

TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
MARCH 1, 2021

A regular meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1, 2021. 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. Subsequent Executive Orders have extended this practice.

The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall. Executive Order 20-43 requires adherence to Centers for Disease Control guidelines regarding the number of people gathering in one location and maintaining a distance of at least six feet from another person. As a result, Councilors, Staff, and the public had the option to participate via Zoom meeting technology. Councilors Chuck Gardiner, Ken Schoon, Andy Koultourides and Steven Tulowitzki were physically present at Town Hall. Councilor Mellon was absent. President Koultourides presided.

Also present in Town Hall were Clerk-Treasurer Wendy Mis, Controller Patricia Abbott, Town Manager Dustin Anderson, Town Attorney Dave Westland, Police Chief Stephen F. Scheckel, Superintendent of Operations Chris Spolnik, and Munster Representative to the Hammond Sanitary District Mike Hawkins. The news media were not represented. The public was given the information needed to access the meeting virtually, and some took advantage of it.

The Town Council has sought legal counsel and has performed its due diligence to the best of its ability in a continually changing situation. 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.

President Koultourides opened the meeting with a moment of silence followed by the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Because of the unique nature of this meeting, the Town of Munster accepted public comment 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 danderson@munster.org. Mr. Anderson reported that none were received.

Mr. Mike Dujmovic, 1833 Tulip Lane, asked about the status of the proposed water rate increase from the City of Hammond. Mr. Anderson reported that there is an agreement in principle and the attorneys are putting it into writing. There will be a uniform agreement for all five communities (Dyer, Highland, Griffith, Munster, and Whiting) that participated in the lawsuit. The first increase will be retroactive to January 1, 2021 with annual increases moving forward. The contract term is ten years with the optional contract extensions.

Mrs. Anne Clark, 8306 Oakwood Avenue, expressed her concern regarding the number of water main breaks that have occurred near her home in the past several weeks. She encouraged the Council to replace and update the water infrastructure instead of just a quick fix.

No one else rose to claim the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held on February 15, 2021

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2L dated 02/16/21 totaling \$153,212.00
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2M dated 02/18/21 totaling \$237,973.51
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2N dated 02/18/21 totaling \$14,688.40
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2O dated 02/23/21 totaling \$137.99
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2P dated 02/24/21 totaling \$330.00
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2Q dated 02/25/21 totaling \$345,329.63
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2R dated 02/25/21 totaling \$398,200.91
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2S dated 02/26/21 totaling \$366,860.98
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2T dated 02/24/21 totaling \$3,067.86
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2U dated 02/25/21 totaling \$31,875.00
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2V dated 02/28/21 totaling \$52,608.84
Confirmation of Voucher Register #21-2W dated 02/26/21 totaling \$10,874.96
Approval of Voucher Register #21-3A dated 03/01/21 totaling \$55,647.59

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Per IC 5-11-1-4 every municipality and local government is required to provide electronically and, in a manner prescribed by the State Examiner, financial reports for the fiscal year not later than sixty days after the close of the fiscal year. Completion and submission of the Gateway Annual Financial Report (AFR) will fulfill this requirement.

The Annual Financial Report (AFR) was submitted to Gateway on February 24, 2021.

WATER BILL ADJUSTMENTS 2021-11 THROUGH 2021-14

Staff received requests for adjustments under the leak adjustment policy adopted by the Town Council on April 8, 2013. The customers have completed the required form, and the request meets 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> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------|
| 2021-11 | 6,000 | 43,000 | 2 months | \$ 134.38 | \$ 82.14 | \$ 52.24 |
| 2021-12 | 1,000 | 29,000 | 1 month | \$89.10 | \$62.97 | \$ 26.13 |
| 2021-13 | 28,000 | 133,000 | 2 months | \$378.36 | \$206.00 | \$ 172.36 |
| 2021-14 | 7,000 | 28,000 | 2 months | \$89.66 | \$43.60 | \$ 46.06 |

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

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE 1818: REFINANCING OF 2011 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BONDS

Proposed ORDINANCE 1818 is AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, INDIANA, AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF CERTAIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVENUE REFUNDING BONDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF REFINANCING CERTAIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES AND APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING OTHER ACTIONS IN RESPECT THERETO. At the February 15, 2021 meeting, the Council approved letters of engagement to proceed with a refinancing of the 2011 Economic Development Bonds (Lake Business Center). The ordinance will authorize the refinancing.

The original bond issue was for \$19,655,000 and the outstanding principal is \$13,030,000. The refinancing could generate savings of between \$240,000 and \$290,000 per year. The Redevelopment Commission will be asked to adopt a resolution later this evening pledging adequate TIF revenues to the debt service of the refinanced bonds.

Councilor Tulowitzki moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner to suspend the rules, waive the second reading, and adopt Ordinance 1818 for the refinancing of the Series 2011 Economic Development Bonds. Councilors Schoon, Gardiner, Tulowitzki, and Koultourides voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

PURCHASE AWARD: UTILITY TRACTOR

Public Works Staff wants to purchase a new utility tractor with boom arm mower as a replacement for Unit #345 which was purchased in 1999. The purchase is part of the Capital Improvement Plan. The new unit will be purchased from Castongia Tractor through Sourcewell Contract #052417-TGR. The new unit will be a 2020 Bengal Series Utility Tractor with Boom Arm Mower at a gross cost of \$125,357.60 less \$13,500.00 trade-in for Unit #345 for a net cost of \$111,857.60. The unit will be funded by the 2018 and 2019 General Obligation Bonds.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to approve the purchase of Bengal Series Utility Tractor Boom Arm Mower with trade-in of \$13,500.00 for a net price of \$111,857.60 from Sourcewell to replace Unit # 345. Councilors Schoon, Gardiner, Tulowitzki, and Koultourides voted in favor; Councilor Tulowitzki voted against. The motion carried.

PURCHASE OF NINE ADDITIONAL GPS WIRELESS PLANS

Currently there are 35 Public Works vehicles equipped with GPS vehicle monitoring. The system is through Verizon Connect and provides information on vehicle speeds, location, idle time, and mileage. Public Works is seeking to add nine (9) vehicles with automatic vehicle location making the total number of vehicles monitored 44.

The software and wireless charges will come from the Technology Fund 247. The hardware was previously purchased. There are four units that are used seasonally, two dump trucks and two sweepers. With the additional vehicles, no new devices will need to be purchased and there will still be one unused device as a spare.

The monthly wireless plan charges are \$16.19/unit. The additional units will increase the monthly charges by \$145.71/month.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Tulowitzki, to approve acquisition of nine additional wireless plans required to enable the automatic vehicle location feature for nine more fleet vehicles. Councilors Schoon, Gardiner, Tulowitzki, and Koultourides voted in favor; Councilor Tulowitzki voted against. The motion carried.

REPORTS

WHOLESALE WATER RATES

Staff provided a status report on negotiations with the City of Hammond regarding the proposed water rate increase. The matter was discussed under the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

This portion of the meeting has been added to give elected officials an opportunity to share news about the various boards and commission on which they serve as liaison.

Councilor Gardiner shared that the Munster Police Department is currently going through its on-site assessment for accreditation. Assessors from the Certification Agency of Law Enforcement Agencies will hold a public hearing and will be available in a virtual setting on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 via Zoom at 3:00 p.m. The public is invited to call 219-836-6921 to speak with an assessor.

Councilor Schoon outlined the benefits of virtual meetings assisted by Zoom-like technologies. He proposed adopting a resolution encouraging the General Assembly to allow the continued use of virtual meetings after the pandemic ends. Mr. Westland explained the current legal process happening with the General Assembly where the matter is currently being debated.

No other reports were given.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Unless stated otherwise, all meetings of the Town Council begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Munster Town Hall.) The number of residents able to participate in person will be limited based on the Governor's Executive Order(s) in effect at that time.

The Town Council will hold regular meetings on Monday, March 15, and April 5, 2021. The Redevelopment Commission will hold regular meetings immediately following the Town Council meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, and upon a motion by Councilor Tulowitzki and seconded by Councilor Gardiner, the meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m. by voice vote.

ATTEST:

Andy Koultourides, President

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer