



Town Council of the Town of North Judson
Regular Meeting Minutes

June 2, 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, Councilmember Lewandowski, Banks, and Windbigler. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe and Town Manager Leszek were present as well.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council President Rowe asked for approval of the agenda. Councilmember Lewandowski 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 May 19, 2025. Councilmember Lewandowski moved to approve those Minutes. Councilmember Windbigler seconded the motion, and all Councilmembers present concurred.

Old Business:

Planning Commission/BZA – Vacancy Letter of Interest

The Council has received more interest in the current vacant position, namely Eric Blaha who submitted a Letter of Interest for the vacant position on the Planning Commission & Board of Zoning Appeals. Blaha is a registered republican. There are now two applicants for the vacancy. A consensus was reached to interview both candidates to provide an overview of responsibilities and assess fitness for the role. The interviews will be held prior to the June 16th meeting.

Town Schedule of Fees – 2025 Update

The Council determined there is no immediate urgency to this update and a special meeting will be scheduled on June 23rd or June 30th to allow adequate time for review and discussion. The fee schedule update process will be structured to meet the requirements of the 30-day public notice before any changes take effect. The proposed updates were developed in collaboration with staff and based on neighboring towns and cities fees.

New Business:

Department of Natural Resources – LWCF Grant: Town Park Improvements Project, Phase II

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe and Town Manager Leszek were able to meet with Mike Reese a few times to refine the park improvement plans based on feedback from both the Council and Troyer Group. The project is

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being submitted under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant, requiring strong alignment with DNR scoring criteria. A key change under consideration is relocating the proposed pickleball courts to an area mirroring the existing courts, rather than the originally proposed site near the planned skate park and plaza. Concerns were raised whether they should build one to two new fields. The two fields would all be for a dedicated softball space, potentially increasing use and revitalizing the area. Concerns were also raised about the long-term maintenance and interest. There was a proposal to build one field now and prep for a second. Updated plans, costs, and in-kind labor values will be circulated before the next meeting for final discussion and potential action. Council President Rowe stated that he would like to meet with the Park Board and Little League Board to help finalize the park plans.

Recognition of Guest

Donna Henry was present on behalf of the Mint Festival Committee. She stated that the Mint Festival will be held on June 13th through the 15th. Henry explained that they will be having their final meeting on Tuesday, June 10th at 6:00 p.m. at the Lutheran Church.

Ben Callender stated that he owns two adjoining parcels: one within the Town of North Judson and the other being in Starke County, outside of the Town's corporate boundaries. Callender asked if the 1.26 acres could be removed from within town limits. County officials informed him that for the parcels to be merged, the Town would have to vacate jurisdiction over the parcel. Town Attorney Schramm will research the process and advise on whether and how the Town could proceed.

Anita Goodman was present but had nothing to discuss at this time.

Scott Krzyzandowski was present but had nothing to discuss at this time.

Department /Representative Reports

Clerk-Treasurer - Andrew Rowe

Clerk Treasurer Rowe provided an update on Liberty Mutual insurance. There were no deductibles on this policy in the past years. Liberty Mutual has begun offering deductible options, but no changes are needed at this time. The policy renews July 1st. He stated that several new town signs have been ordered including signage for the Dog Park, Town Hall and Park.

Rowe mentioned that the audio and video equipment for the Town Hall has been ordered, and the installation is expected within the next few weeks.

School Board – Doug Wilde

Wilde started that graduation took place the day before and was blessed with beautiful weather. He also stated that the NJSP School Corporation is transitioning fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades back into the middle school building. This will require extensive prep work and renovations, which will be starting in the next few weeks. There will be a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) course in partnership with local union masonry professionals. The program will operate in house at the middle school and will include two union-approved instructors.

Building Inspector – Todd Jackson

Building Inspector Todd Jackson stated that he had previously met with the Planning Commission regarding a new residential development project by Tim Howard. Howard plans to build three duplexes at the corner of Luken Street and State Road 10. The project meets all zoning and setback requirements, including

distance from nearby state, county, and city easements and utilities. Permits have been approved by the Planning Commission. Footings are expected to be poured in the next week. The duplexes will be to the north of an existing gravel drive (previously between Luken Street and Brantwood parking lot).

Town Attorney Schramm reviewed ten properties submitted by the Town for his analysis of hazardous or unsafe conditions. He found seven potentially unsafe properties, which will receive formal notices shortly. They also identified two nuisance properties, and one more property needs more information before a decision can be made.

Code Enforcement – Town Marshal Frank Thomas

Town Marshal Thomas stated that there is ongoing difficulty in getting property owners to comply with basic maintenance and cleanup – especially adults neglecting responsibilities like mowing grass or removing debris.

Unsafe Hearing

Nothing presented.

BZA/Planning Commission

Clerk-Treasurer Rowe stated that they do have a BZA meeting coming up within the following weeks. He also clarified to the Council that both the BZA and Planning Commission have vacancies (one on each board).

Redevelopment Commission

Nothing Presented.

Park Board – Nick Radtke

Nothing Presented.

Police Department – Town Marshal Frank Thomas

Thomas mentioned that since the summer is in full force, call volume has increased. With school being out, further increases are expected. A meeting was held with necessary representatives to address safety concerns related to the Mint Festival.

He also mentioned that an application has shown interest in the open position. Thomas met with the applicant for approximately two hours and plans to schedule a tour and meeting to assess how the applicant could fit. Part-time positions remain open, but interest has been low. The local department is facing similar struggles attracting part-time workers due to higher pay in their full-time positions and competitive hourly rates offered elsewhere. It was mentioned that other towns have adopted similar strategies, sometimes even matching officers' home-department wages to attract part-time service. Any changes would need to comply with the salary ordinance and may require formal adjustments.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Todd Jackson

Jackson informed the Council that the Fire Department had a total of 32 runs for the month of May. He also stated that the Fire Department's annual fish fry would be Saturday, June 7th. Jackson mentioned that they were able to finish the construction of a new walk-in cooler to replace the previous 40-year-old unit.

Fire Chief Jackson presented the following Special Event Permit Application for Council Approval: NJFD Golf Cart/UTV Poker Run at North Judson Wayne Township Fire Department on Saturday, June 14th.

Councilmember Lewandowski made a motion to approve the following Special Event Permit Application for NJFD Golf Cart/UTV Poker Run at North Judson Wayne Township Fire Department and waive the \$50.00 fee. Councilmember Windbigler seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Utility Department – Utility Supervisor Kimberly Kapp

Utility Supervisor Kapp stated that her crews have been working on flushing hydrants and cleaning tanks at the Wastewater Plant. They also have been working on their routine mowing across municipal property. The fire hydrant at the Wooded Nickle was relocated and cleaned up. The hydrant is now fully functional and ready for service. This hydrant will serve as the third hydrant dedicated for Mint Festival purposes.

Kapp presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2806 to Utility Supply Company for Mueller Fire Hydrant, Invoice 1521492, in the amount of \$3,642.45.

P.O. 2807 to USA Bluebook for WWTP Lab Supplies, Invoice INV00712240, in the amount of \$987.77.

P.O. 2808 to MacAllister CAT for Cylinder for Backhoe, Invoice P9897033, in the amount of \$1,320.65.

Councilmember Lewandowski made a motion to approve the following Purchase Orders:

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

Town Manager – Joe Leszek

Town Manager Leszek stated that Lisa Hall was unable to assist in the cleanup of Norwayne Field this year. Nick Radtke has reached out to a recent high school graduate for possible short-term help. If no assistance is attained, Radtke has offered to donate some time to help with edging. As a last resort, Clerk-Treasurer Rowe and Leszek will handle weeding and mulching to prepare the park. Hall expressed interest in returning next year.

Leszek stated that the inspection warrant for the property in High Street was received last week. Plans are in place to serve the warrant tomorrow with Town Marshal Thomas present, take the required photos, and proceed with the next steps for enforcement. He clarified that these actions are part of a formal legal process, which takes time to execute properly.

Town Manager Leszek informed the Council that USI is scheduled to be onsite in July to implement their new AI road mapping system.

Leszek presented the following Purchase Orders for Council Approval:

P.O. 2809 to USI Consultants for 2024 #1, 2024 #2 CCMG and 2025 #2 CCMG, Invoice 24604 and 24605, in the amount of \$2,742.00.

P.O. 2810 to Heinold & Feller for HUQVARNA 24HP 61 Zero Turn Mower, Invoice 3126932, in the amount of \$6,099.00.

Legal Updates – Town Attorney Justin Schramm

Town Attorney Justin Schramm provided a comprehensive explanation of the unsafe building enforcement process, specifically in response to recent public and Council inquiries about delays in addressing deteriorating properties. Upon initial identification, a notice letter is served-by statute, the town must allow 30 to 60 days for the issue to be resolved. If there is no resolution, the town must obtain evidence, often requiring entry to property via investigative warrant. Once evidence is collected, the Town files a formal complaint to declare the structure unsafe. A hearing is set, typically another 30-60 days out. Altogether, the best-case timeline is six months, assuming non-compliance from the property owner.

Many properties in violation are in severe disrepair, often abandoned, under trusts, or owned by banks, making tracking ownership difficult. If the Town must carry out demolition or repairs, the cost can reach tens of thousands of dollars per property – as seen in one recent case that would cost over \$100,000 to demolish.

Additional Business Deemed Necessary by the Council:

Nothing Presented.

Payment of Claims:

Councilmember Lewandowski made a motion to pay Payment of Claims in the amount of \$240,662.79. Councilmember Banks seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 P.M.



John Rowe, Council President

Attest:



Andrew J. Rowe, Clerk-Treasurer

Next regular scheduled meeting – Monday, June 16, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.