

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

A meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, February 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. The meeting was not recorded although a meeting transcript was electronically generated by Zoom.

Councilors George Shinkan, Joseph G. Hofferth, Chuck Gardiner, David B. Nellans, and Jonathan Petersen, and 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, Director of Operations Bob Valois, and Hammond Sanitary District representative Mike Hawkins. Representatives from the media were not present.

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](http://munster.org), that questions or comments about an item on the agenda were to be emailed to [wmis@munster.org](mailto: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. Mitch Barloga, 1900 Bluebird Lane, updated the Council about the For Love of Munster public forum and online petition with support for the original Ridge Road project.

Mr. Greg Starcevich, 9501 Cottonwood Drive, asked for traffic to be slow on Camilla Avenue and wanted to know what the Town was planning.

Mr. Cavin McNulty, 8202 Jackson Avenue, a High School senior, requested the Council consider a sustainability commission. He shared the youth would like more walkability and less blacktop.

Mrs. Margaret Pruzin, 1159 Bluebird Lane, requested an update on the RAISE grant and wanted to know how the residents can learn more about the status.

Mr. Tom Jurich, 1839 Magnolia Lane, asked if the RAISE grant had a cost to the Town.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of a regular meeting held on January 20, 2025

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS**

Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-12K dated 12/31/24 totaling \$1,814,625.30  
Approval of Voucher Register #24-12L dated 12/31/24 totaling \$9,602,856.45  
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-1H dated 01/23/25 totaling \$488,018.63  
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-1I dated 01/24/25 totaling \$593,807.08  
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-1J dated 01/30/25 totaling \$645,139.56  
Approval of Voucher Register #25-2A dated 02/03/25 totaling \$206,983.73

**WATER WRITE-OFFS**

Resolution 1745 outlines the collection policy to be followed for Water Utility accounts. In 2020 we began using TRECS as an additional collection remedy. There are twenty-two accounts from 2021-2023 totaling \$2,098.15 that had appropriate collection efforts made but were not successful. It is unlikely that these would be or could be collected.

Under Ordinance 1248, Town of Munster Water Utility records are excluded from disclosure. Therefore, a detailed listing is not provided with this memorandum but is available to the Council at the Clerk-Treasurer’s Office.

**100R FILING LETTER**

Starting in January 2013, the Certified Report of Names, Addresses, Duties, and Compensation of Public Employees (Form 100R) must be entered through the Indiana Gateway for Government Units. The form must be submitted by January 31 each year. (IC 5-11-13-1)

The 100R salary report was submitted to Gateway on January 17, 2025.

**TREASURER’S REPORTS**

The December 2024 and the 2024 Annual Treasurer’s Reports were presented.

**WATER LEAK ADJUSTMENTS 2025-3**

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>
2025-3	7,000	42,000	2 months	\$ 273.45	\$ 175.97	\$ 97.48

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ORDINANCE 1976: AMENDMENT #1: 2025 SALARY ORDINANCE**

Proposed ORDINANCE 1976 is AMENDMENT #1 TO THE 2025 SALARY ORDINANCE. Ordinance 1972 established the 2025 Salary Ordinance and was adopted December 2, 2024. The following amendments are proposed.

1. The proposed amendment would make the following staffing changes.
  - a. One Social Worker (Grade 7) in the Police Department will be added. This has been discussed at the Staff level for over a year and the Police Department is ready to move forward.
  - b. The role of *Civilian Accreditation/Public Records Manager* (Grade 4) in the Police Department has been reclassified as *PD Technical Support Specialist* (Grade 5). The

new title and reclassification were made to reflect the duties actually performed by the incumbent. The role has taken on many technical and IT-type duties over the past year. The accreditation and records management duties will remain within the position. The reclassification is recommended after consultation with ODS who performed the salary and job description review last year.

- c. The addition of six Maintenance employees in Public Works. This will increase the staff of both the Street and the Water/Sewer crews to twenty each. There is a need for additional crew members to handle the additional maintenance needs associated with the train, the increased number of projects, and the need to keep up with the standard day-to-day work needed throughout Town.
  - d. One Economic Development Director in the Town Manager's Office will be added. Munster is a mature town, and redevelopment is critical to Munster's future if it is to thrive and maintain its character. To ensure these standards remain, there is a need for focused effort on redevelopment, to be in conversation with potential developers and to ensure development standards are set, communicated and adhered to by developers. To be in the driver's seat, we need someone who understands how economic development and redevelopment works, who builds relationships with potential developers, who seeks out the development Munster wants, and who acts as the day-to-day liaison between Council and the developer. As the train prepares for revenue-producing ridership by year-end, Munster is facing opportunities with the TDD and the TOD. An Economic Director can prove to be invaluable for Munster.
2. The proposed amendment would include stipends for Public Works employees who are assigned to on-call duty, who become and remain certified as an MS4 Inspector, and who train for and receive a Pesticide Applicator's license. Stipends for similar, role-specific certifications are being reviewed for other departments; these will be added for second reading or a future amendment.
  3. The longevity payment schedule was revamped in 2024 for all regular full-time and regular part-time employees. Language is needed to clarify the inclusion of Firefighters in the new system.
  4. Language is added to include Resolution 2147 and to address scrivener's errors within the original document. The necessary exhibits have been updated to conform with the proposed changes.
  5. All other provisions of Ordinance 1972 remain.

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to consider Ordinance 1976 on first reading and schedule second reading for the next regular meeting. Councilor Gardiner questioned the timeline of hiring an Economic Development before we hire a Town Manager. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **ORDINANCE 1977: AMENDMENT TO COMMUNITY HOSPITAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT**

Proposed ORDINANCE 1977 is AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) TO THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, INDIANA. The subject PUD was established under Ordinance 1043 in 1995 and amended in 2011 via Ordinance 1523. That amendment allowed for vertical expansion. Under Plan Commission application PC24-007, the Community Foundation of NWI has requested an amendment for the addition of a combined heat and power facility, also known as a cogeneration unit. This will simultaneously produce electricity and thermal energy. The unit will be located at the northeast corner of the hospital facility about 350 feet southwest from the intersection of Columbia Avenue and Fisher Street.

Representatives of the applicant appeared before the Plan Commission for a public hearing on December 10, 2024. There were no remonstrances and the Findings of Fact were signed on January 12, 2025. After the public hearing in December, the Plan Commission voted five in favor and zero opposed to forward a favorable recommendation to the Council to approve the PUD amendment. Council must now take final action to adopt, reject, or amend the proposal. Rejection or amendment to the proposal requires further consideration by the Plan Commission.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to adopt Ordinance 1977 approving the Community Hospital Planned Unit Development Amendment at 901 MacArthur Boulevard to allow additional use in this Zone District in accordance with plans, discussions, and findings under PD Docket 24-007. Councilor Petersen asked Councilor Hofferth, who was present at the sound test, to share the results of the noise test. Councilor Hofferth shared it passed the industry standards. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **ENGAGEMENT LETTER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING**

There are an abundant number of day-to-day tasks that Staff must address. Council, Staff and various community stakeholders have initiatives that they would like to accomplish. Strategic planning identifies those initiatives and sets the priorities for a two to five-year period. A strategic plan provides the specific actions to be taken to accomplish the agreed-upon goals. The plan is then used to hold both Staff and Council accountable. Planning is crucial to staying focused and accomplishing Council's goals and initiatives.

HWC has extensive experience in working with communities to develop strategic plans. They also have a strong knowledge base of Munster from their recent work on the Park Master Plan which was completed last year. In addition, they have provided support services to the Community Development Department over the past two years. The proposal has two Options.

Option One consists of data collection, analysis and a community survey in the first month. The following month stakeholder meetings, a public meeting and the first planning workshop would be conducted. Preliminary recommendations would be made in the third month with the second workshop planned and final deliverable in month four. The total cost would be \$35,000.00.

