

**TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
MAY 18, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 2020. At the time of this meeting, the country was facing a pandemic outbreak of the Coronavirus. In response, Indiana Governor Holcomb issued a series of Executive Orders which, among other things, declared a public health emergency and suspended various statutes. Executive Order 20-04 specifically addressed public meetings and the Open-Door Law. This Executive Order along with the opinion of the Indiana Public Access counselor, allows for meetings to be held in a virtual environment.

The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall. Due to the restrictions on the number of people allowed to gather in one location and the requirement to maintain a distance of at least six feet from another person, Councilors Chuck Gardiner, Andy Koulourides, Kenneth J. Schoon, and Steven Tulowitzki, and Town Attorney David W. Westland, were each present in a virtual setting, aided by Zoom meeting technology. It is believed each person was in a different physical location. Councilor Lee Ann Mellon was absent. Others present in the virtual setting were Police Chief Stephen F. Scheckel and Munster Representative to the Hammond Sanitary District Mike Hawkins. Vice President Koulourides presided. The public was given the information needed to access the meeting virtually and some took advantage of it. Clerk-Treasurer Wendy Mis, Controller Patricia L. Abbott, and Town Manager Dustin Anderson were the only people physically present at Munster Town Hall. The news media were not represented.

The Town Council has sought legal counsel and has performed its due diligence to the best of its ability in a situation that is continually changing. The Town Council believes it is acting in accordance with Indiana State law, the Governor's Executive Orders, and the interpretations and directives of other state agencies.

Vice President Koulourides opened the meeting with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

45th STREET CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

DLZ representative Lee Randell was present in the virtual setting. He reported that Sprint is relocating their fiber optic lines and expect to be finished by the end of the week. The traffic signals at Southwood are now activated and flashing red. There was a slight rain delay last week leaving the project at a three-day gain.

The ironworkers are expected on site over the weekend for the reinforcing steel. There are six weeks of acceleration with about \$16,000.00 spent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Because of the unique nature of this meeting, the Town of Munster only accepted public comment submitted 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 danderson@munster.org. Mr. Anderson stated no comments were received.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 4, 2020

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #20-4X dated 04/28/2020 totaling \$927.13
Confirmation of Voucher Register #20-5B dated 05/05/2020 totaling \$32.02
Confirmation of Voucher Register #20-5C dated 05/07/2020 totaling \$383,506.54

Confirmation of Voucher Register #20-5D dated 05/08/2020 totaling \$473,898.92
Confirmation of Voucher Register #20-5E dated 05/08/2020 totaling \$415,558.51
Confirmation of Voucher Register #20-5F dated 05/08/2020 totaling \$6,969.28
Confirmation of Voucher Register #20-5G dated 05/12/2020 totaling \$50.74
Approval of Voucher Register #20-5H dated 05/18/2020 totaling \$140,002.95
Confirmation of Voucher Register #20-5I dated 05/14/2020 totaling \$206,908.98

WATER BILL ADJUSTMENTS 2020-18 THROUGH 2020-22

Staff received requests for adjustment under the leak adjustment policy adopted by the Town Council on April 8, 2013. The customer has completed the required form and the request meets all the criteria for adjustments as follows:

Adjustment Number	Average Usage	Actual Usage	Length of Time	Original Bill	Requested Adjustment Amount	Adjusted Bill
2020-19	6,000	22,000	1 month	\$ 68.65	\$ 42.53	\$ 26.12
2020-20	11,000	42,000	1 month	\$ 125.65	\$ 90.03	\$ 35.62
2020-21	1,000	21,000	1 month	\$ 65.73	\$ 55.79	\$ 9.94
2020-22	5,000	42,000	1 month	\$ 125.65	\$ 108.91	\$ 16.74

TREASURER'S REPORT

The April 2020 Treasurer's Report was presented for acceptance.

Councilor Schoon moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to suspend the rules, waive the readings, and adopt the Consent Agenda on first reading as presented. Councilors Gardiner, Schoon, Tulowitzki, and Koultourides voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried and the Consent Agenda was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE 1797: WAIVER OF LATE FEES

Proposed ORDINANCE 1797 is AN ORDINANCE GRANTING THE CLERK-TREASURER AUTHORITY TO WAIVE LATE FEES ON WATER UTILITY BILLS DURING THE COVID-19 RELIEF PERIOD. At the April 20, 2020 meeting, Council adopted the COVID-19 Policy. The policy states that, when necessary, the Council would be asked to take appropriate legislative action.

With the economic impact of the pandemic, the Clerk-Treasurer anticipates increased water bill delinquencies. It is believed the economic impact will continue past the time the economy is "re-opened." The current *Utility Billing Policies, Rules & Regulations* (last updated August 8, 2018) allows the waiver of late fees if the customer has had no late fees for the previous twelve months or if the customer signs up for automatic payments from their bank accounts.

In an effort to support our residents who are most hurt by the economic downturn, we recommend allowing a waiver of late fees for those customers who make a request in writing to the Water Billing Department in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office. In practice, customers who call requesting a waiver are sent an email. The customer then needs to reply to the email confirming the request.

The relief period will begin with the bills due April 20, 2020 and end with the bills due January 20, 2021. This covers the bills issued when the stay at home order first went into effect through bills with usage through December 15, 2020.

Executive Order 20-05 prohibits a water utility from shutting off service for non-payment. The Order does not address late fees or penalties. Ordinance 1797 has been drafted to address late fees.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to hear Ordinance 1797 on first reading as presented and schedule second reading for June 1, 2020. Councilors Gardiner, Schoon, Tulowitzki, and Koultourides voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Unless stated otherwise, all meetings of the Town Council begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Munster Town Hall.)

The Town Council will hold regular meetings on Monday, June 1, and 15, 2020. The Redevelopment Commission will hold regular meetings immediately following Town Council meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, Councilor Tulowitzki moved with a second by Councilor Gardiner. The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m. with Councilors Gardiner, Schoon, Tulowitzki, and Koultourides voting in favor with none voting against.

ATTEST:

Andy Koultourides, Vice President

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer