TOWN OF MONON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

The Council of the Town of Monon met for their Regular Meeting on, September 2, 2026 at the Monon Town Hall Conference Room, 422 N Market St. Members present were President Ken Hickman, Vice President Ron Benakovich, Toni Onken and Jamie Myers. Also present were Town Marshall Roger Young, Superintendent Tracy Anderson and Clerk Treasurer Annette Sipkema. President Hickman started our regular monthly meeting immediately following the Public Hearing and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment-of silence.

Attorney Rebecca Trent and Member Chris Franklin were absent.

READING OF MINUTES....Council President Ken Hickman asked whether members had reviewed the Regular Meeting minutes dated August 5, 2026. There were no additions or corrections.

> **Ron Benakovich made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes as presented, Jamie Myers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

BILLS, CLAIMS & PAYROLL .... Sipkema noted that invoices previously unbilled from Peerless were included in the current claim run. Superintendent Tracy Anderson noted that the original balance owed to Peerless was approximately $40,000; however, Peerless agreed to reduce the amount to $17,343, crediting errors on their part.

> **Toni Onken made a motion to approve the bills, claims, and payroll. Seconded by Vice-President Ron Benakovich. The motion carried unanimously. $216,162.35**

MONTHLY RECONCILLIATION.....none at this time.

VISITORS

Dianna Tribbett, Park Board President: reported a mower incident involving the movement of a picnic table with the mower near the splash pad. The base of the splash pad was damaged. The replacement part has been ordered for $820, which is below the town's insurance deductible. Tables will be marked "do not move" and kept at a safe distance.

Terry Saunders, Resident: Expressed concerns regarding downtown street parking, vehicles idling in front of residences, and a personal encounter with the Town Marshal. President Hickman directed that personnel complaints must be formally submitted to town hall rather than debated in the public forum.

Edwin Buswell, KIRPC Assistant Director: provided an update on two pending CDBG grants through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA): a Blight Clearance grant targeting the old fertilizer plant site, and an Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation grant. Because the town may only apply for one grant at a time, discussion focused on which to pursue for the current fall round. The council agreed to prioritize the Blight Clearance Grant for the old fertilizer plant. A Public Hearing is required before a proposal for grant application can be submitted. The Council agreed to schedule a special public hearing for the Blight Clearance grant proposal on Tuesday, September 29 at 5:00 PM. It was noted that a Phase 2 environmental assessment is pending, and IDEM is expected to have additional funding available around October 1 to complete that work. The grant proposal will be submitted at the full $500,000 request, to be adjusted once Phase 2 costs are confirmed. A 10% local match is required.

Jared Campbell, Baker Tilly Representative: presented updated sewage works rate study scenarios based on the recent Thieneman Construction (TCI) base bid. Total project cost is calculated at roughly $19.1 million, which includes a $500,000 construction contingency requested by engineers. It was clarified that this amount does not include the Greenwood Street sewer line extension, which is projected to cost an additional $1.8 million to $1.9 million and would be handled as a separate contract if a rebid occurs. . With $11,300,000 in committed funding already secured (including a sewage works bond, USDA RD grant, county cash contribution, and cash on hand), a significant funding gap remains. Several funding scenarios were presented, ranging from a full USDA loan to a 60%/40% loan-to-grant split and a county loan at 0% interest over 20 or 40 years. The best-case scenario modeled—a county loan over 40 years—still results in an estimated rate impact of approximately $90 per customer.

New, Unfinished or Deferred Business

Commonwealth Engr...WW Project Update/Bid Recommendation: Robert Bellucci, Commonwealth Representative, discussed and expressed confidence that rebidding the project, incorporating value engineering changes developed with the low bidder, could yield savings of $2,000,000 to $3,000,000. He noted the second-lowest bidder had undercut the low bidder by $500,000 on the base bid alone, and that rebidding based on the base bid only remains an option if the project goes back out to bid. The Council agreed that moving forward with a rebid was preferable to waiting, as it would allow value engineering to be formally incorporated into the drawings and specifications and provide more competitive pricing. Efforts to identify supplemental grant funding will continue in parallel.

> **Jamie Myers made a motion to reject current bids and proceed with rebidding the WWTP project. Ron Benakovich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ordinance #'s 2026-8-1, 2026-9-1 & 2026-9-2 were presented for approval. The three ordinances—Bond Ordinance #2026-8-1, Right of Way Ordinance #2026-9-1, and Public Records Request Ordinance #2026-9-2—had been presented at the prior meeting by Attorney Trent. No additional discussion was raised.

Toni Onken made a motion to approve Ordinances #2026-8-1, #2026-9-1, and #2026-9-2. Ron Benakovich seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Bowsher IT Maintenance Proposal... Clerk Sipkema presented a proposal from Bowsher IT for a managed services contract covering all town computers, network cameras, routers, switches, firewalls, and cybersecurity protections (including spam/phishing filtering, dark web monitoring, encrypted email, and backup services). The monthly cost would be $2,822.25, compared to the current arrangement of paying $150 per hour on an as-needed basis. The Council expressed support for the cybersecurity components but requested more information on cost-effectiveness before making a decision. Sipkema offered to invite the IT provider to present at a future meeting. No vote was taken.

Staff Reports

Roger Young – Marshal/Street Commissioner... 1) Marshal Young reported that Reith Riley will return September 23 to complete sidewalk and curb work, with asphalt paving scheduled to begin the first week of October. Next year's Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) figures were received from Ken Smith and forwarded to the Council and Sipkema. 2) End-of-year officer training is ongoing. 3) A new police truck has been ordered but will not enter production until the first week of December.

Tracy Anderson – Municipal Superintendent.... provided a comprehensive report covering the following: 1) Vanguard completed the repairs to the section of the WWTP driveway impacted by construction, restoring the area to its original condition. 2) Liz completed the electrical repairs on the trailer; all lights are fully operational. Also, the plastic pipe to secure the rear gate was replaced with a metal-arm. 3) Accu-Dig repaired the road at 1st & Race following damage that occurred from overflow during heavy rain. 4) Apartment Master Key & Utility Policies: Proposed standard contracts requiring apartment owners using internal meters to supply master keys and deposits per unit to minimize liability and ease shutoff logistics. Council strongly rejected the key/internal meter access protocol due to immense legal liability. Landlords refusing to relocate lines externally will be transitioned to a single master-meter billing structure under their own name. 5) Supt Anderson requested that all lab testing materials be shipped directly to Town Hall rather than to Standish Consulting. Member Myers was against changing this at this time. 6) Anderson reported that the second lead and copper test is currently due. 7) Rieth Riley damaged several meter pits on Race Street ($188.32 per lid) and completely buried a pit at 204 W Second Street, which they will uncover. 8) Locks are being changed across all municipal buildings, pole barns, and water plant fixtures; a comprehensive tool inventory is underway by Liz. 9) Anderson reported that the Harley rake work is finished, and grading of alleys are underway. 10) Anderson requested that residents be reminded to direct all non-emergency service requests to Town Hall rather than contacting staff directly.

11) Superintendent Anderson presented three quotes: Bone Dry ($37,686 with 10-year warranty); Titan Construction ($46,810 with 1-year warranty); Four Brothers ($11,800, overlaying metal over old shingles with a 2-year warranty). Council raised structural sealing concerns regarding the central aerator tank protrusion. Tracy will query the low bidder regarding specialized sealing capabilities before a decision is made.

12) Supt. Anderson presented quotes for three 30-yard dumpster that will be needed once the new WWTP is in service. A Texas vendor quoted $19,864.38 delivered and Mancilla Custom Metal resubmitted a quote at $21,600. Anderson recommended using the local option to monitor fabrication compatibility with the town's bag system. Decision deferred.

13) Anderson presented quad and triplex water softener replacement quotes from the following:

Ortman: $208,299
Peerless: $116,254
IWS Option 1 (Quad Softener): 79,800, excluding installation
IWS Option 2 (Triplex Softener): $60,100, excluding installation.

The system is being ran in manual mode and Supt. Anderson requested that the council decide whether to replace or decommission the softener system. Decision deferred.

Annette Sipkema – Clerk/Treasurer....1) 2027 Salary Proposals will be emailed to Council members by the end of the week; target adoption by November. 2) 2027 AIM Medical Health insurance will increase 5.8%; employee share increases marginally from $2.69 to $7.70 per pay period; prior increases were 9.7% (2026) and 15.9% (2025). 3) CCMG Project List: Streets submitted to engineer for next grant cycle include Arch Street, Greenwood Street, 5th Street, Middlestadt, and Railroad Street; match cap reduced to $150,000. 4) Clerk-Treasurer Sipkema reported that Lightstream now offers VoIP phone service without requiring the Town's main phone number to change. The existing main number, 219-253-6441, will remain in use for both Town Hall and the Police Department, with an automated routing system directing callers to the appropriate department. The change is expected to provide annual savings of approximately $600. 5) Sipkema reported that the current lease for the Sharp MX-3071 copier has expired and recommended purchasing the existing machine for $1,600. Per Copiers Plus, the machine may be placed back under a maintenance plan at a cost of $76.38 per month. Council consensus was in agreement with the purchase. 6) Proposed revisions to the Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy were discussed to clarify post-accident testing criteria. Council indicated support for the revised language but did not favor random drug testing for non-DOT employees. 7) Sipkema discussed the potential purchase of 100 water meters and transmitters at a total cost of $37,194. Approximately 200 meters have been replaced to date, leaving an estimated 500 meters remaining before the next replacement cycle begins. Council deferred a decision on the purchase pending fund availability once softener decision has been made. 8) Budget Adoption Meeting has been scheduled for October 7, 2026, at 6:15 PM.

Council Members.....Member Jamie Myers recommended advertising an open position for a multi-skilled worker. He noted that the Council should move forward with the listing despite opposition from the Superintendent and Street Commissioner. Member Myers also raised concerns regarding local property code enforcement, citing deteriorating buildings, overgrown lots, and a lack of effective enforcement mechanisms. The Council discussed the current limitations of utilizing the county court to adjudicate municipal ordinance violations. A proposal was made to consult the Town Attorney regarding the feasibility of reinstating a town court.

Member Ron Benakovich raised ongoing concerns regarding vehicles parked in alleys and a sidewalk hazard near the active construction zone. Commissioner Young reported that Rieth-Riley is scheduled to return on September 23rd to complete the remaining project work.

All Other Matters …. Rob Belluci, Commonwealth Representative, inquired if the portion of Greenwood Street proposed for the Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) application overlaps with the area designated for the proposed lift station expansion. It was confirmed that the areas match. Mr. Belluci stated he will deliver the project drawings to the Town Hall to coordinate the two projects, ensuring new pavement is not torn up if the lift station expansion moves forward.

Adjournment…

VP Benakovich made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Myers. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

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 after 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