



Town Council of the Town of North Judson
Regular Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2025 – 6:30 PM

The North Judson Town Council met in Regular Session at the North Judson Town Hall, 310 Lane Street, North Judson, IN on the above date and time with the following present: Council President Rowe, Council Vice President Brown, and Councilmember Lewandowski, Banks, and Windbigler, Town Manager Leszek and Clerk-Treasurer Rowe present as well.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council President Rowe asked for approval of the agenda. Council Vice President Brown moved to approve the agenda. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all Councilmembers present concurred.

Council President Rowe asked for approval of the Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on March 17, 2025. Council Vice President Brown moved to approve those Minutes. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all Councilmembers present concurred.

Old Business:

Highland & Pioneer Cemetery Caretaker – Request for Proposals & Agreement for Services Approval

Council President Rowe notified everyone that there is one bid for the 2025-2026 Caretaker Agreement for Services of Highland and Pioneer Cemeteries to the Council. The bid was from Gary & Sons LLC for a total of \$22,000, which includes 10 mowings at \$2,200 per mow.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to accept the bid and approve the 2025-2026 Caretaker Agreement for Services of Highland and Pioneer Cemeteries with Gary & Sons LLC. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Town Park Board Member Appointment

Council President Rowe read aloud a Letter of Interest from Andrew Hughes regarding the open position on the Town Park Board. Town Marshal Thomas offered his opinion stating that he has had no previous issues with the candidate and that he would be a good addition to the Park Board.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to appoint Andrew Hughes to the vacant seat on the Town Park Board (Anderson). Councilmember Lewandowski seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Town Ordinance Proposals for Zoning Modifications Update

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that they have the Public Hearing notification published and a date & time set for 8:00 A.M. on Monday, April 14th. The Public Hearing will be hosted by the Planning Commission and then their proposal with recommendation will be forwarded to the Town Council at the April 21st meeting.

New Business:

Starke County Youth Club Update – Marc Vendl/Irene Szakonyi

Irene Szakonyi stated that every child deserves the right environment to grow and learn. They currently have three hundred kids enrolled in their programs across the country which is helping them benefit both academically and personally. She explained that they have an annual evaluation process that collects feedback from families, students, and educators, and is reviewed by an independent evaluator. This meeting included data from the previous year. They provide academic support by hosting interactive programs in math, language, and science, and other hands-on learning. Szakonyi stated that their programs run before and after school, typically from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., and during the summer to prevent learning loss. Town Marshal Thomas asked about their North Judson operations. He was informed that their program is located in the North Judson – San Pierre Elementary School, from 2:15 P.M. to 5:15 P.M. every school day. Szakonyi stated that funding remains the biggest hurdle, with some support coming from the Department of Education grant, but many program elements rely on donations and local partnerships. The Starke County Young Club will be hosting their annual Radio-Thon on May 2nd, which is a major fundraiser to support staff wages and programming.

Prairie Trails Club – Trail Extension Update

Steve and Kathy Lucas were present to discuss the Prairie Trails Club – Trail Extension update. The Trail extension will begin at Main Street and extend along to Railroad Street/English Lake Road, weaving along the south side of the old railroad corridor. The State of Indiana – Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is funding 80% of the project, with 20% provided locally. All design work has been completed and approved by the DNR. The visible construction phase has now begun. The Lucas' asked the Town to collaborate on improvements in the "Triangle" Area, with the goals of creating a unified, welcoming space regardless of boundaries. Some suggested amenities included angle parking, water fountain station, and trail signage.

Recognition of Guest

Marc Vendl was present but had nothing to discuss at that time.

Irene Szakonyi was present but had nothing to discuss at that time.

Donna Henry was present on behalf of the Mint Festival Committee to discuss further updates regarding the upcoming festival. She stated that they are making good progress on the Green Paper, including updating articles and ads. The Council agreed to get a group picture during the next meeting to be published in the Green Paper.

Councilmember Lewandowski made a motion to appoint Chad Scutchfield as the Liaison to the Mint Festival Committee. Council Vice President Brown seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Robin Prater was present on behalf of the Mint Festival Pageant to provide the Council with further updates. Prater asked if the Pageant would be able to borrow four tables and six chairs on May 17th. Leszek informed her that they would be able to help with the request. They'll coordinate picking them up on Friday, May 16th.

Steve Lucas was present but had nothing to discuss at that time.

Kathy Lucas was present but had nothing to discuss at that time.

Department /Representative Reports

Clerk-Treasurer - Andrew Rowe

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe presented a proposal to increase the Town's First Farmers Bank & Trust credit account limit from \$2,000 to \$5,000. The reason being that with frequent expenses exceed the current limit, disrupting the monthly payment cycle.

Councilmember Lewandowski made a motion to approve the increase of the Town's First Farmers Bank & Trust credit account limit from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Council Vice President Brown seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe presented the following Special Event Permit Applications for Council Approval:
Kid's Closet Fun Day at Norwayne Field on Saturday, September 20th.
Purple Tent of Hope at Norwayne Field on Saturday, April 19th.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the following Special Event Permit Applications for the Kid's Closet Fun Day and Purple Tent of Hope and waive the \$50.00 fee. Councilmember Lewandowski seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Rowe presented the following Customer Adjustment Requests:

-Account No. 5920000: Utility Customer paid their bill online on 02/12/2025 but due to issues with Invoice Cloud we did not get notification of this payment until 02/14/2025 causing a late fee to be assessed to their account. They asked to have the late fee of \$8.18 credited back to their account.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approval the following Customer Adjustment Requests:

-Account No. 5920000: Utility Customer paid their bill online on 02/12/2025 but due to issues with Invoice Cloud we did not get notification of this payment until 02/14/2025 causing a late fee to be assessed to their account. They asked to have the late fee of \$8.18 credited back to their account.

Councilmember Windbigler seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Rowe presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2779 to Peterson Consulting Services, Inc. for Capital asset updating services for financial reporting purposes fee, Expenses/Administration, Invoice #24-27, in the amount of \$3,396.90.

P.O. 2780 to Baker Tilly Municipal Advisor, LLC for Monthly invoice for BT+ per agreement dated December 2, 2024, Invoice BTMA 31908, in the amount of \$3,852.45.

P.O. 2781 to WTH Technology for Think GIS User License and Installation, Configuration and Training, Invoice 32734, in the amount of \$1,269.50.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the following Purchase Orders:

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Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Rowe mentioned that they were starting to think about dates for the upcoming employee appreciation picnic. He asked what the best dates for the Council would be; Council President Rowe stated that he believed that a date should just be proposed and go from there.

School Board – Doug Wilde

Nothing presented.

Building Inspector – Todd Jackson

Building Inspector Jackson stated that due to the recent storm-related damage several residents have been calling about roof repairs, pool damage, and accessory structures like barns. Currently, permits are not required for roof repairs, but there's uncertainty about whether permits should be required for replacing or rebuilding storm-damaged structures. Leszek stated that the storm-damage should be similar to fencing permits; if the replacement structure is larger or significantly altered, a permit would be required. There was a general agreement to use discretion and show grace where appropriate, especially considering the storm circumstances.

Code Enforcement – Town Marshal Frank Thomas

Town Marshal Frank Thomas stated that they have made significant progress in addressing abandoned and inoperable vehicles in recent weeks. He explained that some were towed, while others were moved or repaired following conversations with the owners. Efforts were made to educate residents on ordinance leading to more voluntary compliance from residents. Thomas stated that due to the recent storms, there's been temporary leniency on certain ordinance issues to allow storm clean-up efforts to take priority. Thomas stated that the vehicle on High Street has finally been addressed and removed. Overall, there's been noticeable improvement in compliance and neighborhood appearance.

Unsafe Hearing

Nothing presented.

BZA/Planning Commission

Council Vice President Brown stated that the next meeting would be at 8:00 A.M. on Monday, April 14th.

Redevelopment Commission

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that their next meeting would be at 5:45P.M. or 6:00PM on Monday, April 21st. Rowe stated that they will be reviewing proposals from Troyer Group, USI Consultants, and JPR for the Town Park Improvements Project – Phase II. Leszek informed the Council that they would continue to discuss the banners, concrete pads and benches for the Town Park and Downtown area.

Park Board – Nick Radtke

Town Manager Leszek stated that the Utility Crew has been busy working on leaf and brush cleanup but were redirected due to the previous storms. They'll resume their regular work over the next few weeks. He mentioned that the storms did cause some minor damage to the fence at the Dog Park, but it would be repairable. Leszek stated that the old, wooden picnic tables are in the process of being replaced with new metal-legged tables that were more durable and winter-ready. He explained that the crew would be wrapping up smaller projects to get the Town Park ready for the season.

Police Department – Town Marshal Frank Thomas

Thomas informed the Council that Officer Quail and himself had recently returned from a three-day training session in Indianapolis. During this session, they were able to complete all of their state-mandatory training for the year. Completing it all at once saved time and helped with scheduling challenges.

Additionally, Thomas discussed a significant change in the Indiana State Police (ISP) hiring practices. Due to staffing shortages, ISP is now accepting lateral transfers without requiring them to attend the full ISP academy. They've also dropped the requirement that new hires must serve in specific areas for three years, allowing officers to stay in their hometowns. Thomas explained that this makes the ISP more attractive for officers, which may draw talent away from local and smaller departments.

Lastly, Thomas stated that there is a new law will be taking effect July 1st for police officers. The law will require new police hires to commit to three years of service if the department pays for their training. If they leave early for another agency, that agency must reimburse the training cost. If they leave law enforcement entirely, then they are personally liable for the cost.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Todd Jackson

Fire Chief Todd Jackson stated that his department had a total of 29 calls for the month of March. The calls included: 3 structure fires, 5 brush fires, 8 medical calls, and miscellaneous animal issues and smoke issues.

Jackson discussed wanting a new generator due to the recent storms and power outages the Town faced. When the Fire Department loses power, it can cause delays in emergency response. The Department currently has a generator which is not usable and requires a costly transformer setup because it is a 480V, 3-phase unit, while the building uses a single-phase power. This is causing a 2–5-minute delay in emergency response. Jackson proposed buying a Generac standby generator to power lights, doors, furnace and water to their building. He explained that they would be able to purchase one for \$15,000 installed. They would be able to offset some of the expenses by selling their current generator. The Council stated that they would need a proposal from Jackson before any decision can be made.

Utility Department – Utility Supervisor Kimberly Kapp

Utility Supervisor Kapp stated that the crew had been pulling the Oakwood Lift Station quite a bit lately. Her crew has also started their disinfection season as well. They have also been working on meter replacement and storm cleanup.

Utility Supervisor Kapp presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2773 to H&T Electrical for Troubleshoot Clarifier Motor Circuit and Materials, Invoice 2905, in the amount of \$1,230.47.

P.O. 2774 to Utility Supply Company for 5/8 Water Meters R900i with Antenna (12), Invoice 1515218, in the amount of \$5,329.32.

P.O. 2775 to USA Bluebook for Lab Supplies, Pipet & Tip, and Hach Digital Reactor, Invoice INV0065785, INV00657533, and INV00657698, in the amount of \$3,063.93.

P.O. 2776 to Republic for Removal of Sludge Dumpsters (2), Invoice 0717-001659471, in the amount of \$4,056.18.

P.O. 2777 to NWI Concrete & Excavation for Two Bench Concrete Pads and Town Park, Invoice 679, in the amount of \$960.00.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the following Purchase Orders:

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P.O. 2774 to Utility Supply Company for 5/8 Water Meters R900i with Antenna (12), Invoice 1515218, in the amount of \$5,329.32.

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P.O. 2777 to NWI Concrete & Excavation for Two Bench Concrete Pads and Town Park, Invoice 679, in the amount of \$960.00.

Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Town Manager – Joe Leszek

Town Manager Leszek informed the Council that our INDOT CCMG projects would begin within the next week. The contractors would be installing new sidewalks and curbing down areas of Main Street, in front of Retro. The new sidewalks will be made to meet ADA standards. Some of the paving areas included in this round of street and sidewalk paving and rehabilitation. Leszek confirmed that all of the projects would be completed before the Mint Festival.

Leszek stated that HWC would be installing the equipment to support live streaming and recording of Council Meetings. The expected implementation would be within the next thirty to forty days. He also mentioned that the Town's internet/data was down for three and a half days due to the storms. HWC is working on a backup system to avoid similar issues in the future.

Leszek explained that during the recent storm on March 30th, the generator at the Wastewater Treatment Plant failed. Fortunately, the SCADA system was able to alert Utilities Supervisor Kapp, who was then able to temporarily fix the issue, keeping the plant operational. Leszek also mentioned that just as power was restored by NIPSCO, a truck had hit several poles on John Street causing another outage. Power was restored again by Friday, April 4th.

He also discussed that the Town received grant funding for their 2025 Downtown Beautification and Park Upgrade Project: \$5,000 from The Starke County Community Foundation, \$10,000 from The Hardesty Memorial Endowment and \$2,500 from The Bruno and Dolores Seghetti Family Fund. These grants will ease the financial burden on the RDC Fund for park and downtown amenities improvements like benches, trash receptacles, and large flower planters for downtown. Leszek thanked the donors and Jackie Ryan for her continued support and contributions.

Town Manager Leszek presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2778 to USI Consultants for DES #2101695 Hubeny Sub. Sidewalk, Invoice 24116, in the amount of \$2,604.00.

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to approve the following Purchase Orders:

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Councilmember Windbigler seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Legal Updates – Town Attorney Justin Schramm

There was a discussion about the town-owned generator, originally acquired through a grant. Schramm explained that since the generator is public equipment, it cannot be sold privately and must go through a bid process, such as a public auction or bid posting. The Council discussed setting a minimum bid price to ensure the sale is handled properly and transparently.

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe mentioned a request from the Railroad Heights Inc. regarding gravel and paving undeveloped streets and alleyways. However, the Town is unable to move forward due to a lack of legal description or survey of the land in question. This issue will be further discussed in the Planning Commission meeting, and Town Attorney Schramm will be drafting a response stating the Town still lacks sufficient information to process any request.

Additional Business Deemed Necessary by the Council:

Nothing Presented.

Payment of Claims:

Council Vice President Brown made a motion to pay Payment of Claims in the amount of \$379,438.05. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Councilmember Lewandowski made a motion to adjourn, Councilmember Windbigler seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 P.M.



John Rowe, Council President

Attest:



Andrew J. Rowe, Clerk-Treasurer

Next regular scheduled meeting – Monday, April 21, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.