

COUNCIL MEETING (REGULAR)

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

Meeting minutes

The Council of the Town of Monon met for a regular meeting on **Wednesday, September 3, 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 @ 6:30 pm and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment-of silence.

READING OF MINUTES: REGULAR MEETING MINUTES DTD AUG 6, 2025; EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES DTD AUG 14 & AUG 20, 2025

Council President Ken Hickman suggested combining the executive meeting minutes with the regular board meeting minutes to review them all at once. After confirming that all members had reviewed the minutes, he asked if there were any discussion or corrections needed. No corrections were identified.

Jamie Myers made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Toni Onken seconded.
Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS, CLAIMS AND PAYROLL

Ken Hickman proposed combining the presentation of bills, claims, and payroll with the presentation of the financial report for August to address both items simultaneously. There were no objections to this approach.

After asking if there were any questions on bills, claims, and payroll, and receiving no response, Hickman entertained a motion.

Chris Franklin made a motion to accept bills, claims, payroll, and the monthly financial report, seconded by Ron Benakovich. Motion carried unanimously.

\$212,658.31

(Total, Bills, Claims and Payroll)

Month End Reconciliation Review / Sign Off... President Ken Hickman reviewed and signed off on August bank reconciliations.

VISITORS / BUSINESS:

Jenilynne Kyburz, White County Area Plan Director

Director Kyburz presented Rezone Petition #1217 to amend the official White County Indiana zoning maps for the property at 902 N Market Street in Monon. She explained that the petition was properly advertised and was heard at a public hearing of the Area Planning Commission on August 11, 2025.

Kyburz stated that the request was to change the zoning from B-2 (General Business) to R-2 (Single and Two-Family Residential). The Area Plan Commission had voted 10-0 in favor of recommending the change to the Town Council. She noted that the property in question was formerly Annis Mini Mart, a gas station and convenience store that is no longer in operation. The property includes only the parcel with the building, not adjacent lots. The applicant's intention is to remodel the existing building to live on the property, which is not permitted under the current B-2 zoning.

Council Member Toni Onken asked about soil contamination due to the property's former use as a gas station. Raymond Rottach, owner, explained that the tanks, vents, piping, canopies, pumps, and all potential sources of contamination had been professionally removed by Jacobs. He noted that the state had tested the soil, closed down the monitoring wells, and approved the soil sampling.

The applicant, Raymond Rottach, explained his plans to use the building as a residence while parking his commercial vehicles (two semis and four trailers) on the south part of the property, which would remain commercially zoned. He clarified that this would not be a commercial garage operation but simply a place to park his equipment when he's not on the road. He mentioned he's a truck driver who is gone 3-5 days a week and plans to maintain the property in a clean, organized manner. Rottach also indicated his plans to paint the building within 30 days and add proper siding and lighting next year.

Toni Onken made a motion to approve the rezoning, seconded by Chris Franklin.

Motion carried unanimously.

ORD # 2025-6

ROSS HAGEN, BAKER TILLY, RATE PROPOSAL

Ross Hagen from Baker Tilly presented an updated preliminary rate analysis for the town's wastewater project. He explained that the total estimated project cost is approximately \$16.1 million, consisting of about \$13.6 million in construction costs and \$2.5 million in non-construction costs.

Hagen outlined the committed project funding sources:

- USDA Rural Development loan: approximately \$5 million at 1.5% interest over 40 years
- Rural Development grant: approximately \$3.4 million
- Potential READI grant: \$2.3 million
- County cash contribution already received: \$663,000

He explained that there is a funding gap of approximately \$4.8 million that needs to be addressed, and presented three alternatives:

- Alternative 1: State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan at 4.5% interest over 20 years, resulting in an 84% rate increase (\$54 monthly increase for average residential users)
- Alternative 2: County loan at 0% interest over 20 years, resulting in a 57% rate increase (\$37 monthly increase)
- Alternative 3: County loan at 0% interest over 40 years, resulting in a 32% rate increase (\$21 monthly increase)

Hagen noted that if the county loan had a 2% interest rate instead of 0%, it would add approximately \$7 to the monthly bill under either alternative 2 or 3.

Hagen indicated that the next step is to submit plans and specifications to Rural Development for approval to bid the project. Once bids are received, they will have updated numbers to present to the county for potential loan funding.

NEW, UNFINISHED OR DEFERED BUSINESS...

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Ken Hickman addressed the procedure for handling town residents' complaints. He emphasized that residents should contact the town hall and speak with Annette or Tammy, who will relay the information to the appropriate staff. Hickman stressed following the chain of command, rather than contacting workers directly, to avoid priority confusion. If residents cannot reach town hall staff, they should try to contact Roger Young, and if he's unavailable, Hickman is available as a backup contact.

COMMONWEALTH ENGR...WW PROJECT

Rob Bellucci, Commonwealth Engineering, explained that they are ready to submit plans and specifications to Rural Development for approval. He mentioned that they already have the maps needed and are ready to move forward with bidding the project. The plans will include alternate options to help reduce costs where possible. Once bids are received, they will reassess the funding needs and explore options with the county and other potential funding sources.

SANITATION BIDS

The council discussed sanitation bids for waste collection services. The council focused on two main options: Waste Management at approximately \$15.20 per month, and On Point at \$14.35 per month.

Arik VanWeelden, owner of On Point Waste Services, explained their service proposal, noting that their rate would remain at \$14.35 for the next three years. He discussed the transition plan, including the exchange of waste containers from the current provider to On Point. Mr. VanWeelden requested assistance from the town in gathering the old containers in one location for pickup, and offered to provide trucks to help with any waste removal during the transition.

VanWeelden also addressed questions about large item pickup, additional containers (available at \$84 per year), and how overflow trash situations would be handled. He emphasized that On Point would repair or replace damaged containers and would work with the town on enforcement of proper waste disposal practices.

Jamie Myers made a motion to accept On Point's bid for sanitation services, seconded by Chris Franklin.

Motion carried unanimously.

PARK RESOLUTION 2025-2

The council briefly discussed the transfer of \$3,000 from tree trimming to the playground and shelter account requested by the Park Board to pay for two new basketball goals.

Ron Benakovich made a motion to approve the transfer, seconded by Jamie Myers.

Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNITY CROSSING GRANT QUOTE

Annette Sipkema presented information on the Community Crossing grant application. She reported that the current estimate for the requested road work is approximately \$1.4 million, but the maximum that can be applied for is \$1 million. She noted that the estimate did not include drainage, which would add approximately \$75,000 if included for all streets.

Sipkema explained that the engineering fees would be \$6,500 if awarded the grant, plus \$900 annually for PASER ratings if they chose to have Ken Smith (the engineer) handle that instead of town staff. She mentioned that the town's match requirement is 20% of the project cost.

The council discussed using the sidewalk fund (approximately \$50,000) to cover a portion of the sidewalks that are included in the grant application. Commissioner Roger Young and Vice- Pres. Ron Benakovich emphasized the importance of including drainage work where needed to prevent water damage to streets, yards, and basements.

Ron Benakovich made a motion to apply for the full \$1 million grant amount with the possibility of added drainage where needed, seconded by Chris Franklin. Motion carried unanimously.

2026 SALARY DISCUSSION

Annette Sipkema inquired about the council's preferences regarding the 2026 salary ordinance. She noted that she hadn't received much feedback and needed direction on how to proceed.

Ken Hickman mentioned that he and Annette had discussed increasing the fire department run pay, though Sipkema clarified that this would be part of their contract rather than the salary ordinance.

The council discussed different approaches to salary increases, with Ron Benakovich advocating for merit-based increases rather than across-the-board cost of living adjustments. Ken Hickman suggested that any merit increases should be at least equal to the cost-of-living increase.

Annette indicated she would like to keep the total increase between \$10,000-\$12,000 for all employees. She agreed to email evaluation forms to council members for review, which would help inform their salary decisions. The council agreed to revisit the topic at a future meeting after reviewing evaluations.

STAFF REPORTS:

Roger Young – Marshal/Street Commissioner

Street Department: 1) The Bobcat is experiencing issues connecting to its computer; the battery will be tested, but Bobcat can't inspect it until the 10th. 2) Paving is scheduled to begin the week of the 15th, starting in the park. 3) Mosquito spraying has increased, with a new chemical being used due to supply issues. 4) They've begun painting curbs as they await a response from Brun. 5) The fire hydrant located near Vanguard's Aftermarket plant will be scheduled soon. 6) A water shutoff broke during a disconnection but was repaired with assistance from nearby workers. 7) The Town of Reynolds has offered new meters and radios for purchase at a reduced cost. 8) The old dump truck at the park isn't running properly and should be sold. Commissioner Young informed the council that the dump truck was to be sold to the Park, but that the park was never charged for the truck. The council discussed selling the vehicle by a Reserve Bid process. Commissioner Young will check on the current market value of the truck to discuss reserve bid next month.

Police Department: 1) All officers will attend advanced firearms training in East Monticello on Saturday. 2) The radar trailer has been moved to Meridian Road near the school crossing. 3) The State Department of Highway Transportation denied the permit for flashing lights on Broadway St near Meridian Rd. and indicated the school crossing is not up to federal standards.

Annette Sipkema – Clerk/Treasurer

1) Charrisse Hook submitted her resignation from the Monon Park Board effective December 31, 2025. The council agreed to post the vacancy on Facebook to find a replacement. 3) Town wide trick or treat will be held on October 31 (Friday) from 5:00-7:00 PM. 4) Verve Clinic's last day will be October 31, with Healthy Access scheduled to provide an introduction for employees later in the month. 5) She received two questionnaires from Bob Hoffman with Altz-Wig for the old fertilizer plant. This was forwarded to Jim Davis since he has been working on this project.

Jim Davis elaborated on the brownfield project, explaining that it involves the old fertilizer plant. He has been coordinating with Edwin and Emily (KIRPC) for the last three years, utilizing Ready Grant and

demolition program funding. Their efforts have advanced to the brownfield stage. Most recently, Davis completed a survey for SME (Smith and Montgomery Environmental) to assist in research and remedial efforts for the site. He filled out the survey to the best of his ability but suggested Clerk Siphema be the main contact for access arrangements to the property. Davis also highlighted an agreement with the property owner to proceed with clean-up efforts.

Additionally, Davis mentioned that the Civic Preservation Society would host a trunk-or-treat event on Market Street and a haunted house in the theater on Halloween (5:00-6:00 PM). He also mentioned a park event on October 18 with candy, slushies, and popcorn free to all attendees, starting at 2:00 PM.

Attorney Rebecca Trent

Attorney Rebecca Trent reported that everything is updated for the grant. She also mentioned that after researching the fire department run fees, she found they could be increased up to \$150 per run, which was higher than initially expected.

Council Members

Council Member Chris Franklin inquired about the status of the old funeral home property. Roger Young reported that the owners had mowed, cleaned up, and boarded the windows as requested. Young mentioned that the owners had hired an architect with plans to convert the downstairs into two apartments (one 1-bedroom and one 2-bedroom). He indicated that they were told to submit their plans to Area Plan for review.

Member Jamie Myers asked Sean Garrett about progress on the new fire station project. Chief Garrett reported that he has been researching other recently built stations and had sent out emails requesting information but was waiting for responses. He explained that the first step would be getting a design, which would determine the necessary property size and budget. Garrett noted that he had visited fire stations in Brookston and Idaville, with costs ranging widely from \$2 million to \$22 million.

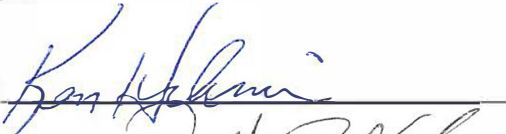
There being no other business to discuss,

Ron Benakovich made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

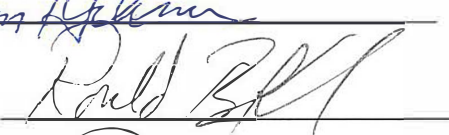
Jamie Myers seconded. Meeting adjourned @ 7:57 p.m.

There will be a Public Hearing held on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 at 6:15 p.m. with the regularly scheduled meeting to follow.

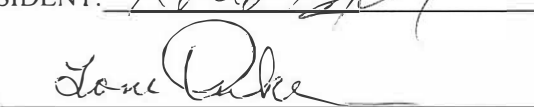
COUNCIL PRESIDENT:



COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT:



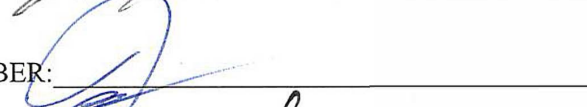
COUNCIL MEMBER:



COUNCIL MEMBER:



COUNCIL MEMBER:



ATTEST:



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>