

TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
JULY 21, 2025

A meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, July 21, 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 G. 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, Fire Chief Mark Hajduk, Director of Operations Bob Valois, and Town Attorney Dave Westland. Police Chief Stephen Scheckel and 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: NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

Councilor Hofferth read the proclamation recognizing August 5, 2025, as the 30th National Night Out Against Crime in the Town of Munster.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to adopt the “National Night Out Against Crime Proclamation as presented.” Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried, and the proclamation was adopted.

PUBLIC HEARING: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (4)

The first reading on the ordinance was held at the July 7, 2025, meeting. Additional appropriations were sought in three funds: Local Road & Street, Cumulative Capital Development, and Self-Funded Liability Insurance.

The procedure for securing additional appropriations requires a public hearing, scheduled for this evening, and the adoption of an ordinance by the Town Council. Upon passage of the ordinance, the appropriations for the Self-Funded Liability Fund will be in effect and reported to the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF). The Local Road & Street Fund, and the Cumulative Capital Development Fund appropriations will be submitted to the Department of Local Government Finance which will issue its determination within ten days.

President Shinkan opened the public hearing.

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

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. Denise Jacobs Barlage, 8320 Linden Avenue, shared concerns about the lacking and poor quality of walking areas on her block. The Town will assess the area for accessibility.

No one else rose to claim the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of a regular meeting held on July 7, 2025

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-7C dated 07/10/2025 totaling \$59,572.01
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-7D dated 07/10/2025 totaling \$46,393.47
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-7E dated 07/10/2025 totaling \$425,838.02
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-7F dated 07/11/2025 totaling \$726,567.00
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-7G dated 07/11/2025 totaling \$1,363.24
Confirmation of Voucher Register #25-7H dated 07/17/2025 totaling \$754,996.81
Approval of Voucher Register #25-7I dated 07/21/2025 totaling \$356,429.47

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, 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 1985: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (4)

Introduced ORDINANCE 1985 is AN ORDINANCE FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE YEAR 2025 (4). The ordinance was the subject of a public hearing earlier in the meeting.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans to approve introduced Ordinance 1985 as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

ORDINANCE 1986: STOP SIGNS ON CAMELLIA DRIVE AND WHITE OAK AVENUE

Introduced ORDINANCE 1986 is AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 54, TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES, OF THE MUNSTER CODE OF ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO ADDITIONAL STOP SIGNS. The ordinance was considered on first reading at the last regular meeting. Stop signs are proposed for the following locations.

- Camellia Drive at Elmwood Drive
- Camellia Drive at Walnut Drive
- White Oak Avenue at Cardinal Court
- White Oak Avenue at Wren Court

The recommendation has been reviewed by SEH, the Speed Team, and Police Department. An ordinance is needed for the stop signs to be enforced by the Police Department. Ordinance 1986 has been drafted for this purpose. The ordinance will go into effect once adopted and properly advertised.

Councilor Petersen moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans to adopt introduced Ordinance 1986 to Amend the General Provisions of Chapter 54, Traffic and Vehicles, of the Munster Code of Ordinances Pertaining to Additional Stop Signs on first reading. Discussion ensued regarding the need for criteria before future stop signs are installed. It was shared the Speed Team is working on criteria. It was stated we rely on the recommendations of our professional staff. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE #1987: AMENDMENT TO WATER BOND ORDINANCE #1936

Council adopted Ordinance 1936 at the April 15, 2024, meeting authorizing the issuance of water revenue bonds and bond anticipation notes. Staff provided a list of projects to be included in the bond which represented \$8,250,000. This list included watermain work that was completed in 2024, installation of advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), upgrades to the River Bend and Calumet Avenue pump stations, and a water system model to help guide future improvements throughout the Water Utility. Each of these projects have been done. New leadership, with the assistance of the water model, have identified necessary infrastructure projects as follows.

Description	Estimated Cost
Water Main Replacements	
Forest Avenue - Ridge Road to North Limits (design 2025; construct 2026)	\$2,300,000
Kraay Avenue - Fairway Drive to Ridge Road (design 2025; construct 2026)	585,000
White Oak Avenue - Fairway Drive to Ridge Road (design 2025; construct 2026)	607,500
Wren Drive - Crestood Avenue to East Limits (design 2025; construct 2026)	225,000
Calumet Avenue - Ridge Road to Town Limits (design 2026; construct 2027)	1,700,000
Hohman Avenue - Ridge Road to Town Limits (design 2027; construct 2028)	3,500,000
System Improvements	
Altitude Valves (White Oak, Superior, Ridge Road)	1,200,000
Mud Valves (White Oak, Superior, Ridge Road)	45,000
New controls on all towers/tanks	1,500,000
Rebuild valve vaults at River Bend	100,000
New Generator at River Bend	350,000
Lead service line replacements (117 services)	1,700,000
Construction Contingency (10%)	1,381,300
Other Project Costs	
Repayment of 2024 Bond Anticipation Note	4,547,800
Issuance Costs	348,400
	\$20,090,000

The cost is supported by the currently approved water rates. The rates were structured to support this level of infrastructure maintenance and improvement. The rates will also allow for regular operations and smaller projects to be completed.

Financial advisors Baker Tilly has requested to seek authorization for \$21 million in bonds to ensure coverage for the underwriter's discount. Because the new scope exceeds the amount originally authorized under Ordinance 1936, and amendment is needed to approve both the new amount and the expanded scope of work. All other aspects of the original ordinance will remain in place.

Baker Tilly presented two options for issuing the bond at the June 11, 2025, Agenda Review. Based on those conversations, it was determined that issuing bonds on the open market is the better option. The calendar for issuance calls for adoption of the amendment at the August 4 meeting with the required advertisements over the following two weeks. The bond sale is scheduled for the first week of September with closing about two weeks later.

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to hear Ordinance 1987 on first reading and set second reading and adoption for August 4, 2025. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT: CAPITAL ASSETS

Every year the Town is responsible for updating its capital asset information for financial reporting purposes. During the past several years, Peterson Consulting Services, Inc. of La Grange, Illinois, has assisted the Town in implementing the Governmental Standards Accounting Board (GASB) Statement No. 34 which prescribes financial reporting requirements for state and local governments to make annual reports more thorough and easier to use.

Staff recommends continuing the engagement of Peterson Consulting Services who would reexamine the provisions of GASB Statement No. 34 regarding capital assets, offer suggestions pertaining to the reporting of asset additions and retirements, provide input on the reporting of construction-in-progress (CIP), aid in capitalizing CIP, formulate year-end capital asset worksheets and summary schedules, create a Consolidated Summary Schedule, and provide guidance for strengthening Munster's capital asset policies and procedures for the year ending December 31, 2025.

The price has increased \$100.00 from last year to \$4,350.00. The project cost will be divided among the General, Motor Vehicle Highway, Park & Recreation, Technology, Sewer Maintenance, Water Cash Operating, and Solid Waste Management Funds.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to confirm the letter of engagement with Peterson Consulting Services, Inc. at an amount not to exceed \$4,350.00. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

LEASE AND MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana, Inc. (CFNI) d/b/a Powers Health has installed an extra flagpole and landscape material in the public right-of-way located at the Treadway Drive and Donald S. Powers Drive roundabout. CFNI is currently using one of the flagpoles for a Powers Health flag. CFNI would like to enter into a limited purpose lease agreement of the subject site to maintain the landscape installed and to continue to use one of the flagpoles for a Powers Health flag.

Under the terms of the proposed agreement, Powers Health has limited right to access and use said public right-of-way property to maintain the contemplated flag and agrees to provide routine maintenance of the installed landscaping, including aesthetic upkeep. The terms are continued from year to year until terminated by either party upon written notice. Powers Health assumes all liability, carries adequate insurance, and repairs any resulting damage from the use or acts of negligence.

Councilor Nellans moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to approve the proposed Limited Purpose Lease Agreement dated May 15, 2025. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL SIDEWALK COST

On May 5, 2025, Council approved a proposal from L2 Incorporated to repair sidewalks damages from water main breaks over the winter in the amount of \$23,211.72. Additional repair locations were discovered that were not included in the original scope of work. L2 Incorporated was already mobilized and Public Works Staff authorized them to repair the other locations. The additional work cost \$7,565.01 for a total cost of \$30,776.73. The additional work will be paid from the Water Cash Operating Fund.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Petersen, to approve the additional cost of \$7,565.01 for a total cost of \$30,776.73 to L2 incorporated for Water Department sidewalk repairs. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT: CELLULAR LEASE CONSULTING

AT&T has approached the Town with a proposal to install telecommunications equipment on the Ridge Road Water Tower. The Town has used the consulting firm of VMC, LLC in the past to assist with reviewing and negotiating these types of leases and equipment installation. VMC is familiar with this infrastructure. Under the terms of the agreement, VMC will evaluate site drawings and antenna and structural specifications, coordinate a preconstruction meeting, conduct inspections, and review and negotiate the lease agreement.

There are three separate agreements to be approved as follows.

1. General terms and conditions
2. Professional services which include a scope of work and fee not to exceed \$15,000.00 for this matter
3. Construction document review and onsite inspection which includes a fee of \$13,400.00

Additional services, if needed, range in cost from \$500.00 to \$6,000.00. The base cost will not exceed \$27,400.00. Town Attorney Dave Westland has reviewed the documents.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve the agreement for general terms and conditions between the Town of Munster and VMC, LLC, as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to approve the agreement for professional services between the Town of Munster and VMC, LLC, at an amount not to exceed \$13,400.00 as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve the agreement for professional services for on-call general engineering services between the Town of Munster and VMC, LLC, at a cost not to exceed \$13,400.00 as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL: EMISSION TESTING SERVICES

Earlier this year the methane generator at the landfill was replaced by Clarke Energy. Under the conditions of the landfill permit with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the new generator must be performance tested within 180 days of startup and every 8,760 hours of operation or every three years, whichever occurs first. Testing is to demonstrate compliance with air pollutant emission limits.

Andrews Engineering secured a proposal from Impact Compliance and Testing to perform the work. The scope of work includes air emission testing and analyses, project management and reporting, and report preparation for submittal to the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The cost is \$15,300.00 and will be paid from the Solid Waste Management Fund.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to accept the proposal from Impact Compliance and Testing to provide air emission testing services for the landfill methane gas engine in the amount of \$15,300.00 as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

SOFTWARE PURCHASE AND AGREEMENT

The Town uses CivicPlus to manage its municipal code online. CivicPlus also offers a software to manage and prepare meeting agenda. This is a robust solution that is superior to the current process. The software will streamline the process by creating workflows for staff to submit reports and organize the agenda. Features include the following.

- Word, Excel and other documents are automatically converted into searchable pdf documents with bookmarks.
- A secure portal designed for Council offers the ability to review, take notes and mark up documents before and during meetings and for future reference.
- Notes can be entered during the meeting to record motions and votes.
- Public comments can be entered and a built-in timer is available.
- Meeting videos are stored in the system which eliminates the extra step of uploading videos to YouTube. Agenda items are synched to the recording to allow direct navigation to the video segment where the agenda item is being discussed.

The software can be used by any board or commission. Training for Staff and Council is included. Existing meeting packets and videos can be imported to the new system so all information is housed in one location.

The initial cost is \$17,150.00 which includes a one-time implementation fee of \$8,450.00 and a discounted first-year annual fee of \$8,700.00. The annual recurring cost is \$14,700.00 with a 5.00% escalator.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to accept the proposal from CivicPlus to purchase an agenda and meeting management software application in the amount of \$17,150.00 for Year 1 and authorize execution of the Master Service Agreement with CivicPlus LLC pending final approval of the agreement by the Town Attorney. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION #2155: CHAIN OF COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Proposed RESOLUTION 2155 is A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION NO. 2133, DEFINING THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN MANAGER, AND TOWN STAFF. It has been observed that the roles and responsibilities of Town Councilors, the Town Manager, and Staff are not well defined. A clear understanding of and mutual agreement on these roles is essential for fostering an effective organization that delivers exceptional services to the community.

Munster follows the council-manager form of government. The International City/County Management Association provides best practices for this form of government by showing the distinction between the governing body, which is responsible for enacting legislation and determining policy for the community, and the administrative role of the manager, who implements those policies and manages daily operations. This model promotes a professional and apolitical approach to the management of public services.

Resolution 2133 was adopted June 3, 2024, by adding a chain of command and communications policy that established principles and protocols to facilitate effective collaboration among Councilors, Town Manager, and Staff in service to the community. Resolution 2155 amends this resolution by further defining the chain of command and communications policy.

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to approve Resolution 2155 as presented. Councilors Hofferth, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Shinkan voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Councilor Petersen shared his health continues to improve.

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, August 4, 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 7:00 p.m. by voice vote.

George Shinkan, President

ATTEST:

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer