

**TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 18, 2024**

A meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 18, 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, Police Chief Stephen Scheckel, Town Attorney Dave Westland, and Director of Operations Bob Valois. Hammond Sanitary District representative Mike Hawkins was not present. 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.

PROCLAMATION: SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

Councilor Hofferth read a proclamation recognizing Small Business Saturday and the Holiday Shop Small Crawl presented by the Munster Chamber of Commerce.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Shinkan, to approve the proclamation as presented. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against.

PUBLIC HEARING: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (6)

The procedure for securing additional appropriations requires a public hearing and the adoption of an ordinance by the Town Council. The first reading was held at the November 7, 2024, meeting. Additional appropriations are being sought in five funds: Parking Meter Fund, Local Option Income Tax-Economic Development Fund, Sewer Maintenance Fund, Park Donation Non-Reverting Fund, and Technology Fund.

After Council approval, the appropriations for all funds will be in effect and reported to the Department of Local Government Finance for their review and authorization.

President Nellans opened the public hearing.

Mr. Robert Thomas, 8445 Manor, had a question about the Centennial Park Parking Meter Fund.

No other member of the public came forward to speak, the public hearing was closed.

PRESENTATION

Mr. John Miles of One-Eyed Jacks gave a brief presentation on his proposed services to be reviewed later in the meeting.

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, of the Manor Avenue Safety Group shared information from with the Council regarding safety and sound.

No one else rose to the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of a regular meeting held on November 7, 2024

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-11C dated 11/08/24 totaling \$57,956.99
Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-11D dated 11/08/24 totaling \$50,641.67
Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-11E dated 11/07/24 totaling \$485,710.34
Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-11F dated 11/14/24 totaling \$161,042.99
Approval of Voucher Register #24-11G dated 11/18/24 totaling \$517,267.92
Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-11H dated 11/15/24 totaling \$508,507.06

WATER LEAK ADJUSTMENTS 2024-53

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:

<u>Adjustment Number</u>	<u>Average Usage</u>	<u>Actual Usage</u>	<u>Length of Time</u>	<u>Original Bill</u>	<u>Requested Adjustment Amount</u>	<u>Adjusted Bill</u>
2024-53	3,000	56,000	2 months	\$ 362.79	\$ 320.35	\$ 42.44

Councilor Petersen requested invoices for Westland and Bennet be voted on separately.

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

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to approve the invoices from Westland and Bennett. A discussion ensued. Councilor Shinkan called to question with a second from Councilor Gardiner. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, and Nellans then voted in favor of payment of the Westland and Bennett invoices as presented in Voucher Register #24-11G; Councilor Petersen voted against. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE 1968: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (6)

Introduced ORDINANCE 1968 is AN ORDINANCE FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE YEAR 2024 (6). This matter was the subject of a public hearing earlier this evening. Once the ordinance is adopted, the appropriations will go into effect and be reported to the Department of Local Government Finance.

Councilor Shinkan 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.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 2130: FUTURE OF CENTENNIAL PARK

Proposed RESOLUTION 2130 is A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF THE CENTENNIAL PARK CLUBHOUSE FACILITY. The Clubhouse has been closed to the public due to structural concerns with the allowance to operate the golf pro shop and storage of golf carts until a new facility is built. Those facilities are currently under construction with completion expected later this year. Council held a joint session with the Park Board on April 11, 2024, and discussed the future of the Clubhouse at Centennial Park.

As a result of that meeting, it was determined to permanently close and vacate the Centennial Park Clubhouse facility and move forward with plans to demolish it after the golf operations end later this year. The Park Board adopted Resolution 2024-02 at their April 16, 2024, meeting which made this recommendation to the Council.

Resolution 2130 has been drafted to confirm the Park Board resolution.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Shinkan, to adopt Resolution 2130 as presented. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 1972: 2025 SALARY AND PAY PLAN

Proposed ORDINANCE 1972 is AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE 2025 PAY PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, INDIANA (2025 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 1972 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 3.00% increase. (Rates for elected officials must be set by December 31, 2024.)
2. The Certified First-Class Officers Rate will increase by 3.00%. (The rate must be set and certified to the State of Indiana by December 31, 2024.)

3. The Park Board is expected to approve the pay rates for part-time employees at their November 19, 2024, meeting; Exhibit C will be updated as needed for second reading and adoption of Ordinance 1972.
4. Changes to the 2024 provisions include:
 - a. Implementation of the Min/Mid/Max system as described in the Compensation and Salary Structure for non-Sworn Personnel Policy.
 - b. Addition of employees as requested for the 2025 budget including: (1) Social Worker – PD, (1) Administrative Assistant – TM, (1) Administrative Secretary – CD, (1) Maintenance Level II (PR), (1) Maintenance Level IV (PR), (1) Administrative Secretary (PR), (1) MS4 Coordinator – PW, (3) Maintenance Level II (PW), (3) Maintenance Level III (PW).
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 Hofferth, to hear Ordinance 1972 on first reading as presented and set second reading for December 2, 2024. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

COMPENSATION POLICY FOR NON-SWORN PERSONNEL

At the May 20, 2024 meeting, Council approved ODS to conduct a compensation study for non-sworn personnel and a benefits study for all personnel. ODS gave all non-sworn personnel the opportunity to review and update their job descriptions and interviewed all these employees. The job descriptions were then updated by ODS to properly reflect the work being performed by each role. The revised job descriptions were then compared through a database of comparable positions to determine the market rate.

ODS provided two options. One was a Step and Grade system like what is currently in place. The other was a Grade system with minimum, midpoint, and maximum rates (Min/Mid/Max). One of the main issues that comes up with our current system is the lack of flexibility; every employee must be on a Step within their Grade. This has proven to be a disincentive for some employees and frustrating to Department Heads particularly when seeking new hires. This concern has been voiced to Staff as well as ODS.

After discussions with ODS, the recommendation is to implement the Min/Mid/Max system. This allows Department Heads to reward the employee that goes above and beyond while also allowing for annual cost of living increases for all employees. It can also motivate employees.

ODS compared employees' current rates to the market-based Min/Mid/Max rates. Most employees are where they should be within their respective Grade. A few are below it and will be brought to the appropriate rate. Some remain at a higher rate than the study showed the market rate to be. These employees will receive a lump sum bonus as the maximum rate increases.

Part of the ODS engagement included the creation of a compensation policy which provides structure, guidance, and an explanation to how Munster will approach compensating its non-sworn personnel. This document is not the annual Salary Ordinance. That will be adopted separately.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve the Compensation and Salary Structure Policy for non-Sworn Personnel dated November 18, 2024. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

RELEASE OF RETAINAGE: CCMG 2023-2

The Town received a Community Crossing Matching Grant (CCMG) for street paving under the 2023-2 call. The streets included Terrace, Forest, River, and Kraay. On February 19, 2024, Council awarded the contract to Milestone Contractors North, Inc. for a total of \$1,307,700.00. Change Order #1 was approved at the October 7, 2024, meeting bringing the final contract cost to \$1,416,371.35.

SEH has reviewed and recommends release of the final retainage amount of \$141,637.17.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Shinkan, to approve the final release of retainage for Terrace, Forest, River and Kraay (CCMG 2023-2) in the amount of \$141,637.17. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

CCMG 2024-2: AMENDMENT #2 FOR ENGINEERING

On July 15, 2024, the SEH original design agreement was approved for the CCMG 2024-2 with the original scope of design services that was based on partial curb and gutter removal and replacement at Oakwood Court, Heather Drive, Cardinal Drive, Woodlawn Avenue, and Broadmoor Avenue. On August 5, 2024, Council approved a change order for the engineering of additional streets from the original scope of services bringing the contract total to \$134,300.00.

The Town has decided to proceed with full curb and gutter removal and replacement, along with full depth pavement removal. In addition, the watermain along Broadmoor Avenue from Calumet Avenue to Euclid Avenue to be removed and replaced as part of the project. This scope expansion requires additional design efforts to develop a comprehensive plan set that includes all necessary information for the total reconstruction of the project streets. The revised plan set will include full curb and gutter removal and replacement along all project streets, plan and profile views, and spot elevations along the curb and roadway as needed for construction. The scope expansion of the watermain will result in an additional design effort above that originally estimated. Additional fees of \$100,500.00 for completion of the services plus Resident Project Representative services required for reconstruction of all five streets are requested.

The additional design services for redesign of the streets will be funded by G.O. Bond funds. Work related to the watermain will be funded by Water funds.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve \$100,500.00 for additional street design and watermain design, separation of combined sewers, and resident project representative services for a total additional cost of \$100,500 and a total contract cost of \$234,800.00. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

PURCHASE OF RADIOS FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works needs new radios for their vehicles. The current stock was purchased in 2002 and there is now a lack of coverage. The new radios will have a 7/800 MHZ frequency which is the same frequency used by Police, Fire, and Lake County.

There are only two local vendors who supply Motorola radios and quotes were received from both as follows.

Motorola Solutions

(53) APX1500 Enhanced 7/800 MHZ mobile radios

With three-year service and programming	\$186,247.30
Installation by Chicago Communication	<u>15,635.00</u>
Total	\$201,882.30

Tri-Electronics

(53) APX2500 7/800 P25 Phase 2	
TDMA mobile radios	\$195,040.00
Included two-year warranty and installation	<u>23,744.00</u>
Total	\$218,784.00

Staff prefers to have the radios installed before the snow season begins. Only Tri-Electronics has the radios in stock and Staff recommends awarding the project to them. Funding will come from General Obligation Bond proceeds.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to approve the purchase of fifty-three APX2500 7/800 P25 Phase 2 TDMA mobile radios from Tri-Electronics at a cost of \$218,784.00. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

ENGAGEMENT LETTER: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A consistent message the Town has received from its residents, Council, and Staff is the less-than-optimal communication about projects, difficulty with using the website, and inconsistent social media presence. Presently, there is no one on staff with the time or skills to adequately handle these needs. As a result, Staff has spoken with firms that can fill this gap.

One-Eyed Jacks is a public relations firm that can manage the Town's social media presence including maintaining its website, YouTube channel, Instagram and Twitter accounts. They will provide press releases, content creation including photography and video services. They would work with an internal Munster Staff Committee to determine what is needed and for ongoing media presence. This can include videos of Town events such as Lite the Nite, the K-9 Golf Outing, the Snowplow Rodeo and the like. It will also handle outreach about construction projects including road resurfacing and water tower restoration.

The material created will serve both our residents and potential developers as positive media coverage will highlight what is good about Munster. There is a lot happening in Town; this will help us communicate those things to our residents in a proactive, positive way.

The agreement calls for twelve months, but Council can choose to have it be for six months and evaluate if it wants to continue. In addition, once the program is established, Staff can be identified and trained to take on some of the tasks such as regular postings. There would be a monthly fee of \$7,500.00 for ongoing maintenance. Additional services (e.g. voice-over work) are available and would be pre-approved by Staff. The program will be paid from the LIT – Economic Development Fund.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to table the proposal pending additional discussion. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, and Petersen voted in favor; none voted against. Councilor Nellans did not vote. Motion carried.

NIPSCO EASEMENTS

As part of NIPSCO's ongoing infrastructure improvements, they are installing new poles and guy wires in three Munster locations. All are near the Pennsy Greenway along Timrick Drive. Two of the properties are owned by the Town and the third by the Park Department.

Each location already has an easement. The nature of the NIPSCO improvement necessitates a new easement to properly reflect the larger poles and new angles/tension needed in the guy wire anchors. NIPSCO will pay Munster \$1,000.00/easement.

The Park Board will be asked at their November 19, 2024, meeting to approve the easement for the location that is in their name.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Shinkan, to approve the Easement for Electric Facilities #200138-002PE in exchange for \$1,000.00 and the Easement for Electric Facilities #200138-003-PE in exchange for \$1,000.00. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

REPORTS

Councilor Petersen will be co-hosting an event on November 19th with the Munster Public Library at the Library at 6:30 p.m.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

No reports were presented.

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, December 2, 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 7:51 p.m. by voice vote.

David B. Nellans, President

ATTEST:

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer