

COUNCIL MEETING (REGULAR)

JULY 2, 2025

The Council of the Town of Monon met for a regular meeting on **Wednesday, July 2, 2025**, at the Monon Town Hall. Members present were President Ken Hickman, Vice President Ron Benakovich, Chris Franklin and Jamie Myers. Also present were Attorney Rebecca Trent, Town Marshall Roger Young and Clerk Treasurer Annette Sipkema.

Toni Onken was absent.

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

MINUTES, PAYROLL, BILLS & CLAIMS:

Minutes: Jamie Myers made a motion to approve the REGULAR meeting minutes from June 4th. Ron Benakovich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Payroll, Bills & Claims: Ron Benakovich made a motion to accept the bills – claims – payroll. Chris Franklin seconded. The motion carried unanimously. **\$308,315.86**

Month End Reconciliation Review / Sign Off....None at this time.

VISITORS:

TERRY SAUNDERS, RESIDENT, inquired if there was a list of business owners in the downtown area. Marshall Young stated that he is working on the list with updated owner information for dispatch.

JIM DAVIS shared that he and President Hickman recently attended a meeting with White County Economic Development, the Town of Reynolds and Keller Development to discuss future housing projects. Mr. Davis shared photos of duplex units located in Delphi, IN that they toured. The units are noted for being immaculately maintained by ownership. He emphasized that this project is income-based, not low-income housing. All residents are required to be employed and capable of paying monthly rent without any assistance. The rent is based on a sliding scale, adjusted according to income. Mr. Davis stated that IEDC has approved the Monon Wastewater Treatment Plant Project, but full approval is contingent on providing match documentation from planned housing and industrial developments. Currently, there are zero new housing units built, highlighting the need for a community growth plan. Discussions included a project on Larry Brown's property across the highway which would require new water & sewer tap(s), and the availability of nine "building trades" lots ready for development with wastewater treatment permission. The \$2 to \$3 million grant for the wastewater treatment plant is tied to presenting multiple projects and having available lots for construction, with the plant designed to serve a growing population. Mr. Davis encouraged the council to keep an open mind when planning for future growth in the community.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

COMMONWEALTH ENGINEERING.... Gabrielle Taber provided an update on the ongoing WWTP project. All requested paperwork and documents have been submitted to USDA Rural Development and are currently being reviewed. Approval is anticipated within the next couple of weeks, after which we plan to advertise for project bids sometime in July, with a typical 30-day bidding period, leading to bid openings in August, hopefully no later than September. Member Myers asked how many contractors typically bid on a project like this. Gabrielle stated that the number of businesses that typically bid on projects like this varies. For specialized projects like lift stations, they often receive one or two bids, sometimes up to five. Commonwealth maintains a large list of reliable

contractors and hope that along with any local contractors that a good number of them will be interested in bidding on the project. Gabrielle also shared that it was recently learned that this project scored significantly better this year than last year for the State Revolving Fund (SRF) program, potentially increasing financing options. Baker Tilly will be reaching out to SRF to discuss additional financing options.

SANITATION BIDS.....President Hickman stated that Waste Management (WM) quoted between \$42,000 and \$49,000 to remove their totes if the town cancels their contract at the end of 2025. If the town were to stay through 2026, there would be no removal fee at the end of the contract. On Point, a competing sanitation company, offered to pick up the carts and deliver them to WM's site in Logansport at no fee to the town if they are awarded the contract. Eric, owner, stated a new cart costs his company \$56 and expressed surprise at WM's proposed charges, which they considered excessive. Concerns were raised about a vague contract clause for a "service fee for cart removal" without a specified amount, which Attorney Trent stated that is not unusual for a company to include such clause. President Hickman suggested that the sanitation discussion be tabled until the August meeting for Rebecca to conduct further research and legal review.

Member Myers made a motion to table the discussion. Chris Franklin seconded.

Tabled to August meeting.

COMMUNITY CROSSINGS GRANT APPLICATION....Quote not yet received. **Tabled**

STUMP REMOVAL.... Commissioner Young reported he had received a quote for stump removal, ranging between \$3,500 and \$3,800. He further stated there was a more urgent issue regarding a fire hydrant replacement on 4th Street. The necessary part to proceed with the hydrant installation costs \$7,207, not including Accu-Dig's cost for excavating a 5-by-8-foot hole prior to installation. Commissioner Young emphasized the importance of addressing the hydrant issue, which appears to be caused by a faulty valve on the east end of 4th Street. Commissioner Young expressed support for stump removal but emphasized that hydrant replacement should take priority, especially if tipping dollars are being considered for other projects. He noted the public safety concern if a hydrant were to fail during a fire. Member Myers inquired whether there was available funding outside of the sidewalk fund to cover hydrant repairs. Clerk Sipkema confirmed that the water account could fund the repair but expressed concern due to significant expenditures already made this year. She stated the current balance of the water operating account is \$301,000, with \$102,000 in the water depreciation account. Commissioner Young stated that if sufficient funds are available, both projects should move forward. He noted the lack of a shutoff directly at the hydrant and stressed the importance of including shutoff valves in all new hydrant installations to ensure they function during emergencies. Clerk Sipkema also reported that the sidewalk fund currently has a surplus exceeding \$50,000 due to unspent collected funds from previous years, including 2025.

Member Myers made a motion to utilize the water fund to pay for the fire hydrant repairs needed and sidewalk funds (tipping fees) for stump removal. Chris Franklin seconded. All in favor, motion carries.

HEALTH-E ACCESS CLINIC..... Clerk Sipkema reported that a guest speaker from the Health-E Access Committee was originally scheduled to attend the meeting but was unable to be present. She indicated that if the board wished, arrangements could be made for the speaker to attend the next meeting. Member Myers asked whether there would be any penalties for terminating the agreement with the current clinic provider. Clerk Sipkema confirmed there would be none. The town has passed the one-year mark in the agreement and is only required to provide a 90-day notice for termination. Clerk Sipkema presented information about the proposed new provider, St. Elizabeth's Health-E Access Clinic, which offers a flat monthly rate of \$68 per enrollee. This rate includes coverage for all immediate family members, in contrast to the current provider, which charges an additional fee for each family member, with the highest monthly rate reaching \$235. Sipkema highlighted an estimated 50% reduction in monthly costs compared to the current provider. Health-E Access includes urgent care, after-hours virtual care, medications, physician visits, mental health support and yoga classes. The program would be available to all town employees, including those not currently enrolled in the town's health insurance plan. Sipkema noted that employee feedback on the potential switch was mixed, with some employees

expressing interest and others preferring to stay with the current provider due to established care relationships. A question was raised regarding eligibility for volunteer firefighters. Clerk Sipkema will follow up for clarification. She also noted that if enrollment exceeds 25 participants, the monthly rate increases slightly. However, there is an option to require participants to contribute toward the cost. Currently, the town covers 100% of the clinic membership cost for employees and their families.

Following discussion:

Member Franklin made a motion to switch the town's clinic provider to St. Elizabeth's Health-E Access Clinic. Vice President Benakovich seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENTS:

TOWN MARSHALL ROGER YOUNG..... nothing at this time.

STREET COMMISSIONER ROGER YOUNG... 1) Working on improving the appearance of the business district and has contacted a striping contractor (same used by schools) for pricing 2) Central Paving has not provided a date for street repaving, but this is expected soon. 3) There was a tripping hazard identified recently at the firestation. Comm. Young received a quote of approximately \$3,000 to remove the 8 foot section of concrete in front of the door and slope it to the existing approach. 4) Tracy successfully passed her Water Distribution Certification (Water 3). This license is currently restricted to working under an Operator of Record. Commissioner Young recommended that Tracy continue to work under Standish Consulting's supervision for the remainder of 2025 contract. Chad Reynolds from the Rural Water Alliance will assist Tracy with paperwork training. 4) Pay Scale Discussion: Tracy's current pay rate is \$21.41/hour. Labor 1A with one certification pays \$22.52/hour and Sewage Plant Operator with 1 certification rate is \$23.78/hour.

After discussion,

Member Myers made a motion to raise Tracy's pay to \$22.52/hour. Vice-Pres. Benakovich seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Young recommended that future employees attend in person classes.

CLERK-TREASURER ANNETTE SIPKEMA... 1) Civic Center Boiler Inspection is scheduled for Monday, July 7th. 2) The Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) was released and there are copies on the back table for anyone interested. The report is also available on the Town of Monon webpage. 3) Keystone has been sending daily updates regarding rising fuel prices; this is something we will need to keep an eye on for budget season. 4) 2026 Budget information: Dept Heads will receive the initial budget information next week. Council Members and Dept Heads are asked to think about next year's budget and any future projects that the town should be preparing for. Budget Workshop scheduled for July 23rd at 5:30. Tentatively, Clerk Sipkema would like to have the 2026 budget ready for council review at the August meeting, hold the Public Hearing in September and finalized in early October. 5) Clerk Sipkema shared with the council that she has not received the fire contract nor the annual contract payment of \$10,000 for 2025 emergency services.

ATTORNEY REBECCA TRENT...nothing at this time.

COUNCIL MEMBERS....

Member Benakovich noted that there is a large pothole at the east end of Monroe.

There being no other business to discuss,

Chris Franklin made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ron Benakovich seconded. Meeting adjourned @ 7:27 p.m.

There will be a Budget Workshop held on July 23rd at 5:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, August 6, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Ken Hahman

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT: Paul Beck

COUNCIL MEMBER: Toni Oake

COUNCIL MEMBER: [Signature]

COUNCIL MEMBER: [Signature]

ATTEST: Annette Spkema

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>