

TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
JUNE 19, 2023

A meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 7:02 p.m. on Monday, June 19, 2023. Ordinance 1830 is the basis for holding electronic meetings. The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall. Councilors, Staff, and the public had the option to participate via Zoom meeting technology.

Councilors Chuck Gardiner, Lee Ann Mellon, Ken Schoon, and Steven Tulowitzki were physically present at Town Hall. Councilor Andy Koultourides was absent. Also present in Town Hall were Clerk-Treasurer Wendy Mis, Controller Patricia Abbott, Town Manager Dustin Anderson, Deputy Town Manager Jill DiTommaso, Fire Chief Mark Hajduk, Town Attorney Dave Westland, and Munster Representative to the Hammond Sanitary District Mike Hawkins. Director of Operations Steve Gunty was present virtually. The news media were not represented.

President Gardiner opened the meeting, requested those present to remember the Juneteenth holiday and its meaning during a moment of silence which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Town of Munster accepts public comments submitted both in-person and electronically. The public was informed, via the agenda posted at munster.org, that questions or comments about an item on the agenda were to be emailed to danderson@munster.org.

Ms. Jennifer Graff, 8805 Meadow Lane, lives across from Kiwanis Park. She has observed a large increase in the number of people driving to the park, littering in the park, and surrounding area, using offensive language, parking in no parking areas, and blocking resident driveways, drinking alcohol, and grilling. She asked that signage be put up with the rules about no alcohol or grilling. As this is considered a neighborhood park and not a destination park, she also requested residential parking only in the area.

No one else rose to claim the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of a regular meeting held on June 05, 2023

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #23-6E dated //23 totaling \$34,287.40
Confirmation of Voucher Register #23-6F dated //23 totaling \$53,323.73
Confirmation of Voucher Register #23-6G dated 06//23 totaling \$517,298.90
Approval of Voucher Register #23-6H dated 06//23 totaling \$141,578.71
Confirmation of Voucher Register #23-6I dated 06//23 totaling \$520,288.61
Confirmation of Voucher Register #23-6J dated 06//23 totaling \$457,471.75

WATER BILL ADJUSTMENTS 2023-36 AND 2023-37

Staff received requests for adjustment under the leak adjustment policy adopted by the Town Council on April 8, 2013. The customer has completed the required form and the request meets all the criteria for adjustments as follows:

Adjustment Number	Average Usage	Actual Usage	Length of Time	Original Bill	Adjustment Amount	Adjusted Bill
2023-36	6,000	59,000	2 months	\$ 333.04	\$ 260.52	\$ 72.52
2023-37	4,000	39,000	1 month	\$ 216.53	\$ 192.13	\$ 24.40

Councilor Schoon moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to suspend the rules, waive the readings, and adopt the Consent Agenda as corrected. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against.

NEW BUSINESS

2024 BUDGET CALENDAR

The annual budget adoption process has a series of statutory deadlines which must be met in order to receive a budget for 2024. The 2024 Budget Preparation Schedule has been prepared for consideration. The local schedule was developed based on statutory deadlines. It calls for Town Council adoption on next year's budget on October 2, 2023, with the required public hearing on September 18, 2023. These are both critical pieces in the budget process and both are regular meeting dates.

Council is asked to review the schedule and to notify the Clerk-Treasurer of any scheduling conflicts. The dates may be changed but must fall within the statutory requirements and cannot go beyond any of the statutory deadline dates.

No formal action was requested or taken.

CAPITAL ASSET POLICY REVISION

Every year, the Town is responsible for updating its capital asset information for financial reporting purposes. During the past several years, Peterson Consulting Services, Inc. of La Grange, Illinois, has assisted the Town in implementing the Governmental Standards Accounting Board (GASB) Statement No. 34 which prescribes financial reporting requirements for state and local governments to make annual reports more thorough and easier to use.

The current policy was put in place in 2003 and set the threshold for a capital asset at \$5,000.00 for all assets except for the Water Utility. At that time, the Water Utility threshold could not exceed \$750.00. The policy was updated in 2006 when the Water Utility asset threshold was permitted to go up to \$5,000.00.

While completing the reporting for 2022, the consultant recommended updating the capital asset threshold to \$25,000.00 per unit for all Town assets. This is primarily in response to price increases over the past twenty years. Previously, a \$5,000.00 threshold captured small equipment that is generally considered a capital asset. Now, repair parts can now meet the \$5,000.00 threshold.

Raising the threshold will not change the type of asset that will be reported. A vehicle, dump truck or major piece of equipment will still be captured and reported. The higher threshold will provide a more accurate picture of the capital asset inventory of the Town. Smaller pieces of equipment (e.g., portable radios, printers, water meters, furniture etc.) will still be included in inventory counts for internal control purposes even though their value does not meet the new threshold.

Councilor Tulowitzki moved, with a second by Councilor Mellon, to approve the Capital Asset Policy revision dated June 19, 2023. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against.

APPROVAL OF MEDIATION AGREEMENT

The Town participated in mediation in the matter of Stasko v Town of Munster. Under the terms of the proposed agreement, the Town of Munster will pay the plaintiff \$10,000.00.

Councilor Schoon moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to ratify the mediation settlement agreement in the Stasko v Town of Munster matter. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against.

APPROVAL OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION AGREEMENT

Through the Town Attorney, a proposed agreement to settle a workers' compensation matter has been proposed.

Councilor Mellon moved, with a second by Councilor Schoon, to ratify the compromise and petition agreement in the Talarico v Town of Munster matter. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against.

ORDINANCE #1905: AMENDING THE LAKE BUSINESS CENTER PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

Proposed ORDINANCE 1905 is AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAKE BUSINESS CENTER PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT SIGN PROGRAM. The proposed ordinance will permit CAHAST to modify the lettering on their monument signs at Braden Way and Fran Lin Parkway from non-illuminated, brass, pin mounted lettering to internally illuminated panels with larger white channel letters.

On September 13, 2022, a public hearing was held and no remonstrances were heard. On November 7, 2022, the Council unanimously approved this change. Two signs were inadvertently left out. The Plan Commission has seen the planned signage. While a minor change, the specificity of the PUD requires the change be made by ordinance. Ordinance 1905 has been drafted for this purpose.

Councilor Mellon moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to approve Ordinance 1905 Amending the Lake Business Center Planned Unit Development to revise the site signage plan for the Lake Business Center PUD at 9200 Calumet Avenue. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE #1906: SURPLUS BOND PROCEEDS

Proposed ORDINANCE 1906 is AN ORDINANCE OF THE MUNSTER TOWN COUNCIL DECLARING CERTAIN BOND PROCEEDS AS SURPLUS AND ALLOWING THE USE OF THE SURPLUS BOND PROCEEDS TO PAY A PORTION OF THE DEBT SERVICE DUE. The Town issues general obligation each year. The bonds are repaid from ad valorem property taxes. These bonds are used to finance large capital expenditures such as street resurfacing, equipment purchases, and major park and building improvements. There are times when a project does not proceed. This can happen when a higher priority situation presents itself unexpectedly. There are times when a project or piece of equipment comes in at a lower price than expected at the time of bond issuance. In these instances, the amounts not spent are considered surplus bond proceeds.

I.C. 5-1-13-2 et seq. provides the Town Council, as the local issuing body, with options for how to use surplus bond proceeds. The proceeds can be used to reduce the property taxes imposed by the Town in a subsequent year, to create a reserve fund for repayment of the bonds, or to directly pay the principal and/or interest due on any of the property tax-supported bonds issued by the Town.

Currently, there are proceeds available from 2015 through 2018 totaling \$138,138.13. The projects planned from these bond issues have either been completed under budget or were abandoned. Staff recommends declaring these amounts surplus and using them to pay the principal and interest payment due on the 2019 bond issue (\$125,921.25) and a portion of the payment due on the 2020 bond issue (\$12,216.88 towards the \$256,205.08 payment). Using the surplus proceeds in this way has the effect of lowering the property taxes needed in 2024 for the debt service fund.

The Town is subject to federal arbitrage rules. These rules are in place to prevent government units from issuing excessive debt and to minimize interest earned on the proceeds. Over the past decade, interest rates have been so low that arbitrage was not a concern. It is unlikely that the Town is in an arbitrage position, but the rules and required calculations are complex and potentially costly.

In light of the rising interest rates and the length of time the proceeds have been unspent, department heads were informed in multiple meetings since last November that the proceeds from the older bond issues need to be spent by the end of May 2023.

The ordinance has been drafted to declare surplus a portion of the bond proceeds from the general obligation bonds of 2015 through 2018. These bonds are fully amortized and the surplus totals \$138,138.13. Because of how the budget process works, and to take advantage of the reduced property taxes in 2024, the ordinance would need to be adopted this evening. As such, Council is asked to suspend the rules, waive the readings, and adopt Ordinance 1906 on first reading as presented.

