

**TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 7, 2024**

A meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 7:01 p.m. on Thursday, November 7, 2024. 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 G. Hofferth, Chuck Gardiner, Jonathan Petersen, and David B. Nellans were physically present at Town Hall. Also present in Town Hall were Clerk-Treasurer Wendy Mis, Controller/Interim Town Manager Patricia Abbott, Fire Chief Mark Hajduk, Town Attorney Dave Westland, Director of Operations Bob Valois and Hammond Sanitary District representative Mike Hawkins. Representatives from the media were not present.

President Nellans 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.

Mr. Robert Thomas, 8445 Manor, and Mr. Christopher Pitts, 8445 Manor, shared safety concerns along the NITCD train line and provided information from the USDOT regarding community safety assessment and rail trespass prevention.

Mr. Mike Englert, 113 Beverly Place, updated us on the progress on Beverly Parkway as it is ready for seeding and landscaping.

Mr. Mike Hatczel, 502 Evergreen Lane, asked for an update on the curbing.

Mr. Tom Jurich, 1839 Magnolia, stressed the importance of input from the public, especially regarding safety.

No one else rose to the floor.

Clerk-Treasurer Mis shared that emails were received addressing the CVPA, the Ridge Road Lane reduction, reducing speed on White Oak and speeders on Azalea.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of a regular meeting held on October 21, 2024

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-9K dated 09/30/24 totaling \$56,383.25

Approval of Voucher Register #24-9L dated 09/30/24 totaling \$1,690,956.18

Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-10J dated 10/24/24 totaling \$1,625,887.34

The Local Option Income Tax – Economic Development Fund needs appropriations for the outside services related to the zoning code roll back. The total appropriation request for the fund is \$30,000.00.

The Sewer Maintenance Fund needs appropriations for the MS4 contract. The total appropriation request for the fund is \$30,000.00.

The Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission has agreed to reimburse the Park Department for the purchase of memorial trees. This was not known at the time the current budget was prepared. Memorial trees are purchased from the Park Donation Non-Reverting Fund. The total appropriation request for the fund is \$9,000.00.

The Police Department has acquired new software which was not contemplated in the current Technology Fund budget. The total appropriation request for the fund is \$22,875.00.

The procedure for securing additional appropriations requires a public hearing, scheduled for November 18, 2024, and the adoption of an ordinance by the Town Council. These are considered reporting only funds and the appropriations will go into effect upon passage of the ordinance.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to hear Ordinance 1968 on first reading, and schedule a public hearing and second reading for November 18, 2024. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 1969: WATER RATE INCREASE

Proposed ORDINANCE 1969 is AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SCHEDULE “A,” A NON-CODIFIED PORTION OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE, AMENDING FEES FOR WATER UTILITIES. It is important to regularly examine the rates to prevent the need for significant changes. This helps our residents and allows Staff to get on a schedule of capital improvements while keeping up with maintenance.

In response to an action taken by the City of Hammond, water rates increased in 2021. That increase addressed the increase from Hammond and prompted a rate study by NewGen Strategies and Solutions. Prior to the 2021 increase, the rates had not been updated in several years. The 2022 ordinance established rates from 2022 through 2025. The 2022 ordinance provided for fluctuating percentage increases going as high as 29%. Residents and Staff want to avoid this type of increase moving forward.

At the April 1, 2024, meeting, Council approved an engagement letter with Baker Tilly to perform a study of the current water rates. Baker Tilly looked at current and projected expenses through the year 2028 including the Bond Anticipation Note issued earlier this year and the expected bond to be issued in 2025. This was the basis for determining the revenue requirements to meet these needs and maintain adequate reserves. The result is a 9.24% increase in rates over three years, meaning an approximate 3% rate increase is needed in each of the years 2026, 2027, and 2028. This increase would be on residential, business, and sprinkler rates. Deposits on new accounts will increase in each of the stated years to reflect the new rates.

The procedure for instituting a new rate includes adopting an ordinance and holding a public hearing scheduled for December 2nd, 2024. Ordinance 1969 has been drafted for this purpose.

Councilor Petersen questioned the process of rate studies, and a discussion ensued.

IMPACT CONTRACT REVISION

The Town of Munster works with Impact Networking to manage its IT needs. Impact has made a review of the number of items being serviced and under the terms of the existing contract, the monthly payment will increase by \$128.72 from \$15,955.56 to \$16,084.28

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve the revised monthly invoice cost for Impact Networking to a cost not to exceed \$16,084.28. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

LEASE AGREEMENT FOR TENNIS COURTS

The School Town of Munster approached the Town requesting the use of property to construct new tennis courts to be located in Community Park in the area surrounding the pool.

The property will be used for an outside tennis facility including out housing, bathrooms, and all activities related to or support the tennis facility. In lieu of rent payments, the School Town will be responsible for all maintenance, utilities, and improvements made to the property. The property is subject to a covenant of the Indiana Land & Water Conservation Fund which requires the property have open public use hours. Staff has requested language about hours of operation and that if the Department of Natural Resources requires a conversion be made, that the lessee fund it.

We are awaiting the exact legal description and there is a question of the appropriate liability insurance amount. It is suggested that the form of the agreement be approved pending these two items.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to approve the general form of the lease agreement by and between the Town of Munster, Indiana, and the Board of Parks and Recreation of the Town of Munster, Indiana, and the School Town of Munster pending the legal description and insurance amount. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

PURCHASE OF PICK UP TRUCK

The Public Works Director is in need of a new truck. The purchase will be made from the 2020 General Obligation Bond. Quotes were sought from dealerships that had 2025 Chevrolet 2500 Silverado Crew Cabs in stock as follows.

Garber Chevrolet, Highland, Indiana	
2024 Chevy Silverado	\$70,600.00
Miscellaneous fees	<u>238.76</u>
Total	\$70,838.76

Phillips Chevrolet, Frankfort, Illinois	
2024 Chevy Silverado	\$71,585.95
Miscellaneous fees	<u>435.03</u>
Total	\$72,020.98

Bosak Chevrolet did not submit a quote by the deadline.

Costs related to the inspection are spread among the various departments that use the fuel pumps.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Shinkan, to approve the service agreement quote from B & K Equipment to provide a monthly walkthrough inspection of the Town fuel tanks. The cost is \$129.00 monthly for a total cost of \$1,548.00 from August 2024 through July 2025. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

REPORTS

Councilor Petersen will be hosting an event on November 19th at the Munster Public Library.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Councilor Gardiner shared there will be an upcoming TOD meeting on November 13, 2024.

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 Monday, November 18, 2024. 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 Shinkan and seconded by Councilor Gardiner, the meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m. by voice vote.

David B. Nellans, President

ATTEST:

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer