Resolution 2010-45A: Part I: Preliminary Approval of Tax Abatement for Tasus Corporation**

**Thomas made a motion to approve Resolution 2010-45A. Kelson seconded.**

(Cockerill) What we have is the preliminary portion of our tax abatement approval and the ERA designation. This comes to you with a unanimous recommendation from the Economic Development Commission as well as a nod of approval from the Redevelopment Commission. I say nod of approval because they are only asking for personal property tax abatement and not real property and the TIF only collects the real property portion of it. They've looked at it and they think it is a good idea but I want to acknowledge that they don't have as big of a thought in that process. After tonight, if you approve this, there will be an advertisement and then we'd have the second phase at next month's meeting.

(Melanie Hart, President, Tasus Corporation) I want to thank you very much for considering this tax abatement. It seems like I've come before this Council many times in my 20 years with Tasus – a few familiar faces still on the Council. Tasus Corporation is going to make a \$1.5 million equipment property investment and is asking for an abatement on that.

I want to run through a little bit about Tasus Corporation so that the Council could be familiar with what we do, our history in this community, and our work culture and the environment we've created there for our 122 employees.

We were established here in Bloomington. It was our first company in the United States. We were established in 1986 although we didn't begin our operations until the year 1990. Those operations are out on Daniels Way just behind Ivy Tech and in front of Cook. We have 105,000 square feet there and 122 employees. Our 2010 sales are projected at \$22 million. We have continued to grow over the years. You can see that our five-year sales growth is 57%. Now over the last couple of years that growth has not been there. As you know, the automotive industry has been heavily hit in this economy which has been unfortunate for us. But what we've been able to do is remain relatively successful. Many of our

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competitors have closed their doors. We have not had to do that. A lot of that is because, I think, of just some good leadership and some great talent at the plant. They know what they are doing. They have a great history and are very skilled.

We are an injection molder. We make plastic parts essentially for automobiles. So everything from your power steering fluid reservoir to your headlights, taillights, engine covers, the consoles between your seats. We make those parts primarily for Toyota vehicles. They are 54% of our sales; but then also Ford, Honda, Chrysler, Subaru, GM, Nissan and Hyundai. So you can see we hit several automotive manufacturers. Most of our products are lighting products which you will see our investment and the investment we are being requested to make by our customer, North American Lighting, is a lighting product.

I wanted to just talk a little bit about what we do for our employees. We offer a very competitive wage in the manufacturing industry. Our employees have health insurance, dental insurance, and vision insurance. We have a cafeteria benefit plan so essentially they're given an allotment of money that they can choose what benefits they purchase with it. So it meets their needs. We also have a 401K program and we do a 50% match on that. We provide for tuition reimbursement and have many employees who take advantage of that. We pay the tuition in full. The courses need to be job or career related. We provide adoption assistance, which is fairly unique but one that I feel very passionate about. An employee will receive \$2,000 at the time they adopt. We also have a first-time homebuyer's assistance. We give an employee \$1,000 toward the cost of that home for closing costs or a down payment. We have a profit sharing program and have been able to pay employees profits over the last couple of years. And then an attendance award, which includes a car for 10 years of perfect attendance. We have one employee who has 20 years of perfect attendance now. We have several who have over 15 years and 10 years. Our attendance rate actually runs around 99%. So we literally have 1% absence which is unheard of in most industries and particularly in manufacturing.

In community involvement – this is not a full list of our involvement but we have been very generous in this community with our time and our money. These are some of the activities and the organizations that we give to. We made a significant contribution recently to the Monroe County School Corporation Foundation in order to help them in their efforts. Ivy Tech Foundation, Wonderlab, the list is here; I won't read through them all but you can see our involvement. Our employees get involved a lot. The Thanksgiving food baskets are something they've done. We call the local Townships and ask for names of families that are in need. Our employees give and we put food into baskets that create an entire Thanksgiving Day for them – from breakfast through their Thanksgiving dinner. Our employees actually deliver those baskets to the homes which is a real lesson for them.

Further on being a good corporate citizen, we are environmentally certified, ISO 14001. But a little more exciting than just that certification is that in 2009 we generated \$38,000 of savings by selling items that were going into a landfill. It might be recycled materials. It might be trash, pallets, skids. The neat thing about that is that we took that \$38,000 – because it was through the initiative of our employees that we did this – and we turned that money around and gave it to them in bonuses. So they were able to benefit from that savings. It took their energy and we wanted to return it to them. We reduced our landfill charges by \$1,200 a month also.

We also are reducing our carbon footprint. One of the most recent things that we've done is install a computerized control on our HVAC system. As you know, businesses get charged for peak hours and

peak usages. We've been able to reduce our electrical costs significantly by minimizing those peak hours, understanding when they are and we have certain things that will kick on and off during those peak hours so that we don't reach those higher costs.

This is the machine we're buying. It doesn't look very big right here but it is very big. It is our largest. Right now our largest press is 950 tons so we are jumping up significantly for this customer. But we are one of the only injection molders in the Midwest that have this size tonnage. So we are really optimistic about this. We have room to set three to four of these machines. This customer right now is asking for one and we know they are headed into two. They've made that clear. We are hoping for a third. We have some other customers that are interested in the third and fourth. So we are optimistic that in this product line and this business line we can grow.

This is the part that we will be making on it. It is a headlight housing. It probably doesn't look like much to you but it is what houses the lens and the guts of the headlight.

This is an important customer to us. They are our largest customer and we really want to maintain them. If we allow this opportunity to pass by, they will develop another molder. That just puts us at risk with our business with them. It is really critical that we take this on. It does preserve five jobs that we currently have which I feel really good about because in these times preserving jobs is a great success and adding them is a real success but preserving them is what we can do right now. We hope to certainly lead to more jobs.

It does expand our capabilities. We think that as we move through the cycles of the automotive industry, this is just going to really help us to grow and advance forward.

(Hawk) It is good to see you again. Thank you for staying here in Monroe County and keeping your jobs here. We really appreciate it. I can tell you when you go through the benefits, I bet you have people lined up down the street wanting to work there.

(Hart) We tend to and they stay.

(Hawk) I just wanted to say that I think it is really good that you are so involved in the community because we really need to be very good to those employers who are very good to the community so that we work hand-in-hand. I just appreciate your being here. Thank you.

(Henegar) A very effective, very impressive presentation. Where do you go to apply for a job?

(Thomas) I appreciate your coming in and I do support this. I typically don't support abatement requests in TIFs but this is on personal property, not on real property so I do support it. And really if you do the math it is a little over \$100,000 and it is 10 years and it is 5 employees – it is well worth it. Hopefully it will lead to more growth. I think that is where you are headed.

(Hart) It will.

(Lesh) Thank you for your presentation. I want to commend you on your very progressive benefits and the community involvement program. It is very impressive.

(Kelson) I will certainly echo that. I'm intrigued. If you have the biggest machine in the business, it seems reasonable that you are going to have new opportunities coming along. So although this particular request is not expected to lead to growth, I can see the possibility in the future. I certainly hope so.

(McKim) The term *good corporate citizen* is bandied about rather cavalierly sometimes but clearly Tasus has demonstrated that it is. We are very lucky to have you here. We do look forward to continued growth and continuation of your very progressive benefits policy.

(Hart) Thank you, we feel lucky to be here.

(McKim) Well thank you. What I'd like to do now, is if Mr. Travis from the Economic Development Commission is willing to come up and address us. The Economic Development Commission is a three-person panel that is statutorily required to review all tax abatement requests. They are all three citizen appointments and we greatly appreciate the time and effort that they put into reviewing these applications.

(Greg Travis) We did review this application. There was some trouble in that I considered recusing myself. I drive a Toyota and my wife drives a Honda and that caused some problems. Luckily we haven't had to replace any of the headlights so it's been good. We reviewed it. We did not see any flags. There is the concern that [Councilwoman] Thomas expressed of granting abatements in TIFs which are structurally problematic. But in this case, it is an abatement only on personal property not on real property. We did have some discussion about the distinctions. As I think I've discussed with you before there is this term *personal property* which people think means bicycles and DVD players but in the tax abatement world, personal property refers to typically large pieces of capital equipment like this 1,400 ton press. So again we didn't find anything that raised any flags. The corporation is an exemplary citizen of our County and we forward it to you with our full-hearted recommendation.

(McKim) Thank you very much for your service. This is more for clarification for the public. As with all tax abatements, the abatement is only granted on the additional taxes that would be owed by the company as a result of the added assessment from their investment, not on the value of the existing property or equipment that they own. Also as with most abatements, they would only get 100% of the abatement value in the first year, 90% in the second, 80 and so on down to 10% in the 10<sup>th</sup> year. So during that time just as a result of the purchase of the equipment and the resulting added assessment, Tasus will be paying an estimated additional almost \$90,000 in property taxes beyond what they currently pay and they will also save about \$109,000 as a result of the abatement.

(Jim Shelton, Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce) We strongly encourage you to support this application. They are good corporate citizens. You saw a partial list of all the things they've done. It would really be a shame to let somebody else penetrate their biggest customer if somebody else went and did this if they turned down an invitation to do it. So we strongly encourage you to support this.

**Kelson called the question.**

**(Stonecipher called roll)**

**Kelson – yes**

**Hawk – yes**

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Lesh – yes  
Henegar – yes  
McKim – yes  
Thomas – yes

**Motion passed.**

**IX. COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Resolution 2010-44: A Resolution in Support of the Monroe County Community School Corporation's Funding Referendum**

**Thomas made a motion to approve Resolution 2010-44. Kelson seconded.**

(Thomas) I would like to speak on this briefly. Normally I would say that this would be something outside of Council purview but I really believe that with the Monroe County Community School Corporation Referendum we have something that does impact our County residents and it impacts our County budget and that is why I dare go here because this is about our criminal justice costs in the future. This is about economic development. This is about attracting new homeowners [and] new businesses. This is about making the best community possible that will help our County survive financially. So with that I would ask for the support of my fellow Councilors.

(Hawk) It looks as if we don't have a lot of folks in the audience to speak to this so I'll speak to the folks at home. For those of you who might know my family members, my eldest daughter has her Masters [and] teaches in Florida. I wish she would come back here. She also has her – there is a special license, something you get nationally. It is called the National Boards or something and that is a big deal for a teacher. So I'm just real proud of her. Every morning when she calls me – she calls me every morning of the week, Monday through Friday, and we hear about the problems in [inaudible] School District because they are really strapped for money. So I understand the problems that the teachers are having. I also have – my niece teaches here at Monroe County Community School System, my nephew works for the School System. I have another niece who is a teacher in a southern county. I have a cousin who is a retired professor and his daughter teaches in Owen County. So my family has teachers all over the place.

I also was a part of – in Richland Bean Blossom when there was a movement toward having all of the schools under one school corporation when my children were just little. I lobbied hard to keep Richland Bean Blossom Schools separate because our entire community believed that our community would be more successful if we had a separate school system and kept our schools in place and have more community feel. So while I understand the reasons why the people on this Council who are in the Monroe County Community School District would want to weigh in on this, because it is not my school district, I would not be so presumptuous as to tell someone in another school district just exactly what they ought to do. I expect that the people in Richland Bean Blossom School District would not like that either. So I wish everyone well and that they will get out and vote their conscious and make sure that they vote on this.

(Henegar) Well, there is a whole lot you could say about this but basically I support it. As I was telling Julie before the meeting, everybody talks – this is campaign season. There will not be a single candidate for public office that doesn't get up and say that they are for jobs, for good jobs, for high-paying jobs.