

COUNCIL MEETING (REGULAR)
FEBRUARY 5, 2025

The Council of the Town of Monon met for a regular meeting on **Wednesday, February 5, 2025**, at the Monon Town Hall. Members present were President Ken Hickman, Ron Benakovich, Toni Onken, and Jamie Myers. Also present were Attorney Rebecca Trent and Clerk Treasurer Annette Sipkema.

Chris Franklin and Roger Young were 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: President Hickman asked if everyone had a chance to review the Special Year End meeting minutes from December 18th, 2024 and the Regular meeting minutes from January 5, 2025.

Ron Benakovich made a motion to approve the December 18th Special meeting minutes & the January 5th REGULAR minutes as presented.

Toni Onken seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Payroll, Bills & Claims:

Jamie Myers made a motion to accept the bills – claims – payroll.

Toni Onken seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

\$ 217,036.46

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

VISITORS

JENILYNNE HALL, WHITE COUNTY AREA PLAN DIRECTOR....Director Hall presented Rezone Request #1202 to change 609 N Race St. from B-1 (Neighborhood Business) to R-2 (Single and Two-Family Residential). This was sent to the town with a favorable recommendation from the Area Plan Commission. The rezone request is to bring the dwelling into compliance with its current and proposed use. Director Hall explained that a single-family dwelling and a duplex are permitted uses in the R-2 district. There was concern expressed over whether a duplex would increase the sewer load. Director Hall stated that any building plans within the town that may cause an increase to the system has to be sent to the town for their approval before the permit is issued.

Jamie Myers made a motion to approve Rezone #1202.

Ron Benakovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Ordinance #2025-1

Director Hall presented Amendment to Zoning Ordinance #A81. Director Hall explained that Amendment A81 is a proposal to establish updated standards for Battery Storage Facilities including Battery Storage Fields and Battery Storage Retrofits. This proposal requires Battery Storage projects to host Educational Sessions to local public safety officials prior to initiation of construction. This amendment also proposed a change to the Permitted zoning district from A-1, General Agriculture to A-2, Agriculture Industry. (This type of project also remains a permitted use with I-2, Heavy Industrial). After a brief discussion,

Ron Benakovich made a motion to approve Amendment A81.

Jamie Myers seconded. 3 in favor, 1 against. Motion carried by majority vote. Ordinance #2025-2

Director Hall presented Amendment to Zoning Ordinance #A82. Amendment A82 is a proposal to establish regulations and standards for Data Centers. This proposal requires Data Centers specific regulations if located within I-2 zoning districts. This amendment also proposed to revise the existing standards regarding permitting Broadband projects. After a brief discussion,

Jamie Myers made a motion to approve Amendment A82.

Toni Onken seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Ordinance #2025-3

COMMONWEALTH ENGINEERING...GABRIELLE TABER stated that the WWTP permit application has been approved. The application has been sent to USDA for their approval. Once USDA approval has been received, the project will be ready to be sent out for bids. Ms. Taber also shared that the 5-year Wellhead Protection Plan was completed. Clerk Sipkema stated that she has submitted the plan and IDEM is currently reviewing the document.

EDWIN BUSWELL, KIRPC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, shared information about potential brownfield grant opportunities that may be available to the town. These grants could be used to clean up the old fertilizer site on 3rd St. Mr. Buswell explained that an environmental study (Phase 1) would be necessary to assess the site. Additionally, we would need to obtain permission from the property owner to enter and conduct the study. Mr. Buswell also shared that there are multiple brownfield grant programs that could potentially fund 90-100% of the project costs. This funding could even include the town's purchase of the property, should that become an option. However, it's important to note that there is a stipulation requiring the property to remain vacant for 5 years after project completion, unless it is used for a non-profit venture, such as low-income housing or a childcare facility for low-income families.

Ron Benakovich made a motion to have Mr. Buswell start the grant process for Phase 1.
Jamie Myers seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

SIDEWALKS/STREETS..... President Hickman reported that he and Clerk Sipkema attended a virtual meeting with Robyn and Gabrielle from Commonwealth. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the potential costs and requirements for Commonwealth to assist with the Community Crossings Grant. The estimated cost for their services ranged from \$50,000 to \$100,000. President Hickman expressed concerns that the engineering fees were unaffordable and suggested exploring alternative options. Attorney Trent offered to contact an engineer that has done some work for other surrounding municipalities to inquire about their fees for similar services. President Hickman stated that there are copies of previous applications available at the office for reference. Edwin Buswell, KIRPC Executive Director, encouraged the town to apply for the grant this year. He recently spoke with a state representative and cautioned that potential cuts to the transportation budget could impact future CCMG grants. The council discussed which streets/sidewalks they want to see addressed in 2025. President Hickman suggested that before the town invests any more money into sidewalks that an ordinance be established to prevent parking on or driving over sidewalks with a fine. Ideally, the fine would go back into the sidewalk fund for future repairs. Should an ordinance already exist, its enforcement will be essential to safeguard the investment. The council decided to focus on the area around the park with the following areas identified:

Streets: Portions of Race St, 2nd St and Park Rd.
Sidewalks: North side of Park Rd to the soccer field area and the sidewalk on Race from 2nd to 3rd St.

The list will be given to Commissioner Young to get some preliminary quotes.

EMERGENCY SERVICE CONTRACTS..... Attorney Trent explained that the 2025 EMS & Fire Services Contracts approved at the December 18th meeting would need to be reconsidered. State statute prohibits a member from voting on a contract from which they could benefit from. Member Myers filed a Conflict-of-Interest form, which President Hickman accepted.

Ron Benakovich made a motion to approve the 2025 EMS & Fire Protection contracts between the Town of Monon and the Monon Departments (Fire & EMS).
Toni Onken seconded. Three in favor, one abstained. Motion passed by majority vote.

CLERK-TREASURER ANNETTE SIPKEMA... 1) A demolition quote of \$4,600 for two accessory structures at 103 N Arch St. was received.

Toni Onken made a motion to accept the demolition quote.

Ron Benakovich seconded. Three in favor, one abstained. Motion passed by majority vote.

2) The council discussed renewing the Kustom Lawn Care contract for 2025. Clerk Sipkema will confirm whether the quote for the old town hall includes the side lot with the gazebo. If so, the council agreed to maintain the same services for 2025. 3) Servline Analysis.... Clerk Sipkema stated that the town is charged \$3.00 for each eligible service location. Since June 2024, the town has paid \$13,428 and collected \$12,979 (through Dec 2024). Clerk Sipkema stated that the town has received \$3,760.47 for claims filed from June 2024-Dec 2024. Clerk Sipkema also shared that residents who have filed claims have been pleased with the ease of filing and the customer service they have received. 4) A quote for Voice Over Internet phones (VOIP) has been received and overall the service would save approximately \$15/month. This would require a three-year contract

and all new non local phone numbers. Clerk Sipkema is not in favor of switching at this time but would be open to it in the future if the savings were greater. Member Myers said he would be interested in a comparison between renting and purchasing the phones. 5) The 20-year warranty for the Civic Center roof has been received. There was discussion regarding the recommendations/requirements to keep the warranty in place. Clerk Sipkema will send the documents to the council to review for discussion. 6) Clerk Sipkema & Deputy Clerk Treasurer Beasley are working on details for the Town Hall Dedication.

FIRE CHIEF, SEAN GARRETT.....1) The new shed construction is underway. Volunteer Firefighters are providing the labor. 2) The department has drafted a donation letter to be sent to local businesses, aiming to raise funds for radio equipment upgrades. Chief Garrett said they have already received a few encouraging responses. 3) A new firefighter has joined the department, and two more individuals have expressed interest. 4) During drain maintenance at the fire station, a void was discovered beneath the concrete slab. The extent of soil erosion over the years is currently unknown, but Chief Garrett noted that the slab is cracking. As a temporary measure, the pipe will be sleeved to prevent further deterioration. There is a company that can be brought in to assess the site.


MEMBER TONI ONKEN requested that something be done with the "Pay Water Bills Here" sign at the town hall and inquired about any plans to sow seed where the tree stumps were removed.

MEMBER JAMIE MYERS requested that the lights in the meeting room and window trim be replaced as soon as possible. Additionally, Jamie Myers has requested that a new fire station be added to the agenda. Member Myers stated that he estimated the cost to be around \$3 million. He believes that shelter grants could assist with the cost, provided the station is used as such.

MEMBER RON BENAKOVICH stated that sidewalks along Race and Park Road would be a nice addition to the town, citing safety concerns for park visitors due to high traffic in the area. He also mentioned that he has received compliments from visitors for the previous work done along 2nd Street leading into the park.

The meeting adjourned @ 8:20 p.m.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 5th, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT: 

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT: 

COUNCIL MEMBER: 

COUNCIL MEMBER: _____

COUNCIL MEMBER: _____

ATTEST: 