

**TOWN OF MUNSTER**  
**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MARCH 16, 2026**

A meeting of the Munster Town Council was held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2026. Ordinance 1830 is the basis for holding electronic meetings. The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall, 1005 Ridge Road, Munster, Indiana. Councilors, Staff, and the public had the option to participate via Zoom meeting technology.

Councilors George Shinkan, Joseph G. Hofferth, Chuck Gardiner, David B. Nellans, and Jonathan Petersen were physically present in Town Hall. Also present were Clerk-Treasurer Wendy Mis, Town Manager Jim Marino, Controller Patricia Abbott, Assistant Town Manager Dan Reyes, Fire Chief Mark Hajduk, Police Chief Stephen Scheckel, Planning Director Sergio Mendoza, Town Attorney Dave Westland. The news media was not represented.

President Hofferth presided, opened the meeting with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Town of Munster accepts public comments submitted both in-person and electronically. The public was informed, via the agenda posted at [munster.org](http://munster.org), that questions or comments about an item on the agenda were to be emailed to [wmis@munster.org](mailto:wmis@munster.org). All in-person public comments are limited to two minutes and limited to a total of twenty minutes for the public comment section.

Mr. Tom Jurich, 1839 Magnolia, the resident asked about the impact of SEA 1 and is the Town cutting costs in response to the projected reduction, but he does not want the Town to cut services or personnel. He said he believed that the proposed AV system is not necessary and he began asking about a local income tax when the time expired.

No one else rose to claim the floor.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of a regular meeting held on March 2, 2026

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS**

Confirmation of Voucher Register #26-3B dated 03/05/2026 in the amount of \$445,167.23  
Confirmation of Voucher Register #26-3C dated 03/06/2026 in the amount of \$578,544.81  
Confirmation of Voucher Register #26-3D dated 03/10/2026 in the amount of \$60,681.17  
Confirmation of Voucher Register #26-3E dated 03/10/2026 in the amount of \$35,043.99  
Confirmation of Voucher Register #26-3F dated 03/05/2026 in the amount of \$209,780.83  
Approval of Voucher Register #26-3G dated 03/05/2026 in the amount of \$494,940.60

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

The January 2026 Treasurer's Report was presented

**RED FLAG REPORT**

The Federal Trade Commission requires utility companies to adopt an identity theft prevention program or red flag policy. In April 2009, the Council came into compliance by adopting Ordinances 1424 and 1514. The policy requires an annual report on the program.

Most of the practices in the policy were in place prior to the adoption of Ordinance 1424. The following shows the number of events since implementation. Each time there was an incident, the staff denied starting billing until proper identification was provided.

Year	Numer of Incidents	Year	Number of Incidents
2011	-0-	2019	1
2012	1	2020	-0-
2013	-0-	2021	-0-
2014	1	2022	-0-
2015	1	2023	1
2016	1	2024	3
2017	4	2025	1
2018	1		

Since the last report, there has been one red flag incident. A property owner requested that more individuals have their names added to their water utility account. When asked why, they could not give a logical answer. We believe they may have requested to try to prove residency for the school system. Neither party could prove their attachment to the property, and were not allowed to add their name. As a result of prior similar incidents, a procedure has been put in place requiring the primary account holder to be with them at the time of signing up, as well as to attach proof of the extra person to the property.

On May 9, 2024, the Town Council approved an agreement with the Indiana Department of Technology to create a website specifically for Water Billing. This website went live on June 20, 2024. This new site provides information for our residents regarding all things water billing. This is also a safe space for our residents to request/end water service and sign up for ACH payment. Since that time, we have seen great improvement in the process, and our residents have very much appreciative of the new process.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to suspend the rules, waive the readings, and adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ORDINANCE 2007: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (1)**

Proposed ORDINANCE 2007 is AN ORDINANCE FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE YEAR 2026 (1). There are four funds in need of additional appropriations.

Fund 2240- Local Income Tax – Public Safety is requesting appropriations in the amount of \$17,925.00. Cameras are being installed at both train locations. The requested amount is for the associated licensing. This purchase will come to Council for approval at this evening’s meeting.

Fund 2547- Technology is requesting appropriations in the amount of \$25,280.00. At the March 2, 2026, meeting, Council approved the purchase of Brightly Asset Management Software for the Public Works Department, and the Technology Fund will cover \$13,500.00 of the total cost. The remaining \$11,780.00 is for the Imagetrend Software needed by the Fire Department.

Fund 4446- Maple Leaf Crossing TIF is requesting appropriations in the amount of \$6,000.00 to cover any TC17 refund that may occur in that district. TC17 Refund is an adjustment property tax increment revenue that has already been allocated to a TIF district but later must be repaid to the taxpayer. This is commonly due to assessment appeals, corrections, or overpayments. The refund reduces the TIF increment revenue previously distributed for that tax year and must be recorded at an expense on the general ledger.

Fund 6106- Water Bond Reserve is requesting appropriations in the amount of \$363,660.00 On August 4, 2025, Town Council passed Ordinance 1987 to approve the Water Bond Issuance. Within this issuance it is stated that the Water Bond Reserve Fund must be created to ensure a reserve for future debt payments. The fund has been created and requires additional appropriations to establish the original budget. Future appropriations will occur as part of the regular budget process.

The procedure for securing additional appropriations requires a public hearing, scheduled for April 6, 2026, and the adoption of an ordinance by the Town Council. All funds listed here are considered reporting only funds, and the appropriations will go into effect upon passage of the ordinance.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to hear proposed Ordinance 2007 for additional appropriations on first reading and schedule a public hearing and second reading for April 6, 2026. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**INCREASE TO CASH DRAWER**

The Office of the Clerk-Treasurer has authority for a \$500.00 cash drawer to be used at the main counter. This amount was authorized in October 2023. Staff have identified the need for a third drawer for assistance at the counter and is requesting an increase of \$100.00 for a total amount of \$600.00.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Gardiner, to authorize a \$100.00 cash drawer increase for the Office of the Clerk-Treasurer for a total cash drawer of \$600.00. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**FIBER INSTALLATION ON CALUMET AVENUE**

In August 2024, there was an accident at the intersection of Calumet Avenue and Fisher Street that damaged a signal control box. When the accident happened, the fiber line was severed, damaging it beyond repair. Midwestern Electric was called to make initial repairs, but there was not enough slack to repair it. There was also not enough room in the conduit to pull back the cable and replace it. As a temporary measure, Midwestern connected to a different line that allowed the signal to work in a limited way. The new controller was received and installed last month. Because of the damaged fiber line, Police cameras cannot be connected, and signal synchronization cannot work properly.

The fiber line goes from Ridge Road to Fisher then from Fisher to Fran Lin. It is known that the existing fiber is damaged, that there is not enough slack to repair it, and that there is no space in the existing conduit to add more fiber. IT has worked with Midwestern Electric and have provided the following options.

1. Run all new conduit and fiber from Ridge Road to Fisher and connect the new line to the old line that runs from Fisher to Fran Lin at a cost of \$62,500.00
2. Run all new conduit and fiber from Fran Lin to Fisher and connect the new line to the old line that runs from Fisher to Ridge Road at a cost of \$58,000.00.
3. Avoid all the previously mentioned work and try tapping into the 144-strand line that is also there at a cost of \$16,000.00.

The upside to the first two options is that there will be all new fiber and conduit, and by bypassing the existing infrastructure, positions the Town for future growth. The downside to these options is the cost. The upside to Option 3 is the potential significant cost savings. The downside to this option is that it is unknown if that line can be tapped successfully or if it will set off a string of other problems.

Staff have discussed the options and recommend adopting both Options 1 and 2 for a total cost of \$120,500.00. This replaces all the old lines in that corridor. While this is the most expensive, a repair is needed, and Staff believes it is best to correct the whole problem. Because the repair is needed as the result of an accident, the invoices will be submitted to insurance for reimbursement. While it is uncertain if this will be covered by the carriers involved, Staff will file the claim. Regardless, the work needs to be completed. The cost will be paid from the Self-Funded Liability Insurance Fund.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to approve Option A and Option C of the Midwestern Electric quote DA26002 dated February 17, 2026, in the amount of \$120,500.00. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against.

#### **ORDINANCE #2008: PAVILIONS AT 45<sup>th</sup> PUD AMENDMENT**

Proposed ORDINANCE 2008 is AN ORDINANCE REPEALING ORDINANCE 1178 AND REPLACING IT WITH THE 45<sup>TH</sup> PAVILION PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT ORDINANCE, INCORPORATING THE REPLAT, AND ESTABLISHING THE STANDARDS FOR BULK, DESIGN, AND USES, AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, LAKE COUNTY INDIANA.

G.H.K. Development, Inc. is seeking to repeal Ordinance No. 1178 which established the 45<sup>th</sup> AVENUE ADDITION COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (PUD) and replace it with a proposed ordinance establishing THE PAVILION ON 45<sup>TH</sup> PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (PUD) incorporating the replat of Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4, a resubdivision The 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue Addition Lot 1, and to establish Standards for Bulk, Design, and Uses. The Property is located at 1830 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue and identified by Parcel No. 45-07-32-126-001.000-027.

The Petitioner proposes Lot 4 of THE PAVILION ON 45<sup>TH</sup> PUD will include a new climate-controlled storage facility. Representatives of the applicant appeared before the Plan Commission on November 18, 2025, December 9, 2025, January 13, 2026, and February 10, 2026. The Town of Munster Plan Commission reviewed, discussed and held public hearings to consider the proposed amendment. THE PAVILION ON 45<sup>TH</sup> PUD. Remonstrances were heard in favor of or against the proposed amendment. The proof of publication for the notice of public hearing was received and is compliant with state law. Based upon the testimony and evidence presented by the Petitioner and a motion properly made and seconded, the Plan Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to forward a favorable recommendation to the Town Council to approve the PUD amendment.

The Munster Town Council must now take final action to adopt, reject, or amend the proposal. An amendment to the proposed PUD amendment would require further consideration by the Plan Commission.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to approve the repeal of Ordinance 1178 which established the 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue Addition Commercial Planned Unit Development District and replace it with the proposed Ordinance 2008 establishing The Pavilion on 45<sup>th</sup> Planned Unit Development District. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**RELEASE OF KIDDIE ACADEMY ESCROW**

Kiddie Academy was required to put \$3,459.75 in escrow in November 2022. The funds were collected pursuant to SECTION 26-6.125 A. 1., Security for Compliance & Completion for the improvement and performance of 26-6-405.P. 1. E. 3. A. Private Lot Landscape Standards, which was required due to the modification of the exterior of the principal building that exceeded \$25,000, which then is required to comply with the current landscape and screening standards identified in 26-6.405.A-8 Private Landscaping and Fence.

Community Development Staff performed a site inspection and determined acceptable compliance with the Town of Munster Landscape and Screening standards has been achieved and the funds can be released.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to authorize the Clerk-Treasurer to release funds held in the Kiddie Academy escrow in the amount of \$3,459.75. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**PURCHASE OF LPR CAMERAS FOR TRAIN STATIONS**

The Munster Police Department has identified a need to expand License Plate Reader (LPR) camera coverage to include the areas surrounding the Town’s two new train stations. The additional LPR cameras at these locations will enhance officer awareness and investigative capabilities by identifying stolen vehicles, wanted persons, aid in investigations, and other criminal activity, while also improving safety in and around the commuter rail stations.

Funding of \$32,166.81 will come from the 2024 General Obligation Bond for the initial camera and hardware purchase and annual payments of \$17,923.41 for licensing and maintenance will come from the LIT-Public Safety Fund for 2026 through 2030.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to authorize the Town of Munster Police Department to enter into a five-year contract with Axon for the purchase, licensing, and maintenance of nine license plate reader cameras supporting the new train station areas for a total five-year contract cost of \$121,783.86. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

**MAIN MEETING ROOM AUDIOVISUAL SYSTEM**

Staff has collaborated with IT from the School Town to identify a new audiovisual system for the Main Meeting Room in the Town Hall. Meetings were conducted with department heads and staff to assess the audiovisual requirements for their board and commission meetings. Based on their feedback, quotes were received from three different companies. The chosen solution comes from AVI-SPL. They offer a turnkey and scalable solution, minimal staff technical support burden, and the best company technical support. The lowest bidder is not being selected because their system is not turnkey, there is a greater technical support burden on staff, and their system has limited scalability. More importantly, their proposal

retains some of the existing equipment. While using existing equipment reduces the cost, it is best to install all new equipment rather than integrating old and new equipment.

The updated system will feature eight hard-wired microphones and eight video monitors for each seat at the dais. These video monitors will enable those seated at the dais to see what is displayed on the wall-mounted video screens, such as meeting materials, images, site plans, renderings, drawings, and PowerPoint presentations. Two wireless microphones will be positioned on the staff table, with one located on the podium. All microphones will be connected to new ceiling speakers. An 85-inch video screen will be installed on the east wall opposite the staff table for both staff and audience viewing. Additionally, a smaller video screen will be placed on the east wall at the back of the room for those seated in the rear to see. Both the wall-mounted and dais video screens will be integrated to show the same images. New audiovisual hardware will be installed in the server room, and there will be a wireless tabletop control panel for staff to manage the system.

The table below shows the pricing from each vendor. The base price from AVI-SPL presented at the February 11 agenda review meeting increased from \$77,706.13 to \$80,073.71. The additional cost is due to price increases for updated equipment and hardware. The largest increase is a result of adding a third camera. It was decided to add a third camera so that a staff person who speaks can be seen on camera.

Three additional items were requested at the February 11 meeting, which are listed. The original quote did not include a touch-screen video display, which is what we currently have. The cost to mount the rear room video display on the ceiling and add a wall-mounted USB receptacle are included as options. The project will be funded by Bond Proceeds, Technology, Water Cash Operating, and Sewer Maintenance Funds.

Company	Cost	Touch Screen Display	Wall Mounted USB Receptacle	Ceiling Mount Rear Room Video Display	Total Cost with Options
AVDG	\$ 70,272.43	-	-	-	\$ 70,272.43
AVI-SPL (base quote)	\$ 80,073.71	\$ 2,232.41	\$ 571.24	\$ 250.00	\$ 83,127.36
Blades	\$ 90,313.76	-	-	-	\$ 90,313.76

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to accept the proposal from AVI-SPL for installation of an audiovisual system in an amount not to exceed \$83,127.36. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, Petersen, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

### **ADOPTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN**

At the Feb 3, 2025 meeting, the Town Council approved, with a 5-0 vote, entering into an agreement with HWC Engineering to facilitate and produce a Strategic Plan for the Town of Munster. The goals of the Strategic Plan are:

1. Engage residents and key stakeholders in a proactive manner to better understand their vision for the Town of Munster.
2. Engage the Town Council and staff in reviewing current data and operations to create a strategic plan forward.
3. Prioritize a series of strategic initiatives to guide decision-making and investments over the next several years.

During the spring of 2025, a community survey was distributed throughout the town and there was a two-day period of department head meetings, community and business meetings, developer meetings, stakeholder meetings, a community open house and a work-study meeting with the Town Council.

A draft of the strategic plan was distributed and discussed at the June 2025 Town Council work study meeting. Subsequently, staff has taken the feedback from council members and have worked with HWC to create this final plan. Most recently, Council Member Gardiner reached out to all council members for their input and suggestions. Additionally, he has asked each council member to consider the following format so that each council member has accountability and involvement in this strategic plan.

The proposed format for implementation is that each council member would rank, in preferential order, the strategic initiatives they would like to be involved with the most, with 1 being their top choice and 5 being their lowest choice. The Council President would compile the data to determine which two council members would be assigned to a working group for each strategic initiative based on their preferences. No council member would be assigned to more than two working groups.

The purpose of the strategic initiative working group is to enhance communication with staff and the council. Additionally, these regular meetings (usually no more than once a month) will allow council members to provide input and ask for additional details while allowing staff the opportunity to respond and provide guidance to meet our strategic initiatives.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Nellans, to adopt the 2026 Strategic Plan for the Town of Munster. Councilor Petersen shared a printed Better Strategic Plan he created. Councilor Petersen motioned the Strategic Plan to be amended to include the Better Plan. Motion died for lack of second. Councilor Petersen motioned the vote be tabled to allow others to review the plan. Motion died for lack of second. A discussion ensued with Councilor Petersen sharing why he created a different plan. Councilors Gardiner and Shinkan vocalized their support of the 2026 Strategic Plan. Councilors Shinkan, Gardiner, Nellans, and Hofferth voted in favor; none voted against. Councilor Petersen did not vote on the motion. Motion passed.

### **REPORTS**

Clerk-Treasurer Mis shared the Lake County Public Library is a valuable asset to the Town of Munster and she encouraged residents to visit our local branch in Munster.

Councilor Gardiner tendered his resignation from the Lake County Solid Waste board and requested Councilor Petersen as his replacement. Council President appointed Councilor Petersen, which he accepted.

Councilor Shinkan shared from the Board of Safety meeting that the Munster Police Department year end activity reported violations and warnings increased year over year.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Council will hold a regular meeting on Monday, April 6, 2026. The Redevelopment Commission will hold a regular meeting immediately following. (Unless stated otherwise, all meetings of the Town Council begin at 6:30 p.m. at Munster Town Hall.)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council Shinkan, and upon a motion by Councilor Shinkan and seconded by Councilor Nellans, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m. by voice vote.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Joseph Hofferth, President**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer**