

**TOWN OF MONON
COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2026**

The Council of the Town of Monon met for their Regular Meeting on, February 4, 2026 at the Monon Town Hall. Members present were President Ken Hickman, Vice President Ron Benakovich, Toni Onken and Jamie Myers. Also present were Attorney Rebecca Trent, Town Marshall Roger Young and Clerk Treasurer Annette Siphema.

Chris Franklin 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 if all members had reviewed the meeting minutes from January 7, 2026. There were no questions or comments.

Jamie Myers made a motion to accept the minutes, Toni Onken seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

BILLS/CLAIMS:... The Council reviewed the bills, claims, and payroll. No questions were raised by any Council members.

Ron Benakovich made a motion to approve bills/claims as presented. Seconded by Jamie Myers. Motion carried unanimously. \$ 302,477.66

VISITORS:

JENNILYNNE KYBURZ, WHITE COUNTY AREA PLAN DIRECTOR....Director Kyburz presented Zoning Amendment A87, which was properly advertised and heard in a public hearing on January 12, 2026, which received unanimous approval (10-0) from the Area Planning Commission. The amendment would change where industrial waste facilities may be located. Previously, they were allowed by right within the I-3 Industrial Park District when abutting a railroad right of way. The amendment would eliminate this provision, only allowing such facilities in Heavy Industrial, I-2, districts with special exception use approval through the BZA.

Toni Onken made a motion to accept Amendment A87, seconded by Ron Benakovich. Motion carried unanimously. Ordinance #2026-2-1

Director Kyburz presented Zoning Amendment A88, which was also properly advertised and received unanimous approval (10-0) from the Area Planning Commission on January 12, 2026. This amendment proposes changes to the parking lot surface standards for light and heavy industrial properties outside of municipalities. The change would exempt I1 (light industrial) and I2 (heavy industrial) districts in unincorporated areas from the current parking lot surface standard (which requires 8 inches of aggregate material and 4 inches of surface material). However, new driveways would still require asphalt or concrete surfaces extending 20 feet from the roadway into the property to prevent gravel spillover onto county roads. Kyburz clarified that this exemption would not apply to properties within municipalities, including the Town of Monon.

Jamie Myers made a motion to accept Amendment A88, seconded by Ron Benakovich. Motion carried unanimously. Ordinance #2026-2-2

KIRPC REPRESENTATIVE; OLD FERTILIZER SITE/BROWNFIELD GRANT UPDATE.....

Emily Albaugh, Executive Director of KIRPC, and Edwin Buswell, KIRPC Community Development Planner, provided an update on the brownfield project at the old fertilizer plant. Director Albaugh reported that a Phase 1 assessment had been completed, which suggested additional sampling was needed. KIRPC is now working with the Indiana Brownfields Program to submit an application for a Phase 2 assessment, which would provide deeper analysis and additional samples. Director Albaugh explained that this approach would allow hazardous materials to be removed at no cost to the town through the Indiana Brownfields Program before applying for an Office of Community Rural Affairs (OCRA) blight clearance project grant. This strategy would keep the blight clearance project more affordable by removing contaminated materials beforehand and lessening the chance of federal prevailing wage requirements. She

noted that they are not yet acquiring the property, as acquisition costs could be used as part of the local match for grants. The assessment grants could also count toward the local match. Mr. Buswell discussed that if the town proceeds with the blight clearance grant, the property would need to stay vacant for five years after project closure unless used for housing, which Jim Davis mentioned was already being considered.

UNFINISHED/NEW BUSINESS:

COMMONWEALTH ENGR... WW PROJECT..... Gabrielle Taber from Commonwealth reported that they had completed the Guide 5 budget form required by USDA and sent it to Baker Tilly for review. After incorporating their comments, it will be transmitted to USDA as the final piece of the review process. Once reviewed, USDA should authorize the project to go to bid. Taber also updated the council on the Ready 2 funding, stating that White County Economic Development had submitted all requested documents to IEDC and they were awaiting final approval. Once approved, a meeting would be scheduled with Julie Berry from Lafayette Commerce to understand the process for awarding and reimbursement of funds.

STANDISH CONTRACT.....The council discussed the contract with Dustin Standish. President Hickman noted that everyone had time to review the contract since the last meeting and asked for any requested changes. He mentioned he had asked Attorney Trent to include the contractor visit the plant site once a month for employee questions and concerns, in addition to the quarterly meeting requirement already in the contract. Terry Saunders, resident, supported this request and also asked if the contract could accommodate a future transition to having Tracy (who is water certified but working on wastewater certification) take over operations once she becomes fully certified. Roger clarified that once Tracy gets wastewater certified, they would no longer need Standish's services, but felt it was good to have his oversight for at least another year while Tracy continues training. The council agreed to add a monthly on-site visit requirement to the contract.

Toni Onken made a motion to accept the contract with the addition of a monthly on-site visit requirement, seconded by Ron Benakovich. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Roger Young, Town Marshal... 1) Young reported that during the most recent snowstorm, five vehicles were towed from designated snow routes and twenty-one vehicles were tagged for not being moved after the storm; all but one were subsequently moved, and the remaining vehicle was towed. 2) Young further reported that Town departments met the previous day to establish a safety committee for Town employees and that a safety plan will be presented to the Council at a future meeting. 3) All annual training reports have been submitted to the academy.

Roger Young, Street Commissioner... 1) Commissioner Young referenced a letter submitted by Lead Anderson providing a written update on wastewater and water department operations and stated that the letter would be provided to the Council prior to monthly meetings for review and questions. 2) a clarifier pump at the wastewater plant failed and required emergency replacement at a cost of \$14,721, with delivery anticipated within three to four weeks. 3) He provided an update on the recent IDEM Sanitary Survey inspection of the water plant, noting improvement from prior inspections and that corrective actions are ongoing. 4) Young reported that a bucket truck was acquired from Lightstream, decaled, and placed into service for streetscape and water department operations, and that the former bucket truck was sold to Reynolds in exchange for cash and unused meters. 5) Lead Anderson's application for IDEM Wastewater Certification testing had been submitted. 6) A new computer had been installed at the water plant, and upcoming cybersecurity compliance requirements will require coordination with Bowser IT. 7) The boiler at the Civic Center had problems requiring service from Northern Mechanical. He noted that the two boilers would need replacement soon, having been underwater multiple times with corrosion issues. He would get price quotes for replacement.

DIANNE TRIBBETT, RESIDENT, expressed concerns regarding water odor and taste at her residence, and Young stated that a water sample would be collected in the referenced area for review.

Annette Sipkema - Clerk/Treasurer....1) Sipkema expressed appreciation to Four Brothers Construction for donated time, labor, and materials to install the Meeting Owl in its permanent location. 2) She addressed the water loss concerns referenced in the sanitary survey, noting a reduction from approximately 54,000 gallons in 2023 to approximately 27,000 gallons in the current reporting period. Commissioner Young added that plans are underway to install meters at previously unmetered locations, including Town Hall and the Fire Station, to better monitor usage. 3) Sipkema reported that AIM open enrollment has been completed and that current insurance coverage has been canceled effective February 28. 4) The staff is working on the Annual Financial Report. 5) Sipkema presented the Custom Lawn Care proposal for 2026 services and inquired whether the Council wished to make any changes. The Council indicated that services would remain the same for 2026.

Sipkema noted that one application had been received for the park position. Commissioner Young stated that consideration may be given to extending the application deadline and emphasized the importance of consistent on-site presence at the park, approximately 32 hours per week, particularly during peak usage months from May through October

Attorney Rebecca Trent...1) Correspondence had been sent to Monon Meats regarding insurance information related to the building on 4th St; however, no response had been received. She stated that she would contact the insurance carrier directly for follow-up. 2) Trent also reported that she had communicated with Monon Township Trustee, Jacob Garling, in regards to the 2026 Fire Services contract. She stated that information provided reflected township expenses of approximately \$24,000 annually for insurance and trash removal, in addition to the \$10,000 paid to the Town, which she indicated was generally comparable to Town expenses. Trent presented the Township and Town fire agreement for Council consideration.

Toni Onken made a motion to approve the Township and Town fire agreement, seconded by Ron Benakovich. Motion passed by majority vote, 3 in favor, 1 abstain.

Council Members... Member Myers and Benakovich both emphasized serious concerns about the deteriorating building near Harold's Steakhouse, noting it was now being used to park cars and presented a hazard and liability risk.

ALL OTHER MATTERS

No additional matters were discussed.

Jamie Myers made a motion to adjourn at 7:07 p.m., seconded by Toni Onken.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on March 4, 2026 @ 6:30 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Ken Helmer

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT: Ronald B...

COUNCIL MEMBER: Toni Onken

COUNCIL MEMBER: _____

COUNCIL MEMBER: _____

ATTEST: Annette Sipkema

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 atfor 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>