Option Two consolidates the initial public meeting, stakeholder input and first Council workshop into a two-day planning event. The second Council workshop will happen thirty days after that. This allows Council time to review the initial draft of the plan. A kickoff meeting would be scheduled with Council and Staff to prepare the approach, schedule, and identify stakeholders. An online survey will be prepared and open to all members of the Munster community. The total cost would be \$29,000.00.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans to approve Option Two of the HWC Strategic Plan Proposal dated January 3, 2025, for an amount not to exceed \$29,000.00 to be paid from the LIT-Economic Development Fund. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

The Town recognized the importance of timely and accurate communication among residents, Council, Clerk-Treasurer, and Staff. In an effort to improve this communication, a Request for Proposal (RFP) has been drafted seeking an agency to develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan. Council and Staff have had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the document.

The scope of work includes the development of programs to engage residents to ensure community feedback and involvement, to identify the preferred methods of communication, to evaluate the Town's website, to train Staff for working on social media platforms, and to develop a crisis communication plan for use in emergency situations. An internal working group will be created to work with the selected firm. Key Performance Indicators will be identified to measure progress.

The intent is to offer a one-year contract. The evaluation will take place after nine months. At that time, the Town will consider if the contract will be extended or to create an internal position to handle communications moving forward.

The RFP will be advertised by February 10, 2025, with submittals due by 10:00 a.m. March 10, 2025. Staff will have the opportunity to review the submittals and provide a recommendation to Council at the March 26, 2025, Agenda review.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to approve the Request for Proposal a Strategic Communication Plan/Agency as presented. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF LICENSE**

The owners of 1000 Azalea Drive contacted the Town last summer regarding a license the Town granted to them in 1995. The license is for a shed that was built beyond the property line to remain in place. The homeowners were selling the property and asked how to transfer this license to the prospective buyer.

In consultation with the Town Attorney, Staff asked the property owners to prepare an assignment of the license to the new owner to be executed during closing on the property. The property was sold and closed in November 2024, and the new owner has brought the assignment seeking acceptance by the Council. There is no change in what the Town is granting under the original license.

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner to approve the Assignment of License for 1000 Azalea Drive as presented. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **ENGAGEMENT LETTER: LOBBYING SERVICES**

The Town has engaged the law firm of Barnes & Thornburg for many years as its state legislative relations counsel. A letter of engagement has been drafted for Barnes & Thornburg to provide certain lobbying services for the 2025 General Assembly Session. Fees for this service would be \$5,000.00/month for the General Assembly Session from November 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025, and \$3,000.00/month during the non-session months of May 1, 2025, through October 31, 2025. Executive branch services will be performed at \$7,000.00/month. These rates are unchanged from the prior year. The engagement includes assistance in seeking earmarks for local projects

Under the terms of the agreement, the Town will continue to retain the firm for the 2026 Session of the General Assembly beginning November 1, 2025, and beyond unless the Town notifies Barnes & Thornburg.

At the request of the Town, Barnes & Thornburg may draft or file lobby registration or activity reports for submission to the Indiana Lobby Registration Commission on behalf of the Town for an annual fixed fee of \$1,500.00. Additional expenses, including but not limited to lobbying compliance fees, would also be allowed.

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner to authorize the Council President to sign the letter of engagement with Barnes & Thornburg for legislative lobbying services. A brief discussion regarding how the Town is benefiting from these lobbying efforts. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**CONTRACT EXTENSION: GARBAGE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICES**

At the March 15, 2021, meeting, the Council accepted the bid for residential curbside and municipal facility collection of trash and recycling. The contract runs from May 1, 2021, through April 30, 2024. The bid provides a three-year term with two optional years. The contract is due to expire on April 30, 2025. The Town has been satisfied with the performance of Homewood Disposal Service and would like to accept the Year 5 option of the contract at a rate of \$21.58/household/month. This is the last option available in the current agreement.

HDS would like to continue as the Town’s service provider and has proposed entering into a five-year agreement with options for up to three additional years. Rates would increase annually regardless of the option chosen.

Option One would see Homewood Disposal continue service with the existing carts. This includes unlimited collection of Munster households with one bulk item per week, dumpster service for street sweeping with no changes, and waste collection for Town-owned facilities and Public Works at no charge. Option One rates are as follows.

Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Optional Year Six	Optional Year Seven	Optional Year Eight
\$22.66	\$23.79	\$24.98	\$26.23	\$27.54	\$28.92	\$30.37	\$31.89

Year One would be a 5% increase over the 2025/2026 rate of \$21.58/household/month, and each subsequent year would increase by 5%.

Option Two would provide the same level of service as Option One but would provide all new refuse and recycling carts for each homeowner. When HDS took over the service, most carts were relatively new. Instead of getting rid of these, stickers were placed over the previous service provider’s name. Many of those carts are still in service. As part of the replacement, HDS would be responsible for delivery and removal of the carts. Option Two rates are as follows.

Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Optional Year Six	Optional Year Seven	Optional Year Eight
\$23.50	\$24.68	\$25.91	\$27.21	\$28.57	\$30.00	\$31.50	\$33.08

Year One would be a 9% increase over 2025/2026 rates and each subsequent year would increase by 5%.

A municipality can continue a contract if the Council approves. Accepting the proposal allows for certainty in the rates for at least five more years. This helps both the Town and the residents. The alternative is to put the matter out for bid. Staff recommend accepting the proposal. A formal addendum to the contract will be prepared.

A brief discussion ensued which clarified that Homewood Disposal does replace totes/carts as needed. It was questioned what the \$3,000 information included in the contract includes. The 5% annual increase was determined to be consistent throughout the region and the industry.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to accept the year five option of the current contract. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans to approve Option One of the proposed extension of services with Homewood Disposal Service dated November 27, 2024. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **KNOX BOX KEY RETENTION SYSTEM UPGRADE**

The Munster Fire Department has utilized the Knox Box System for twenty-seven years. Over time, police sergeants have been added to the system. The system for key retention in each vehicle is no longer supported by Knox Box nor can new boxes be ordered for it. Currently, there are two in disrepair and four additional units need to be ordered for the new police cars that have been put into service.

The new system requires a new key retention box for each vehicle and a new operating program that is subscription-based. The cost of outfitting twenty vehicles with the new system, including brackets, is \$20,622.00. The annual subscription cost is \$1,298.00. With shipping, the total cost is \$22,206.00

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Petersen to allow the Fire Chief to sign the Knox Box quote #QT-KA-61621 for the total amount of \$22,206.00 to be paid from the CCD Fund, specifically 4402-23201-62900. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **TAKE-HOME VEHICLE EQUIPMENT PURCHASE**

In order to outfit the twenty-six SUV's and nine pickup trucks recently purchased as part of the Take-Home Squad Program, the Police Department needs to purchase additional equipment to make them patrol-ready. This includes equipment that is stored in the trunks of the patrol vehicles and necessary storage/safety equipment that was not installed at the factory. The total cost is \$51,256.00 and is detailed in the "Munster Police Department Ancillary Equipment List." The invoice will be paid from the TIF Allocation Fund.

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to authorize the Munster Police Department to purchase the necessary equipment to outfit the vehicles accordingly. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **CCMG 2024-2: LPA CONTRACT APPROVAL**

On November 7, 2024, Munster received the Award letter for CCMG 2024-2 in the amount of \$660,442.49. This project is for Cardinal Drive from Cardinal Drive to the east end, Heather Drive from Chestnut Lane to the east end, Oakwood Court from Chestnut to the east end, Broadmoor Avenue from Calumet Avenue to Columbia Avenue and Woodlawn Avenue from Broadmoor Avenue to the south end. Woodlawn includes watermain work which is ineligible for CCMG funding. The total estimate for all work is \$1,186,317.50.

INDOT has presented the Local Public Agency (LPA) contract for signature. This is the agreement between the Town and INDOT for the funding. Council must approve all contracts. INDOT requires one person to be designated to sign all documents related to the project. Resolution 2141 was approved by the Council on December 2, 2024, for this purpose and named the Interim Town Manager as the signer.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans to approve LPA Contract Number 87580 in the amount of \$660,442.49 for CCMG 2024-2. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**PURCHASE OF PUMP: CALUMET PUMP STATION**

Metropolitan Pump Company has been evaluating the pumps at the Calumet Avenue Pump Station. Their evaluation of Pump #2 came back with a recommendation to purchase a new pump rotating unit instead of a repair to it. The cost of a complete rotating unit replacement is \$30,131.00. The purchase will be made from Water Funds.

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve the purchase of a rotating unit replacement for existing Pump #2 at the Calumet Avenue Station for a cost of \$30,131.00. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**CHANGE ORDER #5: 2024 PAVING AND WATERMAIN PROJECT**

The 2024 Paving and Watermain Project included work on Fran Lin, Chestnut, Holly, Camellia, and White Oak. The final punch list walk-through to determine if additional work is needed to close out the project was done in December 2024. After the walk-through, Rieth-Riley presented Change Order #5 for additional concrete work for an increase in price of \$29,099.36, and they requested an extension of the completion date to April 30, 2025.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans to approve Rieth-Riley’s Change Order #5 for the 2024 Paving and watermain Project for additional concrete work in the amount of \$29,099.36, and to extend the completion date to April 30, 2025, which will bring the new project total to \$5,404,726.34. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**2024 PAVING AND WATERMAIN PROJECT ENGINEERING COST INCREASE**

The original scope of service and Resident Project Representative (RPR) services were based on providing an average of four hours of on-site representation per day for a period of twenty weeks. This was the estimated construction timeline for the project. The project resulted in a greater overall magnitude and longer schedule from the original estimate.

Additional project staffing costs were incurred due to a longer construction time and staff salary increase. The longer construction time and construction delays were beyond the control of the Town and SEH. Watermain testing added eight additional weeks to the project. In addition, SEH increased its PRP to an average of six hours per day as well as weekend work throughout the project. SEH has requested additional fees of \$16,000.00 to cover the cost of the additional work.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans to approve SEH additional cost of \$16,000.00 for RPR services on the 2024 Paving and Watermain Project. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

## **DISPOSAL OF EQUIPMENT**

Public Works has the following equipment that is no longer in use or no longer serviceable.

Motorola HT 250 Radios – 23 with 23 chargers

Motorola PR 1500 Radios – 3

Motorola HT 600 Radio – 1

Motorola Impress Chargers – 13

1 Radio Shack MPA – 46 PA Amplifier

1 Sony Microphone

1 All Tech Microphone

2 Samsung Notebook Model XE303C12

1 Samsung Notebook Model NP470RSE

1 Amano BX6000 Punch Clock

1 K800 Fuel site controller

1 Petrovend Chip Key Encoder

1 Verizon Wireless Home Phone Model NOVT 2000

4 Lenova/Impact Computers numbers N91723, N91719, N91714, N91722

### **Traffic Control**

1 Econlight Control product model ASC/2 -2100

1 EDI model number NSM – 12

12 TSC modules Series 200

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner to declare the listed equipment surplus and authorize its disposal. Councilors Nellans, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

## **REPORTS**

No reports were given.

## **PORTFOLIO REPORTS**

Councilor Gardiner shared the Munster Parks Annual Report which was presented at the recent Park Board meeting is available online. The RDA is meeting on 02/12/2025 at 11 am.

**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, February 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 7:21 p.m. by voice vote.

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**George Shinkan, President**

**ATTEST:**

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**Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer**