

COUNCIL MEETING (REGULAR)
OCTOBER 1, 2025

The Council of the Town of Monon met for a regular meeting on **Wednesday, October 1 2025**, at the Monon Town Hall. Members present were President Ken Hickman, Vice President Ron Benakovich, Toni Onken, Chris Franklin and Jamie Myers. Also present were Attorney Rebecca Trent, Town Marshall Roger Young and Clerk Treasurer Annette Sipkema.

President Hickman started our regular meeting immediately following the Public Hearing on additional appropriation and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment-of silence.

READING OF MINUTES....President Hickman asked if there were any objections to passing the minutes for the executive session, public hearing, and regular council meeting dated September 3, 2025 all at once. There were no objections.

Jamie Myers made a motion to adopt the minutes as written.

Seconded by Chris Franklin. Motion carried unanimously.

PAYROLL, BILLS & CLAIMS:....President Hickman asked if there were any questions on the bills, claims, and payroll. Hearing none, he requested a motion to approve all three items together.

Chris Franklin made a motion to approve the bills, claims, and payroll, seconded by Ron Benakovich. Motion carried unanimously. **\$416,613.49**

VISITORS:

Fire Chief Sean Garrett addressed the council regarding their ongoing fundraiser for 800 radios. He reported that the fundraiser would close on October 11th, and they have collected around \$23,000 so far to pay towards the radio purchase. The total quote from J&K for 10 new radios is \$46,167.80. Chief Garrett requested the town consider paying half of the remaining amount (\$11,583.90) with the other half to be paid by the township (pending request & approval).

Council Member Jamie Myers asked if they had looked into grants or gotten comparable quotes. Chief Garrett indicated he had applied for grants through organizations like Firehouse Subs but needed to get additional quotes.

Chief Garrett also shared preliminary drawings for a new firehouse design that incorporated a community center and town hall with 5 bays. Council members reviewed the plans and discussed the need for more information about capacity, costs, and design features. Council members agreed that Garrett should continue exploring options and gathering information about the facility design.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

COMMONWEALTH ENGINEERING.... Clerk Treasurer Sipkema provided an update on behalf of Commonwealth Engineering. She stated that Rural Development has acknowledged a confirmed funding source from SRF, a prerequisite for proceeding to the bidding phase. The subsequent step involves USDA's review of the submittal package, expected to take 30 to 45 days. Upon approval, authorization to solicit construction bids is anticipated. This timeline is contingent upon the federal government's reopening, given the involvement of federal funds.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION – RES. 2025-3.....

This request is for the Park Fund to disperse donated funds from Rose Acre Farms for a new basketball court in the amount of \$35,877.

Member Jamie Myers made a motion to accept Resolution 2025-3, seconded by Chris Franklin. _Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution #2025-03; Additional Appropriation; Park: \$35,877.00

COMMUNITY CROSSING GRANT APP..... Clerk Siphema reported that they had just received quotes that afternoon for the Community Crossing Grant application. The quotes totaled over \$1 million, which exceeds the grant limit. The council discussed which streets to prioritize, with the Arch Street project alone estimated at \$1,222,050. Third Street was estimated at \$357,720, and Lincoln Street at \$229,875.

The council decided to arrange another meeting with the engineer to determine what portions of the projects should be prioritized to stay within the grant budget. There was also discussion about whether Race Street, which wasn't explicitly included in the quotes, might be a better option than some of the other streets

SANITATION CONTRACT..... Attorney Trent presented the details of the sanitation contract to the Council. The proposed agreement stipulates that On Point will collect and return waste containers to Waste Management, imposing a fee of \$100 per load. The estimated number of loads required is between 10 and 13. The Council acknowledged this cost as reasonable and authorized the contract for execution.

2026 TRASH RATES..... Clerk Siphema presented information about the 2026 trash rates. The current ordinance sets the rate at \$14.55 per month for residents beginning January 1, 2026. If they kept the rate at \$13.96, the town would pay \$3,042 annually to cover the difference. The council discussed various rate options.

Council Member Jamie Myers recommended keeping the rate at \$14.55, noting that this is still a good value for trash service. The council agreed to maintain the current rate structure. They also discussed enforcement mechanisms for residents who consistently overfill their trash cans, including potential fines or additional can requirements. Commissioner Young stated that a letter with the information will be included in English & Spanish upon delivery of the On Point containers.

SALARY DISCUSSION..... President Hickman opened discussion on employee salaries for 2026. He expressed concerns about implementing a merit pay system with only three employees, suggesting it could create animosity among staff. Council members discussed whether to maintain an across-the-board percentage increase or consider individual merit-based raises.

Council Member Ron Benakovich suggested that performance evaluations and additional compensation should be handled by the department heads rather than the council. The council also reviewed information about employee benefit packages, particularly health insurance costs, noting that employees currently pay 8.5% of their health insurance costs, which is significantly lower than what most employers require.

The council agreed to hold an executive session on October 20th at 5:00 PM to discuss employee performance before finalizing the salary ordinance in a public meeting.

DEPARTMENTS:

TOWN MARSHALL ROGER YOUNG..... 1) The police department has completed training hours 2) passed a state safety audit for school safety "with flying colors." 3) The Durango's AC is not working, so it has been taken to the mechanic for repairs.

STREET COMMISSIONER ROGER YOUNG... 1) splash pad will be closed by mid-October 2) a new truck is expected soon, with plans to outfit it with lights, bed spray, and snow plow attachments, 3) options for wastewater license training through Alliance at \$400 plus \$200 for books, 4) repair of a hydraulic block on the Skidsteer, 5) completion of in-house hydrant repair at Vanguard, damaged by a forklift, 6) acquiring 10-15 1" water meters from Reynolds for \$500, 7) progress on elevating water meter pits that are currently below ground, , and 8) upcoming concrete work for setting the basketball goals at the new court.

Council discussed the damaged hydrant further, determining that the hydrant was damaged by a forklift and that the responsible party shall be billed for the repair costs. The estimated total for the repair, including labor and materials, was approximately \$800. Labor was estimated at two to three hours at a rate of \$100 per hour. It was noted that this was a dry hydrant and that similar replacements have been completed in the past.

CLERK-TREASURER ANNETTE SIPKEMA... Clerk Sipkema reported on the housing project she and Member Toni Onken visited. She described the facility as very nice with amenities including a community center, pickleball courts, and a dog park. While they don't expect to receive funding this year, they plan to reapply next April. If approved, the town's portion would be approximately \$170,000, which could include infrastructure contributions like sidewalks and fire hydrants rather than just cash.

She also reported that their CCR (Consumer Confidence Report) needed to be updated to include meeting times and information about where to find the lead service inventory online. A notice will be prepared by the office to be hand delivered to each service address.

ATTORNEY REBECCA TRENT... 1) discussed the need to update the contract with the wastewater operator. She offered to send council members different contract versions for review and recommended they consider what services are needed for both water and wastewater operations.

COUNCIL MEMBERS....

Member Toni Onken inquired about the status of the property clean up fees for Arch St.

Member Chris Franklin reported that an elderly resident requested a deposit box be installed on Harrison Street for easier bill payment access. Roger Young confirmed that the box has been made and they just need to determine the installation location.

Member Jamie Myers discussed the need for equipment to collect leaves rather than requiring residents to bag them. He suggested looking into purchasing a leaf vacuum system, estimating the cost at around \$25,000. He also expressed concerns about the appearance of town trucks and lawn mowing practices, suggesting that the grass was being cut too short at the town hall.

ALL OTHER MATTERS.....

President Hickman shared information about a potential large development project east of town. He explained that a company is considering a 500-acre development that could include multiple 250,000 square foot buildings and employ 150-200 people with six-figure salaries. Hickman noted this could be an opportunity to get help funding the new sewer plant, fire station, and other community needs.

The council discussed water usage concerns, potential economic benefits, and the need to gain community support. Hickman stressed the importance of council members and residents attending the upcoming Area Plan meeting on October 14th to show support for the project, as opposition could derail it. A meeting about the project is scheduled for Thursday, October 9th at 9:00 AM.

There being no other business to discuss,

Jamie Myers made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ron Benakovich seconded. Meeting adjourned @ 8:16 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 6:30 p.m..

COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Kentiklaun

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT: Ronald Bell

COUNCIL MEMBER: Loni Daker

COUNCIL MEMBER: [Signature]

COUNCIL MEMBER: [Signature]

ATTEST: Annette Sipkema

These minutes are a summary of actions taken at the Monon Town Council meeting. The full video archive of the meeting is available for viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/@townofmonon> for as long as this media is supported.

Official signed minutes may be requested at the Clerk's Office or viewed at <https://townofmonon.com/2025-minutes>