Town of Monroe

Town Board Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2025

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Monthly expenses were reviewed and approved.

Minutes for March 2025 were reviewed and approved.

Those in attendance at tonight’s meeting: Mike Geels, Josh Geerken, David Bard, Rachel Tague, Justin Shaffer, Clayton Lengerich, Kris Burkhart, Brett Grover, Shawn Hamrick, Eric Mann & Resident Bill Bliss

**New Business**

Shawn Hamrick is a guest tonight and wanted to introduce himself and his services. Shawn is also our Berne Witness journalist. He wants to share with council that he now writes grants for communities and he wanted to let council know he is available for such services. The Town of Monroe has used services for grant writing through the companies we hire for projects. For instance, Wessler Engineering has been able to provide help with getting grants for our water and sewage projects. Shawn is local and is asking for consideration for any upcoming projects.

Justin stated the sewage basins are not working well. He stated with all the rain this week he, with the help of Bluhm & Reber and another company, have taken 7 loads of sewage out of the force main between town and 100 South. For some reason he can’t get enough velocity to push hard after passing 100 South and believes something is blocking the sewage pipes. Justin has spoken with Ryan Braun with Wessler and he suggested a different pump. It’s been 5 years but maybe there’s been a change in product for the better. Justin stated that after 2 million was spent on this sewage project we’re still having the same trouble. Justin suspects severe infiltration starting with residential sump pumps. He believes water from sump pumps are being pumped into the sewage. He plans to go door to door this summer and do a die test to check connections. The sewer is full after this weeks rain and there is only 24 inches to the top of the EQ Basin before it overflows. There is roughly 10-15 ft from the top at the east station. He has turned to pumps down to slow the flow to the basins though he is worried with the projected 2 more inches of rain due to fall tomorrow.

**Old Business**

Nothing to report.

**Town Superintendent**

Justin brought up the potential for the summer watering/sprinkling credit that’s been discussed in previous meeting. Jeff Rowe with Baker Tilly is recommending the town increase the sewage rates by another 1% which makes the total increase 7%. David said we’re going to have to increase the sewage rate no matter what, whether it’s 6% or 7%. David asked if it’s worth doing the summer discount when there are only a small percentage using it to begin with. Mike suggests not going with the summer sprinkling at all to save the residents that extra increased amount. Josh would like to think about this a little longer. David asked resident Bill Bliss his opinion. Bill said he doesn’t have a pool and doesn’t use a lot of water so the discount doesn’t do him any good. David said he wants to do what’s right for the majority. Mike stated we should just stick to the original increase of 6%. The sprinkling credit topic will be tabled for now and David asked that Jeff Rowe be available at next month’s meeting so they can all ask questions.

Justin brought up the live streaming mandate placed on all cities and towns by the State of Indiana. Justin and Kris have met with Innovative Concepts. They have presented a quote which will include a camera, a monitor and microphone and other various parts to make live streaming possible. The total cost is 6,637.51. Split into 2 installments. 1/2 due at the beginning of the project, the other 1/2 due at the end. David made a motion to approve the quote and get it started. Josh seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Justin said hydrant flushing will take place over the next 2 weeks. They will do this primarily in the morning hours.

Justin said heavy trash pickup was big this year hauling 16 large loads to the transfer station.

Justin said he’s still working on forming a park board. He’s got just a few people he’s waiting to hear back from.

Justin met with Matt Lehman in Indianapolis. The meeting was about the 124 project through Monroe. The project will take place in 2030. The issue that remains is the stormwater pipes which will be addressed at a later date.

When it comes to town employees, Justin is asking for an additional policy added to the employee benefits. The town does not have any bereavement policy in writing. He would like to add some days to this policy so employees don’t have to use their vacation days. Josh and Mike would like to table this matter and think it over and address this at a later date.

**Town Marshal**

Brett Grover was in tonight due to AJ attending the Indiana Marshals Conference in Indianapolis. Brett reported that there were 25 traffic stops, 3 dog complaints, 3 VIN checks, 1 report of sexual battery, 3 golf cart complaints and that there were 135 hours worked this past month.

Brett reported that the laptop is up and running. The bracket for the car should be in next week. The docking station for the car should be installed by a county employee next week.

AJ has placed an order through AT&T for a SIM card which is to be delivered next week. He’s been working with Troy Habegger with the sheriff’s department to get this done.

AJ has been working with Derek and Nathan to get a firm 2-week schedule in place and this will be ready by May 2025 meeting.

**Fire Department**

Kris stated that a benefit breakfast will be held on April 19th and will include the easter bunny and egg hunt that starts at 10am.

Kris mentioned the antenna on the roof over the police cars garage door is very loose. Not sure how it’s anchored but we may need to address this and have it tightened.

**Clerk-Treasurer**

Rachel Tague is requesting a bump in pay for the deputy marshal’s Nathan Hunter and Derek Loshe. They are currently making $20.60 per hour and Rachel is asking for a flat $5.00 increase to each of their pays. David made a motion to accept this increase. Josh seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The other concern Rachel has is with credit cards. The current company we use, Elan Financial through Farmers & Merchants does a soft credit check on each employee before a card is made available. Rachel is asking for an additional credit card for the police department to use. Rachel is asking to go with the First Bank of Berne who keep their credit cards in house and won’t do any credit checks on the town employees. The one thing First Bank of Berne is asking is for us to open an account and hold the credit limit in that new account for their protection. Josh motioned to accept. David seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

**Attorney**

Clayton has brought with him ordinance 2024-5 and would like to propose an amendment on this ordinance. This ordinance is for public nuisances. In particular he is asking to approve the change in section 2B iii for inoperable vehicles. The previous ordinance was for parked inoperable vehicles on the streets. Justin has suggested this ordinance include inoperable vehicles on residential properties. This proposed amendment mirrors Decatur’s nuisance ordinance. The amendment will only pertain to inoperable vehicles and will be addressed by Brad Roe if said vehicle has been sitting for 10 days or more. Josh spoke up and asked about his daughter’s vehicle sitting in the driveway that is not being used until she gets her driver’s license. Clayton said the difference is that her vehicle is operable and would not be considered a nuisance. David spoke up and asked if the same would be for boats sitting in driveways. Clayton said no, it would not be considered a nuisance. He said the town is not an HOA. This amended ordinance will need to run in the newspapers but Clayton is asking to move forward with that. David made a motion to accept. Josh seconded. Motion passed 3-0. There will be another meeting once this ordinance has been advertised appropriately.

Justin has tasked Clayton with working on and amending ordinance 2024-9. In section 2 the connection fee of 1” or below reads there will be a flat fee of $2000.00 for a new connection fee but if there is an already an existing water supply it should only be $1500.00. Any water service over 1” will collect a fee on a case-by-case basis and must have a back flow preventer added for all that are over 1”. This amendment will create a new ordinance 2025-3. Josh made a motion to accept ordinance 2025-3. David seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

**Other Business**

Bill Bliss spoke up and asked that the tornado siren be moved to a more central location. He said during a heavy storm with strong winds he can’t hear the siren either inside or outside. Kris spoke up and said that the siren is ran by the EMA. He said that the cost for upkeep is so high, they are debating to keep the siren or retire it. He stated that they are working on solutions, perhaps even an app.

The other item Bill wanted to address was the new sign placed at the beginning of Monroe on each end of 124. He said the new No Jake Brakes Permitted sign has done so well. He doesn’t hear them like he used to. He wants to thank council for the addition.

David Bard spoke up and said he would like to move forward with an employee handbook. One has been started but was tabled at some point. David would like get that started once again. David asked council if that was ok? Josh made a motion and David seconded. Motion passed 3-0 to get that started again with Claytons help.

David also asked Kris if he can provide a small report at our council meetings to let everyone know what the fire department has been up to. Kris voiced understanding.

With nothing else to discuss, this meeting is adjourned.

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Town Board President

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Clerk-Treasurer