Councilor Schoon moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to suspend the rules and waive the readings. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

Councilor Schoon moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to adopt Ordinance 1906 on first reading as presented. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

Z-TRACK MOWER PURCHASE: PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works is looking to purchase a new 2023 John Deere Z930M track mower with bag collection system. This vehicle was scheduled for replacement as part of the Capital Plan and will be paid from bond proceeds. A quote was received from Castongia Tractor, Crown Point, Indiana through Sourcewell. The new unit will cost \$12,775.61. The existing Unit #347, purchased in 2017, will be used as a trade-in for \$3,400.00.

Councilor Tulowitzki moved, with a second by Councilor Mellon, to approve purchase from Castongia Tractor of a new 2023 John Deere Z930M for a net total price after trade-in of \$9,375.61. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against.

RESOLUTION #2115: INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT-IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMERGENCY VEHICLE PREEMPTION SYSTEM

Proposed RESOLUTION 2115 is A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, APPROVING THE INTERLOCAL GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND, INDIANA, THE CITY OF HAMMOND, INDIANA, THE TOWN OF ST. JOHN, INDIANA, THE CITY OF GARY, INDIANA, AND LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA. Many signals in the northwest portion of Lake County do not have signal preemption for emergency vehicles. This can make intersections extremely dangerous for police, fire, ambulance, and the public in responding to emergency situations.

Munster, Highland, Hammond, St. John, Gary, and Lake County, Indiana share a common interest while responding to emergency calls and transporting the injured to shared nearby hospitals. Implementation of an Emergency Vehicle Preemption (EVP) system provides emergency vehicles a safe means of proceeding through a signalized intersection. This can reduce conflict, reduce driver confusion, and improve emergency response times.

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) awarded the Town of Munster, Indiana, the Town of Highland, Indiana, the City of Hammond, Indiana, the Town of St. John, Indiana, the City of Gary, Indiana, and Lake County, Indiana \$6,450,000 in Federal Transportation Funds for Signal Modernization, Emergency Vehicle Preemption for Munster, Highland, Hammond, St. John, Gary, and Lake County, Indiana. The Town of Munster has identified thirty intersections, twenty-eight police vehicles, and fifteen fire vehicles in need of signal preemption devices.

Munster is serving as the lead agency for this project. An interlocal agreement is presented to formalize commitments and financial contributions of each entity. The matching funds from Munster will not exceed \$291,970.00.

Chief Hajduk gave a brief explanation of the current system which is about thirty years old. He explained that the updated system will be based on GPS and not line-of-sight technology. This will allow intersections to be cleared prior to the emergency vehicle reaching it.

Councilor Tulowitzki moved, with a second by Councilor Mellon, to adopt Resolution 2115 as presented. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

Councilor Mellon moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to adopt the Interlocal Governmental Agreement by and between the Town of Munster, Indiana, the Town of Highland, Indiana, the City of Hammond, Indiana, the Town of St. John, Indiana, the City of Gary, Indiana, and Lake County Indiana. Councilors Schoon, Mellon, Tulowitzki, and Gardiner voted in favor; none voted against.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

This portion of the meeting has been added to give elected officials an opportunity to share news about the various boards and commission on which they serve as liaison.

Councilor Tulowitzki noted the proclamation adopted previously honoring Juneteenth and reminded those present that fireworks are allowed for the holiday.

Clerk-Treasurer Mis clarified that the July 6, 2023, is a regular meeting that has been properly noticed.

Councilor Mellon expressed her concern about the behaviors seen in Munster parks and the impact on child safety. Staff were directed to take pro-active measures and bring suggestions to Council for how to address it. Councilor Schoon suggested “bump outs” in the no parking areas. President Gardiner asked Councilor Schoon, as liaison to the Park Board, to communicate the concerns of Council at the next Park Board meeting.

No other reports were given.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Unless stated otherwise, all meetings of the Town Council begin at 7:00 p.m. at Munster Town Hall.)

The Town Council will hold a regular meeting on Thursday, July 6, 2023. The Redevelopment Commission will hold a regular meeting immediately following.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, and upon a motion by Councilor Schoon and seconded by Councilor Mellon, the meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m. by voice vote.

ATTEST:

Chuck Gardiner, President

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer