

TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
MAY 19, 2025

A meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 2025. Ordinance 1830 is the basis for holding electronic meetings. The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall, 1005 Ridge Road, Munster, Indiana. Councilors, Staff, and the public had the option to participate via Zoom meeting technology. The meeting was not recorded although a meeting transcript was electronically generated by Zoom.

Councilors George Shinkan, Joseph G. Hofferth, Chuck Gardiner, and Jonathan Petersen were physically present in Town Hall. Councilor David B. Nellans participated virtually. Also present in Town Hall were Clerk-Treasurer Wendy Mis, Town Manager Jim Marino, Controller Patricia Abbott, Police Chief Stephen Scheckel, Fire Chief Mark Hajduk, Director of Operations Bob Valois, Town Attorney Dave Westland, and Hammond Sanitary District representative Mike Hawkins. The news media was represented.

President Shinkan presided and opened the meeting with a moment of silence, 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 wmis@munster.org. All in-person public comments are limited to two minutes and limited to a total of twenty minutes for the public comment section.

Ms. Christine Fortney, 19128 White Oak Avenue, is concerned about loose dogs and the public is encouraged to file a police report if they are threatened or attacked by a dog.

Mr. Tom Jurich, 1839 Magnolia, is concerned about mosquito spray and the impact on birds and butterflies. He would like to look at different ways to control mosquitoes. He is also concerned about the traffic impact of the upcoming 45th Street bridge closure.

Mrs. Diane Kitchell, 8312 Linden, asked for a thoughtful and targeted approach to mosquito control.

Mr. Wojciech Galuszka, 1331 Oriole Drive, shared his concern about speeders on Oriole and asked for additional patrols and stop signs.

Mr. David Bensinger, 1413 Oriole, reported cars zip down Oriole and would like to see speed humps or stop signs to slow down traffic.

No one else rose to claim the floor.

We received one electronic public comment expressing concern about unleashed dogs and the threat they are to our community.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of a regular meeting held on May 5, 2025

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-5D dated 05/08/2025 totaling \$777,291.03

Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-5E dated 05/09/2025 totaling \$59,572.01

Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-5F dated 05/09/2025 totaling \$39,575.94

Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-5G dated 05/15/2025 totaling \$182,722.58

Approval of Voucher Register #25-5H dated 05/19/2025 totaling \$410,939.25

Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-5I dated 05/16/2025 totaling \$549,434.31

WATER LEAK ADJUSTMENTS 2025-21 THROUGH 2025-22

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

Adjustment Number	Average Usage	Actual Usage	Length of Time	Original Bill	Requested Adjustment Amount	Adjusted Bill
2025-21	3,000	7,000	1 month	\$ 63.11	\$ 35.86	\$ 27.25
2025-22	11,000	59,000	2 months	\$ 435.89	\$ 264.37	\$ 171.52

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to suspend the rules, waive the readings, and adopt the Consent Agenda as amended. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE 1981: ADDITION OF STOP SIGNS

Introduced ORDINANCE 1981 is AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 54, TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES, OF THE MUNSTER CODE OF ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO ADDITIONAL STOP SIGNS. Ordinance 1981 had first read at the May 5, 2025, meeting. Upon passage, stop signs would be installed at the following locations.

Harrison Avenue at Briar Lane
Harrison Avenue at Evergreen Lane
Oriole Drive at Southwood Drive
Oriole Drive at Greenwood Avenue

Both Public Works and Police believe this is in the best interest of safety of the school zone neighborhoods. For enforcement to occur, the stop signs must be approved by ordinance and properly advertised. Ordinance 1981 has been created for this purpose. Upon passage, the necessary advertisement will be placed.

Councilor Petersen moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to adopt Ordinance 1981 on second reading as presented. Councilor Gardiner reemphasized the need for a matrix to determine where

stop signs would be most effective. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE 1983: P-CARD AUTHORIZATION

Proposed ORDINANCE 1983 is AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF CORPORATE PROCUREMENT CARDS FOR USE BY CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER. Since 1989 the Town of Munster has allowed certain employees to use a Town authorized credit card to facilitate making purchases on Town business. The uses of the credit cards have changed significantly since that time. Today it is primarily used for travel expenses on Town-related business and regular payments that require a credit card such as the Indiana Toll Road I-Pass account, Amazon, and newspaper subscriptions.

When the Town moved to a First Merchants Bank MasterCard last year, Staff planned to pursue the AIM-sponsored procurement card program that provides cash back on purchases. Under Resolution 2148, the Council authorized entering an agreement with Bank of Montreal (BMO) for the issuance of individual procurement cards. The necessary paperwork with BMO is close to completion and cardholders have been identified as Clerk-Treasurer Wendy Mis, Town Manager James Marino, Police Chief Stephen Scheckel, Fire Chief Mark Hajduk, Director of Parks & Recreation Mark Heintz, Director of Operations Robert Valois, and Controller Patricia Abbott as permitted users of Town-authorized procurement cards.

Two of the existing credit cards will be retained in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office until it is determined there is no longer a need for them.

Proposed Ordinance 1983 has been drafted to authorize the issuance of cards to these employees and to provide guidelines for their use.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to hear Ordinance 1983 on first reading as presented and schedule second reading for the June 2, 2025, meeting. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

ORDINANCE 1984: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (3)

Proposed ORDINANCE 1984 is AN ORDINANCE FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE YEAR 2025 (3). There are two funds in need of additional appropriations. The LIT Economic Development Fund is requesting additional appropriations in the amount of \$29,000.00. This is for the Strategic Planning work by HWC approved by Council at the February 3, 2025, meeting.

The Riverboat Fund is requesting \$102,000.00 in additional appropriations. In February of 2025, the town received invoices for tree removal work completed in 2024 totaling \$55,505.00. The 2025 budget did not contemplate paying tree removal costs for both 2024 and 2025. The request will reestablish the 2025 budget for work to be completed in 2025. The Town has a new vendor for these services and does not expect this to be an issue moving forward. In addition, the landscaping work done to close Terrace Drive (\$46,100.00) was not included in the 2025 budget.

The procedure for securing additional appropriations requires a public hearing, scheduled for June 2, 2025, and the adoption of an ordinance by the Town Council. Once the ordinance is adopted, the request will be submitted to the Department of Local Government Finance. These two funds are considered reporting only funds, and the appropriations will go into effect upon passage of the ordinance.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner to hear proposed Ordinance 1984 for additional appropriations on first reading and schedule a public hearing and second reading for June 2, 2025. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 2153: INTERIM TOWN MANAGER EXTENSION

Proposed RESOLUTION 2153 is A RESOLUTION EXTENDING RESOLUTION 2152: AUTHORIZING AN INTERIM TOWN MANAGER. Resolution 2152 was approved by the Council at the April 21, 2025, meeting to allow Patrica Abbott to serve as the Interim Town Manager through May 23, 2025. Because the new Town Manager has been in position for only four weeks, it would be beneficial to have Ms. Abbott continue in her role as Interim Town Manager through June 6, 2025. This will provide more time for the multitude of tasks and projects to be thoroughly transitioned.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth to approve Resolution 2153 as presented. Councilors took this opportunity to thank Patricia Abbott for going above and beyond as the Interim Town Manager. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

SETTLEMENT OF LAWSUITS

The Town participated in mediation sessions for three separate matters. The proposed agreements are contingent on Council approval. The matters and settlement amounts are as follows.

1. Willams v Town of Munster for \$100,000.00
2. Broederlow v Town of Munster for \$35,000.00
3. Mora v Town of Munster for \$275,000.00

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth to approve the mediation settlement agreements in the Williams, Broederlow, and Mora matters. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF FENCE QUOTE

The Calumet Avenue Pump Station is in need of a new fence for security and safety purposes. Public Works received three quotes for this work as follows.

Reeves Fence Services	\$30,900.00
Oak Ridge Fence and Gate	\$31,150.00
Northwest Indiana Fence Co.	\$41,800.00

The work will be paid for from the Water Cash Operating Fund.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Petersen, to approve the Reeves Fence Services, Inc. proposal in the amount of \$30,900.00 for the new fence at the Calumet Avenue Pump Station.

A brief discussion regarding the condition of the surrounding NIPSCO property. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT FOR MS4 SERVICES

The Town has worked with Reggie Korthals from OHM Advisors to administer the MS4 Program. The agreement for 2024 was for \$40,000.00. Director of Public Works Robert Valois is an MS4 Compliance and Enforcement Certified Inspector. In addition, there are now three Public Works employees who are MS4 Certified Inspectors.

Due to the increased level of knowledge now on Staff, it was determined that the supplemental services needed from OHM Advisors could be reduced to a not to exceed amount of \$20,000.00. Ms. Korthals will be contacted on an as-needed basis. OHM has provided an engagement letter dated May 2, 2025, outlining this arrangement. These services will be paid for from the Sewer Maintenance Fund.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve the OHM Advisors proposal for Stormwater Support in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.00 for 2025. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

SERVICE AGREEMENT: CHICAGO COMMUNICATIONS

Chicago Communications offers a “Bumper-to-Bumper” Service Agreement covering normal wear and tear failures of standard equipment on all patrol vehicles in the fleet. The annual cost for 59 vehicles is \$11,667.84 or \$16.48/vehicle/month. All squads in the Take Home Vehicle Program are not fully operational at this time. Chicago Communications is currently invoicing monthly only for those vehicles in service.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to authorize the Munster Police Department to enter into an agreement with Chicago Communications at a not to exceed amount of \$11,667.84 for Bumper-to-Bumper service May 1, 2025, through April 30, 2025. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

SOFTWARE AGREEMENT

The Investigations Division of the Police Department has determined it needs to change the background information software currently in use. Staff wants to change from Accurant (Lexis Nexis) to TLO from Trans Union.

TLO is the industry standard for this type of work. Staff found in a trial of the software that it produces better results for investigations. Both programs are similar in price with Accurant a \$200.00/month and TOL at \$195.00/month. TLO allows 500 monthly inquiries with overage fees applying after that.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to authorize the Munster Police Department enter into an agreement with Trans Union for a subscription to TLO software for \$195.00/month. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

REPORTS

Clerk-Treasurer Mis provided an update on the recent NIRPC Leadership meeting, noting progress on the Marquette Greenway project, pending Federal Highway and READI Grant approvals. She also reported that the partnership with the Economic Development Administration was renewed. Later that

week, the full NIRPC Commission approved a revised Unified Planning Work Program and adopted a resolution reaffirming its environmental commitment.

Clerk-Treasurer Mis also outlined cost-saving and revenue-generating efforts in response to SEA1. A department head meeting was held to identify opportunities within each department. Additionally, the Town of Munster hosted a regional meeting of Clerk-Treasurers to share strategies from neighboring municipalities. These ideas are under review to assess financial impact, feasibility, and implementation priority.

No other reports were presented.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Councilor Gardiner reminded us of the Park Board meeting scheduled for May 20th at 5 p.m.

Councilor Shinkan shared the Board of Safety would be meeting on May 20th at 7 a.m.

Both meetings are open to the public and the public is encouraged to attend.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Unless stated otherwise, all meetings of the Town Council begin at 6:30 p.m. at Munster Town Hall.)

The Town Council will hold a regular meeting on Monday, June 2, 2025. 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 Gardiner and seconded by Councilor Hofferth, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m. by voice vote.

George Shinkan, President

ATTEST:

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer