Town of Winona Lake
Council Minutes
August 19, 2025

The Town Council of Winona Lake, Indiana met in a regular session on August 19, 2025, in the Town Hall at 6:00 p.m., some attending in person, others by Zoom (video conference).

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** President Ashley McGinnis, Austin Reynolds, and Barry Andrew

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT (ZOOM):** Jim Lancaster (left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.)

**ABSENT:** Jason Zaugg

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Craig Allebach, Clerk-Treasurer Heather James, Fire Department Kevin Gelbaugh, Attorney Adam Turner, and Parks Director Holly Hummitch

**OTHERS PRESENT ZOOM:** Town Manager Pam Howard

**Opening:** At 6:00 p.m. Ashley opened the meeting. Barry said the prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**
Ashley opened the floor for public comment on any agenda items.

Jerry Nelson said he hopes agenda item #18 is more than a statement. He said he wants to hear the town is getting the money back or if the town is taking legal action.

Ashley closed the floor.

**Approval of Minutes**
Heather presented the minutes from the June 17th, July 7th, and July 15th meetings. Barry motioned to approve all minutes presented. Austin seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, 0 nays, the motion carried.

**Approval of Claims**
Heather presented the claims for approval. Austin motioned to approve. Jim seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, 0 nays, the motion carried.

**"Winona Happenings"**

August 23, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Farmers Market at Winona
August 23, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.- The Canal Days in the Village
August 23 Grace College Welcome Weekend- Students Return
August 30, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Farmers Market at Winona
September 6, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. -Farmers Market at Winona
September 13, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.- Farmers Market at Winona

**Miller Sunset Pavilion Items:**
Ashley stated the MSP committee has approved all the documents. She presented them for approval from council.

**Job Descriptions/Postings**

1. Miller Sunset Pavilion Manager- Overall manager for ice season
2. Ice Technician- Zamboni operator/ice operations
3. Ice Rink Attendant- Skate shop attendants

Barry motioned to approve all job descriptions and job postings. Austin seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Dasher Board Sales**
Ashley stated the rates for advertising sales for 2025-2026 season are staying the same as last season. Austin motioned to approve. Barry seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Season Ice Rink Pricing**
Ashley stated admissions and rental pricing for 2025-2026 season are also staying the same as last season. Barry motioned to approve. Austin seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Rink Season**
Ashley presented the hours of operations for the ice season 2025-2026 and shared the rink will be open Nov 22 – Feb 28. Jim motioned to approved. Austin seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

Barry thanked the committee for the work.

**Ordinance 2025-8-1 School Zone CR 250 E at Lakeland Christian Academy**
Adam stated he is still reviewing and determining if this is needed.

**MOU KABS Route/Signs**
This MOU is to place KABS bus stop signs in Winona Lake. This MOU is also needed so KABS can work with Grace College and the Village at Winona. KABS representative shared that Grace College and the Village support the stops. KABS stated that Warsaw is willing to install the signs. The Village will be presenting at their September board meeting. Barry motioned to approve the MOU pending Village approval and would appreciate Warsaw installing the signs. Jim seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Approval of Air Conditioner**
Craig stated that the air conditioner that services the town council chambers needs to be replaced. He shared there were pricing options for price and efficiency. He requested approval to purchase a new air conditioner for $6,550.00 from Verhage. Barry motioned to approve. Jim seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Purchase/Lease of Street Sweeper**
The street department has had a street sweeper/Vac on a trial loan for two months. They would like approval to purchase it. It can be paid for using MVH & Storm Water funds - $50,000 from 2025 budget and $65,000 in 2026. Austin motioned to approve the purchase. Barry seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed. Craig thanked Pam and Shane for their work on this project.

**Gasoline Price Approval**
Craig reported that he and Pam have been working though gasoline cards again and speaking with a couple of vendors. Lassus Brothers quoted gasoline of $2.54 per gallon from now until end of 2026 with. If the council accepts this price, Lassus will work up a contract for the president to sign, holding that price. Pam shared that this is for 25,000 gallons of gasoline. Barry questioned what would happen if the town went over 25,000. Kevin questioned if this includes diesel because the firetrucks use diesel. Craig will discuss with Lassus. Barry motioned to approve the $2.54 price and for Ashley to sign the contract. Jim seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Auction Report**

Update for the August 16 auction.

| | |
|---|---|
| Plow Truck | $1,900 |
| Sweeper Attachment: | $3,900 |
| Ranger | $1,200 |
| Salt Spreader | $25 |
| Snow Plow | $100 |
| Trailer | $275 |
| Durango | $10,000 |
| Total from sale: | $17,400 |

Salt Spreader was held back for later auction to get closer to the winter season

**Sponsorship/Donation/Grant Approvals**
Trick-or-Treat on the Trails OR wherever needed

Kona Ice- $250.00
Travelin' Tom's- $250.00

Barry motioned to accept the donations. Austin seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed.

**Travel Authorization**
Town Manager, Pam Howard, requested approval to attend the Aim Ideas Summit October 21 to 23, in French Lick. Austin motioned to approve the request. Barry seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, motion passed.

**Town Attorney Report:** Adam shared he had been working on agenda items, contracts, ordinances, and with the financial advisor on the audit report.

**Reports from Supervisors**

**Park Department:** Holly reported there were 48 camps and 500 participants for programs this summer. She is working on Trick-or-Treat on the trail which takes place on October 25.

**Fire Department:** Kevin reported the department had 20 runs and 289-man hours. They also assisted with Camp Hero. Kevin said the department had the tanker repaired and the new engine parts were on order.

**Police Department:** Not present

**Reports from Committees**

**Budget Committee:** Heather shared she is meeting with the DLGF on Aug $26^{th}$.

**Ordinance Committee:** Nothing to report

**Miller Sunset Committee:** Ashley reported the committee worked on rink season plans and farmer's market.

Ashley acknowledged this was Craig's last council meeting and thanked him for all his work.

Statement of SBOA Audit.
Ashley read a statement regarding the SBOA audit. She said Adam drafted a letter to employees regarding the audit and requested council approve the letter. She said employees would have 14 days to respond to the letter. Austin thanked Adam for his work on the audit. Austin motioned to approved sending the letter to employees. Barry seconded. With a vote of 3 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion passed. (Jim left the meeting at 6:30 p.m. so he was not present to vote.)

**Floor Topics**

Ken Konieczny stated there was a large hole in (or near) one of the lift stations and he had concerns of children falling inside. Craig & Pam said they were working on reviewing the condition of all lift stations.

Jerr Nelson questioned if former employees would receive the letter. Adam answered they will receive the same letter.

**Adjournment:** At 6:50 p.m., Barry motioned to adjourn. Austin seconded. With a vote of 3 ayes, 0 nays, the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned.

Ashley McGinnis, President

Heather James, Clerk-Treasurer

*This is a summary of the meeting. A full transcript is available at Town Hall.

Over the past year, through the shared leadership and teamwork of the Clerk-Treasurer, the Council and the Park Board, we have already made meaningful progress to address the breakdowns in policy & procedures identified in the report. Our credit card policy enforcement has been strengthened, with consistent application across all departments, leading to greater accountability and compliance.

In addition, our Clerk-Treasurer continues to review and realign the Town's fund accounts to ensure that each fund is being used for its proper and intended purpose. This careful work is already strengthening our financial foundation and will lead to a more accurate, transparent, and reflective budget. As we move forward in preparing the 2026 budget, these improvements will help ensure that taxpayer dollars are managed with both integrity and efficiency.

We are also in the final stages of completing a fully updated Employee Handbook. Once that is adopted, we will update all Town job descriptions to ensure clear responsibilities and alignment with best practices.

Looking ahead, our top priority will be creating a formal Internal Control Manual. Nearly every audit finding ties back to the absence of clear, documented internal controls. Establishing this manual will help safeguard public funds, ensure consistent procedures, and reduce risk in every department.

Our responsibility is twofold — to protect taxpayer funds and to conduct ourselves with fairness and due process.

As detailed in our previous statements, the recent audit has brought attention to several specific purchases and financial practices that have understandably raised questions in the community. We share the public's commitment to ensuring that every taxpayer dollar is used for a clear and legitimate public purpose — and we take this responsibility seriously.

The State Board of Accounts recommended in the report that we carefully review these expenses. We are taking a deliberate, fact-based approach that includes:

- Gathering all records related to the purchases in question — receipts, approvals, and correspondence.
- Requesting written explanations and/or supporting documentation from the individuals involved to allow them to provide evidence of a legitimate public purpose.
- Consulting with our legal counsel to determine whether the purchases meet the legal standard for public fund use.
- If any purchases are found to be personal in nature or lack the proper documentation to prove otherwise, we will discuss pursuing reimbursement requests and take all appropriate steps to recover the funds.

We want to be clear: this process is about ensuring that our actions are lawful, fair, and based on documented facts, not assumptions. This protects not only the integrity of the Town but also the rights of every person involved.

Our commitment remains the same: to learn from the audit, strengthen our processes, and be responsible stewards of taxpayer funds. Progress is being made, and we will keep the public informed as each step is completed.

Respectfully, Winona Lake Town Council 8/9/2025