

**TOWN OF MONON**  
**COUNCIL MEETING (REGULAR)**  
**DECEMBER 3, 2025**

The Council of the Town of Monon met for a regular meeting on **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**, at the Monon Town Hall. Members present were President Ken Hickman, Vice President Ron Benakovich, Toni Onken and Chris Franklin. Also present were Town Marshal Roger Young and Clerk Treasurer Annette Sipkema.

Member Jamie Myers and Attorney Rebecca Trent were absent.

President Hickman started our regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment-of silence.

**READING OF MINUTES....** Council President Ken Hickman asked if all members had reviewed the meeting minutes from November 5, 2025. There were no questions or comments.

Chris Franklin made a motion to accept the minutes, Ron Benakovich seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**PAYROLL, BILLS, CLAIMS & NOVEMBER FINANCIALS:...** President Hickman asked if there were any questions on the bills, claims, payroll and November financials. Clerk-Treasurer Annette Sipkema informed the council that Liberty Arms required full payment of \$1,147 for the rifle being ordered for the Town Marshal, as it was a special order. Town Marshal Roger Young explained this was a replacement for his rifle, which had been budgeted for, and noted that the previous vendor had not delivered after nine months, while this one would deliver in nine days.

Toni Onken made a motion to approve bills, claims, payroll, and November financials. Seconded by Ron Benakovich, and carried unanimously.

**Month End Reconciliation Sign off...** President Hickman reviewed and signed off on November bank reconciliation.

**VISITORS / BUSINESS:**

**Mr. Brent Gillum, President and CEO of LightStream,** extended offers to assist the town of Monon through several initiatives:

- Mr. Gillum revealed LightStream's plans to demolish the dilapidated Standard Auto building, adjacent to their office, in the upcoming spring. After the demolition, he offered the Town of Monon the opportunity to purchase the cleared land for \$1. This offer is meant to support community events, suggesting the space be used for parking or festivals, a gesture President Hickman warmly thanked.
- Mr. Gillum stated that when Lightstream acquired Monon Telephone the company inherited a bucket truck they do not need. Mr. Gillum stated that he would like to offer this 2016 Ford F-350 bucket truck for its trade in value of ~\$10,000. Member Franklin stated that this would be a beneficial upgrade from the town's current 1995 model. Mr. Gillum will provide the council with detailed specifications and photographs to facilitate their decision.
- Lastly, Mr. Gillum announced a new partnership with Josh Bowser of Bowser IT, who is set to lease their front office space. Concurrently, LightStream is exploring convenient solutions for customer bill payments, such as agreements with a nearby bank or installing a secure drop box.

**Jenilynne Kyburz, White County Area Plan Director,.....** presented two zoning ordinance amendments:

**Amendment A85:** This amendment updates Chapter 10: Sign Standards, specifically regarding electronic messaging signs. The amendment changes the required distance for sign orientation from 500 feet to 100 feet from residential

properties. Kyburz explained this change was proposed because numerous variances had been requested by organizations like churches and libraries.

Chris Franklin made a motion to accept Amendment A85. Ron Benakovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously. **Ord #2025-8**

**Amendment A86:** This amendment updates Chapter 3 specific use requirements and performance standards pertaining to data center development. Changes include increased setbacks to property lines, screening and fencing requirements, lighting requirements, educational safety training, and property value guarantees. Kyburz detailed how setbacks increased from 30ft side/20ft rear to 40ft minimum for non-residential properties and 250ft to property line/500ft to dwellings for residential properties.

Considerable discussion ensued about the applicability of this amendment to the Town of Monon versus unincorporated areas. Council members expressed concerns about voting on regulations for facilities not likely to be built in town and questioned how close data centers could be built to town limits. Several residents expressed concerns about the regulations not being stringent enough.

Toni Onken made a motion to table Amendment A86. Ron Benakovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Since Amendment A86 was tabled, the council has up to 90 days to further assess the amendment. During this period, they can consider suggestions for changes or address concerns raised during the meeting. If the council proposes amendments, they must submit them in writing to the Area Plan Commission, which will review them within 45 days. These submissions can request additional considerations, such as stricter setbacks from town limits or other protective measures for community interests. Meanwhile, current standards remain in effect.

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS:**

**COMMONWEALTH ENGR...WW PROJECT**.....Clerk-Treasurer Siphema reported on behalf of Gabrielle from Commonwealth Engineering. The USDA staff is catching up on processing claims following government shutdowns. The electrical inspector visited the wastewater treatment plant to verify power distribution questions. Process design plans and specs are complete, and they expect to receive certified drawings from the structural engineer soon. They're targeting USDA plans and specs submittal by the end of the following week. Once approved, the town will receive formal authorization to begin bidding the project.

**2026 FORD FINANCING OPTIONS**.....Clerk-Treasurer Siphema presented financing options for the new pickup truck. She proposed paying the full amount rather than financing, noting that with a \$25,000 down payment, financing would incur additional costs of \$4,065.70 (3-year) or \$5,422.08 (4-year). She reported the town had \$29,412.96 in the motor vehicle fund and sufficient EDIT money to cover the remainder of the balance.

Ron Benakovich made a motion to pay for the 2026 Ford in full with MVH and EDIT funds. Chris Franklin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**2026 SALARY ORDINANCE – ORD #2025-5**....Clerk-Treasurer Siphema presented the 2026 Salary Ordinance with previously discussed amounts and two changes: updating vacation days to be awarded by anniversary date rather than calendar year, and clarifying the town/township split for fire and EMT compensation.

Chris Franklin made a motion to suspend the rules and forgo the 1<sup>st</sup> reading for the 2026 Salary Ordinance. Ron Benakovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Chris Franklin made a motion to adopt the 2026 Salary Ordinance. Ron Benakovich seconded. Motion carried by the majority vote with 3 in favor, 1 against.

**ORD #2025-5**

**AIM MEDICAL INSURANCE**....Clerk-Treasurer Annette Siphema presented details regarding the AIM Medical Trust insurance option. She explained that opting for Plan 3

from AIM Medical Trust would result in a savings of 16.4% compared to the town's current plan. She highlighted that the AIM Medical Trust has maintained a 0% increase in rates for the past two years, which contrasts with the town's existing plan that had a 13.7% increase for 2025 and a 9.7% increase projected for 2026. This plan requires a 3-year commitment and offers coverage that is comparable to the current plan. Siphkema further elaborated that the trust calculates rate increases based on tenure with the plan and market conditions, with good performance resulting in potential holiday premium relief, which they have achieved twice in recent years. Plan 3 provides a \$1,000 deductible per person, and a \$2,000 deductible per family, with an out-of-pocket maximum of \$3,500 per individual and \$7,000 per family.

Ron Benakovich made a motion to approve switching to AIM Medical Trust Plan #3. Toni Onken seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**LIBRARY APPT TO PARK BOARD.....**The Monon Town Township Public Library has appointed Bobbi Jo Fagerlind to the Park Board. President Hickman will sign the appointment document.

**RETAIN/APPOINT POSITIONS....**The council voted on each position for 2026 individually:

1. Ron Benakovich made the motion to retain KEN HICKMAN, COUNCIL PRESIDENT. Toni Onken seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
2. Toni Onken made a motion to retain RON BENAKOVICH, VICE PRESIDENT. Ken Hickman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Ken Hickman made the motion to retain ROGER YOUNG, TOWN MARSHAL. Ron Benakovich seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Ken Hickman made the motion to retain ROGER YOUNG, STREET COMMISSIONER. Toni Onken seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Ron Benakovich made the motion to retain TONI ONKEN, KIRPC REPRESENTATIVE. Ken Hickman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
6. Toni Onken made the motion to retain RON BENAKOVICH, WHITE CO. TAX ABATE BOARD. Chris Franklin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
7. Jim Davis was reappointed as Economic Development Rep, with the council agreeing to confirm with him that he wishes to continue in this role.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

**Roger Young, Street Commissioner.....**1) New trash carts to be delivered by OnPoint on December 22, with the first pickup scheduled for January 3. Waste Management's last pickup will be on December 27. To manage the transition, town employees will work overtime on December 27 to collect trash carts before they fill up over the weekend. 2) Tracy is working on her wastewater certification, and Auner is set to retest for his water certification to uphold regulatory standards and maintain the town's water and wastewater systems. 3) One clarifier at the treatment plant is non-operational due to a drivetrain issue. They are awaiting the final part needed for repairs, having already received two parts. 4)The NPDES permit is due for renewal and can be completed in-house with a \$150 filing fee, avoiding the higher costs of hiring an engineering firm. 5) Sarah from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management will conduct an unofficial walkthrough of the water plant on December 16 to review improvements and address any issues before an official inspection. 6) Commissioner Young is seeking to replace outdated snow removal equipment and received a \$14,200 quote for a new John Deere machine with a plow and salt spreader, vital for clearing sidewalks in busy areas like the business district and school crossings.

**Clerk-Treasurer Annette Siphkema.....**1) Siphkema requested clarification regarding vacation and sick leave benefits for police personnel, noting discrepancies in how the handbook addresses 8-hour versus 12-hour workdays. The Council determined that benefits for officers working 12-hour shifts should be calculated based on 12-hour days. 2) Siphkema noted a discrepancy in sanitation customer numbers, observing an average count of 645-650 compared to the originally reported 700. She plans to discuss the matter with OnPoint. 3) The town received notification that they were not chosen as a

recipient of the Community Crossings grant. The maximum available for distribution was 100 million and the state received \$237 million in applications. 4) Siphkema clarified that the ordinance number previously cited for the ERP signage ordinance was incorrect (Ord #2025-4), and corrected it to Ordinance No. 2025-7. 5) Siphkema raised the issue of compensating police officers for holidays worked and suggested exploring options aligned with practices of comparable departments. Surrounding areas provide a holiday stipend and pay their officers time and a half for hours worked on a federal holiday. At this time, Monon Officers do not receive any additional compensation for holiday pay. 6) Nepotism forms related to direct supervision and the certification of compliance with the municipal contracting policy were distributed and should be returned to the clerk for file. Marshal Young was provided the existing employee nepotism compliance form and confirmed that his form has been returned. 6) The End of the Year Meeting has been scheduled for December 18 at 5:00 PM.

Council Members

**Member Toni Onken** inquired about the status of certified letters sent by the town attorney regarding property violations. Clerk Siphkema reported that she will follow up with Attorney Trent on proceeding with the lien for clean-up costs on the two nuisance properties. Commissioner Young reported that the other issue on 4<sup>th</sup> St. has contacted him and reported that the owner is seeking a structural engineer to determine whether their building is salvageable.

**President Hickman** clarified that Marshal/Street Commissioner Young should only report to him when a *major issue or incident occurs that the Council needs to be aware of*. Routine updates or personal-day activities do **not** require notification.

**Council Members** thanked the Street Department for their hard work during the recent snowfall event.

**There being no other business to discuss,**

Chris Franklin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ron Benakovich seconded. Meeting adjourned @ 8:04 p.m.

A Special End of the Year Meeting will be held on December 18 @ 5:00 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on January 7, 2025.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Ken Hickman

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT: Ronald B. B. B.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Toni Onken

COUNCIL MEMBER: M. B. B.

COUNCIL MEMBER: J. B. B.

ATTEST: Audette Siphkema

*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>*