

TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 3, 2025

A meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, November 3, 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.

Councilors George Shinkan, Joseph Hofferth, Chuck Gardiner, David B. Nellans, and Jonathan Petersen were physically present in Town Hall. 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, Planning Director Sergio Mendoza, and Town Attorney Dave Westland. The news media were not represented.

President Shinkan presided and opened the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATION: MUNSTER JUNIOR WOMAN'S CLUB

Clerk-Treasurer Mis read A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING MUNSTER JUNIOR WOMAN'S CLUB WEEK proclaiming November 3-9, 2025, as Munster Junior Woman's Club Week in the Town of Munster.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Petersen, to approve the proclamation. Motion carried *viva voce*.

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.

Mr. Patrick McGill, 8710 Hohman Avenue, as a new Munster resident, he wanted to share the Hohman and Timrick intersection is dangerous with speeders and he is aware of two accidents that have occurred at this location.

Mr. Frank Zischerk, 8015 Greenwood, questioned who should review the structure next door to him that keeps blowing into his yard. Mr. Zischerk asked for the Town to look into.

No one else rose to claim the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of a regular meeting held on October 20, 2025

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-9K dated 09/19/2025 totaling \$151.24
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-9L dated 09/30/2025 totaling \$110,761.00
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-9M dated 09/30/2025 totaling \$150,823.85
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-10J dated 10/23/2025 totaling \$119,608.22
Approval of Voucher Register #25-10K dated 10/30/2025 totaling \$1,596,197.04
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-10L dated 10/31/2025 totaling \$544,730.11
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-11A dated 11/03/2025 totaling \$129,154.41

TREASURER'S REPORT

The September 2025 Treasurer's Report was presented.

WATER LEAK ADJUSTMENTS 2025-43 THROUGH 2025-45

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
2025-43	14,000	110,000	2 months	\$ 824.21	\$ 607.11	\$ 217.10
2025-44	5,000	34,000	2 months	\$ 260.81	\$ 180.45	\$ 80.36
2025-45	11,000	90,000	2 months	\$ 639.75	\$ 468.23	\$ 171.52

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

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE 1996: AMENDMENT TO SCHEDULE A: FEES AND FINES

Introduced ORDINANCE 1996 is AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SCHEDULE "A," A NON-CODIFIED PORTION OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE, AMENDING FEES. Council held first reading on the ordinance at the October 20, 2025, meeting. Staff reviewed all fees and fines taking into consideration SEA1 and other key factors including the date each fee was last updated, the cost of labor required to process each fee or fine, adjustments for inflation, rates of neighboring

cities and towns, and the financial impact on residents. Following is a list of the fees and fines to be updated and the estimated, annual revenue increase.

• Annual Business Registration	\$ 10,475
• Annual Contractor Application	\$ 55,000
• Solicitor's Permit	\$ 465
• Collection of excess yard waste and general debris	\$ 2,500
• False Alarm	\$ 37,100

With the exception of the excess yard waste and general debris, each of these fees and fines are General Fund revenues. The potential General Fund revenue increase is \$103,040.

The fines for false alarms have been restructured. There will be one free false alarm/year instead of the current two and a separate rate for residential and commercial alarms. The maximum residential alarm fine will be \$200.00/violation with six or more incidents, and the maximum commercial alarm fine will be \$225.00/violation with six or more incidents. There is significantly more officer time involved with a commercial false alarm than a residential. While there is an estimated revenue increase, the goal is to encourage correction of the underlying problem causing the false alarms.

Fees for building permits are still under review and will be brought to Council in future. Staff recommends moving forward with the fees and fines in proposed Ordinance 1996 at this time in order to have the new charges in place when 2026 business and contractor registrations are available for purchase on December 1, 2025, and at the start of the calendar year for the false alarm fines.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to adopt introduced Ordinance 1996 on second reading as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 2157: INDOT SIGNING AUTHORITY CCMG FY2026

Proposed RESOLUTION 2157 is a resolution granting authority to the Town Manager to sign for Fiscal Year 2026 Community Crossing Matching Grant documents. The Town is applying for the FY2026 Community Crossing Matching Grant. The application includes 3.053 miles of roadwork at an estimated total cost of \$2,953,830. Munster is requesting the maximum amount in funding which is \$1,000,000.

Road	From	To	Length
Singleton Drive	Columbia Avenue	Calumet Avenue	0.142 miles
Ridgeway Avenue	Calumet Avenue	Tapper Avenue	0.199 miles
Baring Avenue	Lambert Lane	Ada Lane	0.146 miles
Primrose Lane	Camellia Drive	Azalea Drive	0.097 miles
Cedar Court	Harrison Court	End of road	0.053 miles
Oakwood Court	33rd Avenue	Fairway Avenue	0.244 miles
State Line Road	Ridge Road	175th	0.917 miles
Indiana Parkway	Superior Avenue	Progress Avenue	0.193 miles
Progress Avenue	Indiana Parkway	Valparaiso Avenue	0.237 miles
Valparaiso Avenue	Progress Avenue	Superior Avenue	0.186 miles
New Devon	Carnaby Place	Leceister Road	0.483 miles
River Drive	Frederick Avenue	Harrison Avenue	0.080 miles
Exeter	Margo Lane	Norwich Lane	0.076 miles

INDOT administers the CCMG projects and requires a resolution to authorize someone to sign the contract and related documents for the project. The CCMG program runs on a tight timeline and having authority to sign is critical to the process. Resolution 2157 has been drafted to authorize James Marino to sign the CCMG FY2026 documents.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to adopt Resolution 2157 as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

ORDINANCE 1997: 2025 PARK BOND ORDINANCE

Proposed ORDINANCE 1997 is AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, INDIANA, APPROVING THE ISSUANCE OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, INDIANA, PARK DISTRICT BONDS OF 2025, THE APPROPRIATION OF THE PROCEEDS THEREOF AND CERTAIN MATTERS RELATED THERETO. At the June 16, 2025, meeting, Council approved an engagement letter with Baker Tilly to assist in determining the appropriate sizing of the General Obligation (GO) and Park bonds while maintaining a steady tax rate in line with changes enacted by SEA 1. As a result of this analysis, it was determined to issue separate Park and General Obligation Bonds. Over the past few months, the Park Board has worked through the required process to issue a bond solely for Park-related needs.

The Park Board adopted the required resolutions at their September and October meetings to both authorize and appropriate the proposed bond. The Park Board concluded their part of the process October 21, 2025, by adopting Resolution 2025-07 authorizing the issuance of special taxing district bonds in an amount not to exceed \$5,000,000. Council approval is scheduled for this evening.

Bond Counsel has prepared the documents to allow for up to \$5,000,000 in proceeds. The Project List, with issuance costs, comes to \$4,237,000. The proceeds will be used primarily for park improvements and equipment replacement. The full project list is included on the second page of this memo.

The final step is for Council to approve the issuance and appropriation of the bonds. Ordinance 1997 has been drafted by Barnes & Thornburg for this purpose. This required notices,

advertisements and public hearing have all taken place. As a result, Bond Counsel has scheduled Ordinance 1997 to be adopted this evening on first reading.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to suspend the rules and waive the readings to allow for the adoption of Ordinance 1997 on first reading as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, adopt Ordinance 1997 on first reading as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 1998: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (6)

Proposed ORDINANCE 1998 is AN ORDINANCE FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE YEAR 2025 (6). There are two funds in need of additional appropriations: Water Bond & Interest Fund and Cumulative Capital Development Fund. The Waterworks Revenue Bond was closed on October 6, 2025. The Water Bond first payment is due in January 1, 2026, meaning the payment will be made in 2025. The additional appropriation request of \$734,686 for the Water Bond & Interest Fund covers this first debt payment for the Waterworks Revenue Bond.

The Cumulative Capital Development (CCD) Fund is requesting \$81,000 to cover the true-up portion of the Axon body camera contract and other software licensing.

The procedure for securing additional appropriations requires a public hearing, scheduled for November 17, 2025, and the adoption of an ordinance by the Town Council. The Cumulative Capital Development Fund is considered a controlled fund. Once the ordinance is adopted, the request will be submitted to the Department of Local Government Finance which will issue its determination within ten days. The appropriations for all the Water Bond & Interest Fund will go into effect upon passage of the ordinance

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to hear proposed Ordinance 1998 for additional appropriations on first reading, and schedule a public hearing and second reading for November 17, 2025. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

ORDINANCE 1999: 2025 BUDGET REDUCTION

Proposed ORDINANCE 1999 is AN ORDINANCE FOR THE REDUCTION OF THE 2025 BUDGET. When the 2025 budget was adopted, estimates were made regarding how much would be received and spent in the last half of 2024 as well as what the December 31, 2024 cash balance would be. All funds were reviewed in October to determine the current status of each fund. Earlier this evening, Council was asked to consider Ordinance 1998 for additional appropriations in two funds as a result of this review. Ordinance 1999 asks for budget reductions in the following twelve funds.

Fund #	Fund	Reduction Amount	Description
1101	General	\$ 400,000	Payroll vacancies throughout year
2201	Motor Vehicle Highway - Unrestricted	\$ 75,000	Payroll vacancies throughout year
2203	Motor Vehicle Highway - Restricted	\$ 1,000,000	Road funding to be used in 2026
2204	Park & Recreation	\$ 75,000	Payroll vacancies throughout year
2250	Municipal Wheel Tax	\$ 25,000	Backup source for road work and engineering
2580	Sewer Maintenance	\$ 200,000	Payroll vacancies throughout year
3330	Redevelopment Bond Reserve	\$ 600,000	Bond & Interest fully funded
3331	Economic Development Bond Reserve	\$ 2,100,000	Bond & Interest fully funded
4406	Redevelopment Operating	\$ 2,000	Fewer legal fees/notices, meeting expenses than anticipated
4445	TIF-Main Fund	\$ 750,000	Reduced spending (Ridge Road & NICTD)
6101	Water Cash Operating	\$ 100,000	Payroll vacancies throughout year
7727	Self-Funded Health Insurance	\$ 166,889	Medical premium holiday

The bulk of the reductions come from lower payroll costs. This is due in part to vacancies from standard employee turnover and the lengthy hiring process for police officers. The balance of the reductions reflect savings through better pricing than anticipated, project changes and spending less than was anticipated when the budget was prepared last year.

The Municipal Wheel Tax has served primarily as a backup to the MVH and Surtax Funds; as a result, there are unneeded appropriations. This fund will be used more actively in 2026.

The Redevelopment Bond Reserve and Economic Development Bond Reserve Funds are required funds under the terms of their respective bond ordinances as protection in case adequate funds are not available, the debt payment can still be made. All of the debt payments in question are fully funded, and the reserves will not be needed.

The TIF-Main Fund had lower expenditures than contemplated originally primarily because the NICTD betterments are nearing completion, and the Ridge Road Project is on hold pending notice from FHWA.

A budget reduction requires the approval of Council; Ordinance 1999 has been drafted for this purpose. The reductions will go into effect upon passage of the ordinance.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to hear proposed Ordinance 1999 for budget reductions on first reading, and schedule second reading for November 17, 2025. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

ORDINANCE 2000: 2026 SALARY AND PAY PLAN

Proposed ORDINANCE 2000 is AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE 2026 PAY PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, INDIANA (2026 SALARY ORDINANCE).

Compensation of elected officials must be fixed, and the Police Pension Base must be certified before January 1 of the ensuing year. Proposed Ordinance 2000 has been prepared for that purpose, and it includes other annual authorizations and clarifications related to payroll. Of note are the following.

1. All elected officials (including the Clerk-Treasurer) and firefighters will receive a 2.00% increase. (Rates for elected officials must be set by December 31, 2025.)
2. The Certified First-Class Officers Rate will increase by 2.00%. (The rate must be set and certified to the State of Indiana by December 31, 2025.)
3. The Park Board is expected to approve the pay rates for part-time employees at their November 18, 2025, meeting; no changes are anticipated for 2026.
4. The final adjustments to comport with the Compensation and salary Structure for non-Sworn Personnel adopted November 18, 2024, will be made.
5. Minor language changes to provide consistency throughout the ordinance and to match what is happening in practice.
6. All benefits and related provisions (e.g. health insurance, Park discounts, etc.) will continue.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to consider Ordinance 2000 on first reading and schedule second reading for the next regular meeting. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

ORDINANCE 2001: KENMARA DEVELOPMENT REZONING

Proposed ORDINANCE 2001 is AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND APPROVING THE ZONE CHANGE FOR THE *KENMARA TECHNOLOGY PARK PUD*, A SPECIAL DISTRICT – PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT, AND ESTABLISHING THE PERMITTED USES THEREOF, AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA. Representatives SPIN Munster, LLC is seeking to amend the Town of Munster Zone Map by reclassifying Tract 1 of the property commonly known as S of 400-440 Fisher Rd., Munster, IN 46321 from CD-4.B, a General Urban B Character District to a Planned Unit Development Zoning District to be known as KENMARA TECHNOLOGY PARK PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT to establish Permitted Uses only.

Representatives of the development appeared before the Plan Commission on August 12, 2025, and September 9, 2025. A public hearing was held on the matter and remonstrances were heard, and, based upon the testimony and evidence presented by the Petitioner, the Plan Commission voted seven in favor and zero opposed to forward a favorable recommendation to the Town Council to approved the proposed Town of Munster Zone Map Amendment and Zone Change Ordinance to develop a Certified Technology Park, per IC 36-7-32 for “high technology activity” uses as specifically defined in IC 36-7-32-7.

Council must take final action to adopt, reject, or amend the proposal. An amendment to the proposed PUD Rezone would require further consideration by the Plan Commission.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to adopt Ordinance 2001 a Town of Munster Zone Map Amendment and Zone Change Ordinance reclassifying a CD-4.B, General Urban B Character District to KENMARA TECHNOLOGY PARK PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

CENTENNIAL VILLAGE TAX ABATEMENT

As part of the Development Agreement for Centennial Village, the Town is granting tax abatement on the owner-occupied residential condominium units located within the Centennial Village development. Each year, the taxpayer must file a form with Lake County to document that the property remains eligible for abatement. The form needs a signature from the Town stating that the property owner is in substantial compliance.

The abatement is only on the owner-occupied residential portion of the development and is provided on a ten-year declining basis. Year 1 of abatement is 100%, Year 2, 90%, and so on. The taxpayer (Centennial Village – CV Development LLC & Others) previously submitted a list of residential condominium units that included those known to be rented. They revised the list to remove the units being rented. The Community Development Department reviewed the revised list and confirmed that none of the units submitted for the tax abatement are included in our list of known rental units. Because verification of owner occupancy for eight units is indeterminable, we are requiring the developer to attest that these units are owner occupied.

This matter was considered at the October 6, 2025, meeting and was tabled pending further review.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to find Centennial Village – CV Development LLC and Others to be in substantial compliance with the tax abatement requirements and authorize the Council President to sign the Compliance with Statement of Benefits. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

OPIOID FUND USE REQUEST

The Town receives a portion of the national opioid settlement; distributions began in 2022 and will continue through 2038. Over the life of the distributions, Munster is scheduled to receive \$355,836.69. There is currently \$210,015.43 in cash and investments between the restricted and unrestricted funds. Before any of the funds can be spent, Council must authorize their use. This is in addition to the appropriation process.

At the April 3, 2023, meeting, Council authorized spending \$6,000.00 annually for the DARE Program from the Opioid settlement funds. To-date, this has been the only expenditure from these monies. Earlier this year, the Police Department hired a Social Worker. Opioid funds can be used for the wages of this employee. Staff is requesting spending \$25,000.00/year towards this cost. In addition, there are various training opportunities that would be beneficial for the Social Worker and Staff is requesting another \$1,000.00/year for this purpose.

Use of the opioid settlement for these purposes will reduce the amount expended by the General Fund.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve the use of \$25,000.00 annually towards the wages and benefits of the Social Worker and the use of up to \$1,000.00 annually for training from the Opioid Settlement Funds. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

BARNES & THORNBURG LOBBYING

The Town has engaged the law firm of Barnes & Thornburg LLP to advocate for the Town's interests before the Indiana General Assembly. Their services include monitoring legislation impacting Munster, drafting legislation, meeting with legislators on the Town's behalf, monitoring relevant hearings and testifying on behalf of the Town if necessary, representing the Town in front of executive branch agencies, monitoring and assisting with grants, and tracking federal legislation that may impact the Munster.

Although these services provide advantages to the Town, they are not required continuously. Certain tasks can be handled by Staff or accessed through alternative resources. For example, Staff actively monitors legislation, a function also performed by Accelerate Indiana Municipalities (AIM). AIM collaborates closely with legislators on important initiatives and legislation to promote municipal interests.

Due to the anticipated decrease in property tax revenues resulting from Senate Enrolled Act 1 (SEA 1), Staff has been instructed to explore methods for reducing expenses. Since the services of Barnes & Thornburg are not required on a continuous basis, the Town can achieve savings by ending its engagement agreement with them. Their annual service fee totals \$150,000.00. However, there will be occasions when the Town requires additional support to promote its interests. During such instances, Barnes & Thornburg can be engaged to advocate for specific legislation or initiatives.

Staff spoke with Barnes & Thornburg regarding the intent to terminate the engagement. They expressed an understanding of the Town's financial motivations for ending the agreement and looks forward to working with the Town in the future on legislative matters.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to direct the Town Manager to notify Barnes & Thornburg LLC that the Town is terminating its engagement agreement for state legislative and executive branch relations counsel services. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Clerk-Treasurer Mis shared Controller was acknowledged with a Finance Award at the AIM Idea Summit. She continued to share the Summit sessions provided valuable information.

Councilor Gardiner announced the Sustainability Committee would be meeting on November 10, 2025. The Munster Civic Foundation is hosting an informative meeting about the new grant program on November 10, 2025. Coffee with the Council will be on November 19, 2025.

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, November 17, 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 Nellans and seconded by Councilor Gardiner, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m. by voice vote.

George Shinkan, President

ATTEST:

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer