

**TOWN OF MONON
COUNCIL MEETING**

May 6, 2026

The Council of the Town of Monon met for their Regular Meeting on, May 6, 2026 at the Monon Town Hall Conference Room, 422 N Market St. Members present were President Ken Hickman, Jamie Myers, Toni Onken and Chris Franklin. Also present were Attorney Rebecca Trent, Town Marshall Roger Young and Clerk Treasurer Annette Siphkema.

Ron Benakovich was 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 whether members had reviewed the Regular Meeting Minutes dated April 1, 2026 and whether there were any additions or corrections. Hearing none, a motion was entertained.

Toni Onken made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes dated April 1, 2026, Jamie Myers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

BILLS, CLAIMS, PAYROLL AND MONTHLY RECONCILIATIONPresident Hickman indicated that, absent any objection, the presentation of payroll and bills would be combined with the monthly reconciliation for March and April 2026. Members confirmed they had reviewed the materials and offered no comments.

Chris Franklin made a motion to approve the bills, claims, payroll, and monthly reconciliation for March and April 2026, Toni Onken seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Treasurer Siphkema stated that two additional invoices from the fire department were received after the materials had been distributed. C-T Siphkema requested authorization to pay: (1) one-half of the fire department AC repair in the amount of \$662.50 to Brandon Young, and (2) one-half of a Lowry Brothers bill for chainsaw repair in the amount of \$131.36, for a combined total of \$793.86. Town Marshal Roger Young provided background, noting the compressor added during a prior building addition was still under warranty, so parts were covered, but labor and refrigerant were not.

Chris Franklin made a motion to approve payment for the two additional fire department invoices totaling \$793.86, Jamie Myers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Visitors

White County Area Plan – White County Zoning Amendment #A89.... Brianna Rassmussen presented Amendment A89, which involves a complete overhaul of Chapter 7 (Renewable Energy Systems) and updates to Chapters 12 (Administration), 14 (Definitions), and Appendix A in the White County Zoning Ordinance. Properly advertised and publicly heard on April 13, 2026, the amendment was approved by a 10–0 Area Planning Commission vote. Key changes include:

- **Chapter 7:** New limits reduce wind conversion system heights to under 140 feet. The ordinance removes participating/non-participating terms. Setbacks are set to 1,000 feet from turbine centerline and two miles from Tippecanoe River and municipal borders, with waiver possibilities. Non-conforming WECS can continue under certain conditions; permit details moved to Chapter 12. Added requirements for wells, lighting, and battery storage.
- **Chapter 12:** Now contains all permit requirements with expanded public notice distribution to a two-mile radius.
- **Chapter 14 & Appendix A:** Definitions updated, requiring special exceptions for battery storage and solar energy systems across various districts.

After a brief discussion,

Chris Franklin made a motion to accept Amendment #A89, seconded by Toni Onken. Motion carried unanimously. Ord # 2026-05-02

JIM DAVIS.....Grant Opportunities – Community Improvement Program: Jim Davis presented information on a community improvement grant program administered through KIRPC, available to municipalities, which provides funding for owner-occupied home improvements including roofing, heating and air conditioning, lighting, and accessibility modifications. The county intends to apply, and the program is also available at the municipal level for a smaller pool. The maximum grant per household would be \$25,000 from a total pool of \$350,000 for the town, with a ten percent local match. Davis noted the program is administered entirely online, and that assistance will be needed for residents who lack computer or internet access. He suggested the public library as a potential resource for applicants. Commissioner Smolek described the program's structure, including a proposed lien mechanism requiring recipients to remain in the property for five years, with repayment from sale proceeds if sold earlier. Davis noted that both the All Aboard group and the Civic Preservation Society stand ready to assist. No formal vote was taken.

Grant Opportunities – Brownfield Demolition: Council Member Davis also reported on progress toward a brownfield grant to fund demolition of the former fertilizer plant building and the building located on 4th St that was heavily damaged by the Monon Meats fire in July 2025. Estimates of \$35,000 and \$25,000, respectively, were obtained from local contractors Josh Bowser and Mike Ezra. Davis indicated he has been working with Emily at KIRPC and that she is exploring whether both buildings can be packaged into a single \$60,000 grant application, which would result in a local match of approximately \$6,000. The Council discussed the potential for either or both properties to eventually serve as public parking. No formal vote was taken.

New, Unfinished or Deferred Business

Commonwealth Engr...WW Project.....Ken Hickman, President, reported on a recent meeting with Commonwealth Engineering regarding the WW project. The project is progressing, but we are still waiting on USDA approval to go to bid. Commissioner Smolek inquired if the council anticipates that county funding will still be needed. The town confirmed that they are in need of financing to fully fund the project. Commissioner Smolek stated that he wants the project underway before his term ends and suggested a joint executive session with the Town Council, County Commissioners, and their attorneys to discuss interlocal agreement and financing by July, dependent on receiving cost estimates.

EMT 2026 Salary.....Clerk-Treasurer Siphkema informed the Council that the full-time EMT (Jennifer) had not received any pay increase for 2026. Siphkema noted that when the salary proposal was received from Member Benakovich, the part-time deputy, the EMT, the crossing guards, and the street commissioner were not included. Member Myers stated his belief that the omission was a mistake and that the full-time EMT should receive the same three percent increase as other full-time employees.

Council Member Toni Onken expressed the view that, since the Council had collectively voted on and passed the salary proposal as presented, it should stand for the remainder of the year and be addressed in the next budget cycle. Member Myers disagreed, drawing a parallel to a prior instance where a separate employee's pay was retroactively corrected after being missed.

Jamie Myers made a motion to grant the full-time EMT a three percent wage increase consistent with other town employees. The motion failed for lack of a second, with Member Onken declining to support it and Member Franklin expressing reservations. Member Myers requested that an executive session be scheduled to review the matter with full documentation, with the possibility of a subsequent vote at a regular meeting.

Jamie Myers made a motion to approve a three percent wage increase for the full-time EMT. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Water/WWTP Operator PayClerk-Treasurer Sipkema presented a request to adjust the pay of Tracy, the wastewater treatment plant lead operator, who had recently obtained both her water and wastewater certifications. The recommended rate for a sewage plant operator with two certifications is \$25.57 per hour; Tracy's current rate is \$24.50 per hour.

Discussion followed regarding Tracy's potential interest in the town superintendent position. Sipkema and Marshal Young both confirmed that while Tracy has expressed interest in taking on more responsibility, she herself has indicated she does not feel fully ready to assume the full superintendent role at this time.

A broader discussion occurred regarding employee classifications—specifically whether Tracy and other utility employees had been properly categorized and whether the three percent cost-of-living adjustment had been correctly applied to all positions. Jamie Myers argued that inconsistencies in how classifications were applied during the prior salary process warranted correction. Member Onken urged the Council to move forward with the immediate pay adjustment and revisit classification language during the fall budget process. The Council ultimately agreed to address the broader classification issue at that time.

Toni Onken made a motion to raise Anderson's hourly pay to \$25.57 per hour in recognition of her attainment of two operator certifications (water and wastewater), seconded by Jamie Myers. The motion carried unanimously.

Sludge Removal..... Marshal Young reported that the town is currently incurring significant costs hauling sludge from the wastewater treatment plant, having paid approximately \$71,000 in the current year alone. He stated this level of expense is not sustainable. Options under consideration include utilizing the existing drying beds (which require approximately three weeks of drying time in ideal weather), a bagging system using polymer, and the use of 30-yard dumpsters at the new plant. Young noted a logistical concern with the drying beds in that the town's skid steer, unlike the prior backhoe, has very little margin of error on the concrete runners. He indicated Dustin (the contracted operator) had been consulted and is working with the town employees on a solution.

The Council discussed obtaining competitive quotes from sludge haulers, with Wealing Brothers and Merrill Brothers mentioned as current or potential vendors. Commissioner Smolek also raised the possibility of exploring a biodigester arrangement with a local agricultural operation, though this was noted as dependent on the moisture content of the sludge. The Council directed staff to continue evaluating options to reduce sludge removal costs, with no formal vote taken.

Ordinance #2026-05-01: CCMG Fund Establishment & Appropriation.....President Hickman presented Ordinance #2026-05-01, establishing a dedicated Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) fund. The Town of Monon has been awarded \$591,756.24 under the Community Crossings Grant program and is required to provide a local match of \$147,939.06, for a total project value of \$739,000. The ordinance establishes a separate fund to track grant and match expenditures. The project will involve milling, resurfacing, curbing, sidewalk improvements, and storm drain installations at Race, Third, and Lincoln Streets. Marshal Young noted that contractors are expected to mobilize within two weeks.

Jamie Myers made a motion to approve Ordinance #2026-05-01 establishing the Community Crossings Matching Grant Fund and appropriation, Chris Franklin seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Ord #2026-05-01

Resolution #2026-03: Transfer Local Match to CCMG Fund.....President Hickman presented Resolution #2026-03, authorizing the transfer of the required local match of \$147,939.06 to the CCMG Fund. The match is to be sourced as follows: \$72,939.06 from the Motor Vehicle Highway Fund, \$50,000 from the Motor Vehicle Highway Restricted Fund, and \$25,000 from the Community Development Fund, specifically 2025 tipping fees collected. It was noted that tipping fee funds are customarily used for sidewalk-related expenditures.

Toni Onken made a motion to approve Resolution #2026-03 authorizing the transfer of the local match to the CCMG Fund, seconded by Jamie Myers. The motion carried unanimously. Res #2026-03

STAFF REPORTS

Roger Young – Street Commissioner..... provided the following operational updates: 1) A sewer backup on the west side of town was traced to the lift station, where both pumps were found to be plugged and repaired by Tanner Fluke; annual cleaning of all lift stations will occur this week, weather permitting. 2) The clarifier remains offline; Fluke is scheduled to attempt bearing extraction, with an alternate vendor lined up if necessary. 3) Another vendor will evaluate the Allen Bradley control system and softener timers at the water plant, as the town is currently back-washing manually. 4) IDEM will inspect the wastewater plant by June 1. 5) A one-and-a-half-inch copper line at the water plant was replaced with plastic, and a check valve is scheduled to be assessed. 6) The skid steer needed a second service call due to a failed hydraulic line. 7) Hydrant flushing is scheduled for May 13 and 14. 8) New banners have been installed uptown. 9) A permit application to add a porch and two rooms to a mobile home in Peak Properties trailer court was denied due to fire and structural safety concerns.

Roger Young – Town Marshal.... 1) All radar units have been recertified. 2) New tires have been ordered for the marshal's vehicle. 3) Young indicated he is also soliciting quotes for a replacement vehicle, noting the current unit is aging. He noted that emergency lighting equipment could be transferred from the current vehicle.

Annette Sipkema – Clerk/TreasurerClerk-Treasurer Sipkema advised the Council that Fire Chief Garrett had contacted her prior to the meeting to discuss replacing and outfitting equipment on two fire department trucks, at an estimated cost of \$9,800. The township has agreed to fund half. Three quotes were obtained, and the best price was selected. Sipkema confirmed the fire department's current budget has approximately \$4,400 remaining, with Chief Garrett indicating that the balance would be covered from the fire fund. Per the town's purchasing policy, the fire chief is authorized to expend up to \$5,000 without Council approval, and no formal vote was required. Sipkema brought the matter to the Council's attention solely to avoid surprise when the invoice appears in future billing.

Attorney Rebecca Trent..... provided an update on the status of an unsafe building matter. A notice letter was sent to the property owner (Mr. Bossung), who has been in contact with her office. Under the town's unsafe building ordinance, a 30-day notice period is required before a hearing can be conducted. A hearing has been scheduled for June 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., prior to the regular Council meeting, to consider whether the building should be ordered demolished. Attorney Trent noted she offered the property owner the option of voluntarily conveying the property to the town; while he has not agreed to that, he has not entirely ruled it out, and she offered additional resources to assist him in exploring alternative remedies.

Marshal Young inquired whether cleanup costs already incurred by the town due to debris from the subject building could be added to any resulting lien. Attorney Trent indicated this may be possible, but noted the costs to date are relatively modest and that the primary focus remains on building removal.

Council Members..... Council Member Chris Franklin explained his absence from the four previous meetings, stating that he was participating in an EMT course. He extended congratulations to both himself and Nick Wade for successfully passing their certifications.

Discussions then shifted to several local issues:

Property Cleanups: Marshal Young highlighted efforts to intensify property cleanup enforcement, noting a specific non-compliant property tied to an unrecorded land contract where the current resident has passed away. This unclear ownership has complicated municipal water service activation. Attorney Trent volunteered to trace the property's legitimate owner through title records. Concurrently, Attorney Trent advised the Board against establishing utility services at this property until this matter is resolved.

Commercial Property Concerns: Member Myers expressed concern about a bustling construction business and tire shop, noting the frequent traffic of vehicles displaying single Illinois plates. In response, Marshal Young intends to step up monitoring efforts at the site and will report any legal violations to the prosecutor.

Economic Development Meeting: The President announced the upcoming annual meeting by the White County Economic Development Committee, scheduled for May 21 at Indiana Beach Ballroom. He plans to attend, emphasizing the importance after the town's absence from last year's representation.

Area Plan Representation: Ken Hickman's term on the White County Area Planning Commission expires at the end of the year. It is crucial for the town to appoint a new representative. He described the commitment as monthly meetings, typically on the second Monday of the month, held at the courthouse beginning at 6:00 p.m., with a per-meeting compensation of \$100. Commissioner Smolek and Council Member Jim Davis each emphasized the importance of the position to the town's future interests.

All Other Matters... A broader discussion occurred among Commissioner Smolek, Council Member Davis, and the President regarding regional economic development, the implications of White County Zoning Amendment A89, data center development, township consolidation under state legislation, and fire district formation. These comments were offered as public observations and no formal action was taken.

With no further business to discuss,

Chris Franklin made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 p.m., Jamie Myers seconded.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., with a Special Unsafe Building hearing beginning at 6:00 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Ken Hickman

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT: Amel Bell

COUNCIL MEMBER: Jim Davis

COUNCIL MEMBER: W. Smith

COUNCIL MEMBER: J. Myers

ATTEST: Annette Spikina

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>