



Town of Munster, 1005 Ridge Road

NEWS YOU CAN USE

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DECEMBER 2025

Town President's Message

Celebrating Excellence in Public Service: Honoring Munster's Own Tricia Abbott

The Town of Munster is proud to recognize Tricia Abbott, whose remarkable dedication and leadership have shaped our community for more than three decades.

A 1986 graduate of Munster High School and a Purdue University Calumet alumna (Class of 1995), Tricia first joined the Town of Munster team in 1989. After spending a few years overseas, she returned in 1995 and has served the community ever since in a variety of critical roles. Her career began at the front counter and grew through positions in payroll, accounts payable, and Accounting Supervisor, ultimately leading her to the role of Town Controller. She also stepped up to serve as Interim Town Manager for more than a year and a half, balancing both leadership responsibilities with professionalism and grace.

Throughout her career, Tricia has exemplified the very best in municipal service combining expertise, integrity, and a deep understanding of the town's operations. Her steady leadership and commitment to transparency have helped guide Munster through many fiscal challenges while maintaining stability and accountability.

This year, Tricia's outstanding service has been recognized statewide with two distinguished honors: the AIM Financial Management Award and the inaugural ILMCT Member of the Year Award.

The Financial Management Award celebrates excellence in fiscal oversight, financial reporting, and leadership in public service. It recognizes finance officers who demonstrate sound stewardship and ensure long-term success for their communities. Tricia's more than 30 years of service marked by professionalism, humility, and deep commitment embody the very spirit of that recognition.

Please join us in congratulating Tricia Abbott, Controller for the Town of Munster, on receiving the 2025 AIM Financial Management Award and the ILMCT Member of the Year Award. Her dedication continues to strengthen our community and inspire all who serve in local government.

Warm regards,

George Shinkan, Town Council President

Clerk-Treasurer's Message

From the Clerk-Treasurer's Mailbox

Thank you to everyone who takes the time to call or email our office. Your input is always appreciated. While I may not personally reply to every message, I make sure your questions and concerns are directed to the appropriate department for follow-up.

One recent question may be of interest to many residents:

Residential emergency key box

A resident asked what happens if they needed an ambulance; how would the Fire Department get into their home without breaking down the door? I reached out to Fire Chief Hajduk, who explained that local businesses use key boxes supported by the Fire Department, and there's a similar option available for homeowners. Through a partnership with the Fire Department, residents can purchase a residential Knox Box from knoxbox.com. This secure box allows first responders to access your home quickly in an emergency, without causing damage.

Utility Bill Payment Options

Your utility bills can be paid directly to the Town of Munster through mail, autopay, or the Town Hall drop box. We also offer online payments through a third-party vendor, though please note they charge a convenience fee of which 100% goes to the vendor, not the Town.

To avoid any fees, we encourage residents to sign up for Munster's free autopay program at munster.org/waterbilling

Budget Challenges Following SEA 1

During the 2025 legislative session, the State enacted SEA 1, which provided property tax relief to residents but also created new funding challenges for local governments. The Town is carefully reviewing both revenues and expenditures to manage these changes responsibly.

We've updated our fee schedule, begun enforcing existing fees that were previously overlooked, and are evaluating vendors to ensure the best value for taxpayer dollars. In some cases, we may need to invest more upfront to achieve long-term savings.

The full financial impact on Munster won't be known until next April, but we are preparing for a conservative, worst-case scenario. Our goal remains the same: to maintain Munster's strong, conservative financial practices and continue delivering the high-quality services our residents expect.

2023–2024 Audit Results

The State Board of Accounts has completed its audit of the Town's 2023 and 2024 financial records. I'm pleased to share that Munster received a clean audit. The full report is available on the State Board of Accounts' website.

Veterans Display

Since shortly after September 11, 2001, the Town of Munster has proudly honored residents serving in the United States Armed Forces with a display in the Town Hall entrance. As our nation approaches the 250th anniversary of American independence, we will be refreshing this display to commemorate this milestone and continue paying tribute to those who have served.

If you would like to include a photo of a Munster resident currently serving on active duty, please bring or send it to the Clerk-Treasurer's Office at Town Hall. Each photo represents a story of dedication and sacrifice, and together they remind us of the courage and commitment that protect our freedoms every day.

*Wishing you all a Happy Holiday season.
Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer, Town of Munster*

Parks & Recreation

Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair at Munster High School is a seasonal favorite with crafters from all around the region! With over 120 vendors, stroll through aisles brimming with holiday cheer as you shop for unique, handcrafted treasures and thoughtful gifts for everyone on your list. Concessions will be available onsite to help support Munster BandBackers. Free admission and parking – use entrances A, J, K or Q. Saturday, 12/6 from 9AM-4PM + Sunday, 12/7 from 9AM-2PM.

We are now accepting **facility rentals** for 2026 – Lions Club Social Center and Park Shelters. Now is your time to reserve your space for your upcoming reunion, shower, birthday or graduation party. Rental Fees, tax and refundable damage deposits are required in full to reserve a facility.

We will begin accepting **2026 Keen-Ager Memberships** after mid-December. Valid for all of 2026, this membership allows you to play daily activities (Bridge, Pinochle, Dealer's Choice, Mahjong, Euchre and BINGO), receive a monthly newsletter or discounts on programs.

The Winter/Spring Recreation Guide will be in mailboxes the week of December 22.

December Event Schedule:

12/5	Sister Act Lunch/Show at Drury Lane Registration Deadline
12/6	Babysitting Lessons & Safety Training
12/8	The e-S.T.E.A.M. Experience – Build a Better Boat
12/10	Keen-Ager Holiday Party
12/10	The Collective Canvas – Colorful ornaments on Tree
12/11	Travel Show w/ Collette World Discovery Tours
12/15	Pasta Much? w/ Rockin' Robbins Kitchen
12/17	Snow Much Fun!
12/18	Jingle Bell BINGO
12/22	Winter/Spring Recreation Guide mailed to homes
12/24-12/25	Park Office Closed
12/31-1/1	Park Office Closed

Any questions related to any park events, contact Parks Department at 219-836-7275

Police & Fire

LIGHT THE NIGHT TREE WALK DECORATING CONTEST - PLEASE VOTE!

South of the Munster Town Hall, residents will find a number of trees that have been decorated by local businesses, school groups, churches, or community organizations that have sponsored a tree as part of our first Light the Night Tree Walk. Beginning December 1st, residents are encouraged to walk through and enjoy looking at the trees throughout the holiday season while also deciding which tree that you think looks the best this year. **After December 3rd, photos of each tree will be posted to the Munster Police Department's Facebook page where members of the community are encouraged to "like" their favorite tree.** The tree with the most "likes" from the public by December 16th at 12:00pm will be chosen as the "People's Choice" Award winner of this year's contest. Awards will also be given to the "First Responder Choice" (voted on by members of the police and fire departments) and "Choice Community Council Award" (voted on by members of the Choice Community Council. The winners will be posted by Christmas. Thank you to everyone for your participation and support this year!

MUNSTER POLICE RECOGNITION



On August 9, 2025 the Munster Police Department was awarded national accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA[®]). Following a multi-year self-assessment phase and a meticulous site-based assessment of community engagement, policy, procedures, equipment and facilities by CALEA assessors, Munster Police Department Chief Stephen Scheckel, Deputy Chief Daymon Johnston, and Accreditation Manager Craig Corie attended the CALEA conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. There the department was reviewed by CALEA's 21-member Board of Commissioners who reviewed all findings and determined the agencies' accreditation status. At the celebration banquet, CALEA President Matthew Packard and Executive Director Craig Hartley, awarded the Munster Police Department with accreditation, signifying excellence in public safety and commitment to community. This is the Munster Police Department's sixth (6th) award of national accreditation since the agency was first accredited in 2008.

Public Works

Branch Collection has ended. The chipper truck will return in the Spring.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULING INFORMATION

Homewood Disposal Service has advised because the Christmas and New Year's holiday is on Thursday, December 25th and Thursday, January 1st there will be a delay of service. Garbage will be delayed 1 day after each of these holidays.

Christmas trees will be picked up by the Public Works Department starting Friday, December 26, 2025, and ending Friday, January 30, 2026, **weather permitting**. Please make sure all decorations are off the tree.

REMOVING SNOW AND ICE FROM SIDEWALKS

It is especially important for residents to remember the Town of Munster's ordinance in regard to removing snow and ice from sidewalks. If you leave snow along your sidewalks, it could prevent students and other pedestrians from being able to get through and could lead to them having to walk in the street. For everyone's safety, please follow this ordinance:

The owner and/or occupant of any dwelling, building or subdivided lot or property shall keep the sidewalks in front thereof clean at all times of the year. Within 24 hours after any fall of snow or formation of ice, such snow or ice shall be removed from the sidewalks.

It shall be unlawful for any person to throw, push or deposit in any manner snow, slush or ice onto any street or sidewalk in such a manner as to impede the safe progress and movement of vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

Persons who violate this subsection are responsible for the costs incurred by the town to remove the impediment to safe progress and movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

MAILBOXES AND SNOWPLOWING

Residents are reminded to kindly inspect their mailbox prior to the winter to ensure that it is in sound structural shape. Rarely does a snowplow hit a mailbox, but often snow thrown from a plow truck hits mailboxes, which can sometimes cause damage to a mailbox especially if it is loose or has a rotted post. It has been our practice to replace damaged mailboxes if caused by a Town snowplow but only if the mailbox was in prior good condition. It is the resident's responsibility to ensure that their mailbox is solid enough to withstand being hit by the often-wet heavy snow thrown from a plow truck. If a damaged mailbox is determined to be from a weakened or deteriorated condition, the Town is relieved of any responsibility to repair it if snow operations cause further damage.

PLOWING

The Public Works Department starts plowing when there is an inch of snow on the road, beginning with main streets, hospital areas, school areas, secondary streets and hilly streets.

These high priority areas get plowed first (ahead of Residential streets, cul-de-sacs and alleys) and are salted down to bare pavement until the snow has stopped. Alleys are plowed last and only after a minimum of 4" snowfall.

Meeting Schedule

TOWN COUNCIL, BOARD, AND COMMISSION REGULAR MEETINGS DECEMBER 2025

Notes: The schedule below is subject to change. Please contact Munster Town Hall (MTH) at (219)836-6900 to confirm meetings. Public meetings are also available utilizing Zoom technology. Visit the Town of Munster website: <https://www.munster.org> (Select: Agendas and Meetings) or contact the appropriate department to access the meeting ID and passcode. Also, a schedule of these meetings and others are maintained on the Community Calendar at the Town of Munster website. **Tune into WJOB 1230 AM Radio and listen to Community Programming Initiative, in which members of the Munster Town Council and guests discuss issues in town. The program runs the first and third Tuesday of each month at 8:30 am.**

Town Council/Redevelopment Mtg.	December 1, 2025	6:30 pm Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Site Plan Review Mtg.	December 4, 2025	1:30 pm Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Board of Zoning Appeals Mtg.	December 9, 2025	6:00 pm Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Plan Commission Mtg.	December 9, 2025	7:00 pm Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Town Council/Redevelopment Mtg.	December 15, 2025	6:30 pm Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Board of Safety Mtg.	December 16, 2025	7:00 am Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Park Board Mtg.	December 16, 2025	5:00 pm Main Meeting Room (MTH)
Site Plan Review Mtg.	December 18, 2025	1:30 pm Main Meeting Room (MTH)

Elected Officials

Town Council Elected Officials:

- George Shinkan, President, Elected Official, Ward 1, Term: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027
- Joseph Hofferth, Vice President, Elected Official, Ward 2, Term: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027
- Chuck Gardiner, Elected Official, Ward 3, Term: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027
- David B. Nellans, Elected Official, Ward 4, Term: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027
- Jonathan Petersen, Elected Official, Ward 5, Term 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2027



George Shinkan
Joseph Hofferth
Chuck Gardiner
David Nellans
Jonathan Petersen
Wendy Mis



Ward #1
Ward #2
Ward #3
Ward #4
Ward #5
Clerk-Treasurer



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(219)689-2225
(708)606-7223
(219)680-6364
(219)803-4550
(219)836-6945



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