

JUNE 4, 2025

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Those present:

Jim Smith	Carrie Mugford	Cam Kissinger	Maddie Schultz
Laura Rager	Nate Birch	Dave McVicker	Heather Cruz
Allen Miracle	Matt Mize	Shannon Carter	Julie Garber
Gary Montel	Ryan Shock	Chris Harrison	Dan Krouse
Chalmer Tobias	Craig Walters	Zach Benedict	Cynthia Johnson
Adam Penrod	Jennifer Hotchkiss	Alex Downard	David Unhoch

Those absent: None. A quorum was attained.

The June meeting of the North Manchester Town Council was held at the Public Safety Building, 709 W. Main Street, North Manchester, Indiana, on June 4, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., pursuant to notice duly given in accordance with the rules of the Council. The meeting was called to order by Council President Jim Smith, who presided.

**MINUTES**

Minutes of the 05/07/25 meeting were presented for approval. Motion to approve the minutes as presented: Rager/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously.

**VISITOR COMMENTS**

David Unhoch, 106 S First Street, notified council that Quality Quick Lube is still parking vehicles in a way that obstructs entry into his garage.

Dan Krouse, 609 Meadow Lane, expressed his support for the wastewater bond ordinances being considered for approval. The Eel River is an important asset to the community and the families that live here. Krouse feels these ordinances, and the associated infrastructure work being done, will keep the Eel River clean and viable for generations to come. Krouse is thankful to live in a town with proactive and responsible leadership that does the work that needs to be done to keep our town and natural resources in great shape.

**UPDATES**

1. Learn More Center – Cynthia Johnson, Director of Education, gave a presentation highlighting updates to facilities and programs. Wabash County has seen the number of working age residents without a high school diploma drop in half in recent years. LMC is excited to offer career exploration programs such as medical assistant, industrial maintenance, and construction certificates. These programs are in addition to high school equivalency and English proficiency programs. An emphasis is placed on reducing barriers to education but also planning ahead for future hurdles to advanced education. The new facility at 1100 Cass Street will be ready in the next few weeks. The facility will feature flexible furniture to allow for individual teaching experiences. A full course offering will begin in August in the fully remodeled facility. Johnson acknowledged that the fees for a full course of education is around \$4,000 per student. President Jim Smith commented that the move to the new facility has been a long process and it's good to see the plans come to fruition. Johnson confirmed that there will continue to be services offered in North Manchester for residents in and around the area.

2. Downtown Revitalization Plan – Zach Benedict, MKM Design, gave a brief overview of the finalized downtown revitalization plan. This plan has been in the works for many months and has had significant input from the 11 person planning committee. The plan is structured by guidance from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs to be a guide for the next 10 years of strategic investment in downtown. During the cursory review, 46 downtown buildings were analyzed and it was determined that the downtown buildings are generally in good shape. Benedict emphasized the desire to facilitate intergenerational living. North Manchester has a large population of older residents and a university, making a unique situation for residential development. There are three key recommendations in the report. First, is develop a regional park attraction along the Eel River in Eel River Commons. Second, is to redefine the rivers edge by redeveloping the area behind downtown. Benedict remarked that the historic downtown is adjacent to the river, but it's as if the two have never met. It is recommended to create cohesion between the two to leverage a missed opportunity. The third recommendation is to develop further housing options in the downtown corridor. The next step will be design and development recommendations for the three key concepts. Town Manager Adam Penrod stated that this planning grant opened opportunities for downtown revitalization grants of up to 2 million dollars. The plan also helps with the implementation of the 2015 comprehensive plan. Council Vice President Laura Rager noted what an exciting time it is for the development of Eel River Commons and the relationship to downtown businesses.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

President Jim Smith opened a public hearing on an alley vacation. Town Manager Penrod stated that a request has been received to close an alley to accommodate development of new housing referred to as College Row. This development is one of the four projects under the Lilly Community College Collaboration grant. The alley in question is the north half of the north/south alley in the 500 block of College Ave. The requested closure is only to the intersection of the east/west mid-block alley. Utilities were investigated and no utilities are located in the area to be vacated. Penrod noted that Manchester University owns all surrounding property so the vacated property will simply be redistributed when the replat is approved. Alex Downard stated that the housing developer is College Row LLC which is owned by Wabash County Development Corporation. Downard described the plan for the shared wall duplex townhomes. The alley vacation has previously been approved by the Plan Commission. Smith asked for additional comments. Hearing none, the public hearing was closed.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Wastewater Bond Ordinances, GO #2 & #3, Second Reading – Town Manager Penrod explained that general ordinances #2 and #3 go hand-in-hand to finance wastewater improvements, pay for unfunded EPA mandates, and satisfy the IDEM long term control plan agreed order. Ordinance #2 is for Rural Development funding for the majority of the project as it is designed right now. There may be additional funding required to finish the last long term control plan project. In that case, SRF funding will be sought which is ordinance #3. Having this ordinance in place will make future funding quicker and smoother. Penrod commented that the not to exceed amount in the ordinances is well above anticipated costs, which prevents having to redo financing if the project scope changes. Every effort is being made to ensure the town receives the best financing through the most effective avenue. Clerk-Treasurer Carrie Mugford read GO #2 and #3 by title only. Motion to approve GO #2 and #3 on second reading: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously. Penrod requested council consider moving to third reading to stay in compliance with the approved bond anticipation note timeline. Motion to suspend the rules and move to third reading: Rager/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously. Motion

to approve GO #2 and #3 on third reading: Rager/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously. Motion to reinstate the rules: Rager/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. One Time Alcohol Allowance (Hispanic Heritage Days) GO #4, First Reading – Town Manager Penrod stated that a request was received from Mackenzie Coulter-Kern, Wabash County Diversity Coalition, to allow alcohol at Warvel Park for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Hispanic Heritage Days Festival. The festival is planned for September 12 from 4:00-11:00 pm. Heather Cruz, Manchester Alive, confirmed that The Franklin mobile bar, through Market Street Grill, will be serving in an enclosed area. Cruz noted that the event was well received last year at Warvel Park and they are excited to hold it there again. Clerk-Treasurer Mugford read GO #4 verbatim. Motion to approve GO #4 on first reading: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously. Smith commented that several years ago the council decided to consider each request for alcohol on town property separately by requiring an ordinance to allow the event, and since then there has been no problems with any of the approved events.

2. Commonwealth Engineering Contract for Wastewater Project Design – Town Manager Penrod explained that this contract follows GO #2 and #3 to design the proposed wastewater infrastructure projects. Commonwealth has been great to work with and look forward to continuing working with them throughout the course of these projects. The contract being considered is for all services in the amount of \$3,073,539. This is a large contract but it is a large undertaking. There will be a year's worth of design before bidding and 18 months to construction. This includes LTCP project #9 and all improvements at the wastewater plant that will set up the plant for many years of operation. Chris Harrison reiterated that this contract is everything to get these projects going which is a significant amount of work. Once approved by both parties, this contract will be submitted to Rural Development for their approval. Motion to approve the Commonwealth Engineering Contract for wastewater project design: Rager/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.

3. Wabash County Diversity Coalition Funding Request – Town Manager Penrod stated that a request for \$10,000 was submitted by Mackenzie Coulter-Kern to support operations of the Wabash County Diversity Coalition. The request was complete with financials and budget information. Julie Garber noted that there has been a lot of learning in the first year as the needs and wants of the community have become evident. There are lots of requests for translation services, whether it's printed forms or talking to local offices. Penrod confirmed that the services offered by Coulter-Kern have been helpful in the utility office. There are also diverse groups of people who meet to discuss their sense of belonging in the community and entrepreneurial opportunities. Councilmember Allen Miracle asked if there have been any surprises uncovered about the community. Garber acknowledged that the Belonging Group testimonials have been interesting to listen to. There was an overall sense of acceptance but there were stories of encounters with people that were less than welcoming. Garber stated that Coulter-Kern is leading a committee through the process to make Wabash County a certified Welcoming Community for all people. This funding request will be considered and discussed at the next regularly scheduled council meeting.

4. College Row Housing Alley Vacation Request, GO#5, First Reading – Town Manager Penrod stated that this ordinance goes along with the public hearing from earlier in the meeting and is the official action to close the alley. Clerk-Treasurer Mugford read general ordinance #5 verbatim. Motion to approve GO #5 on first reading: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously. Penrod requested the council consider moving to third reading considering there were no comments during the public hearing and to keep the development schedule progressing. Motion to suspend

the rules and move to third reading: Rager/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously. Mugford read GO#5 by title only. Motion to approve GO #5 on third reading: Montel/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously. Motion to reinstate the rules: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously.

5. Baker Tilly Wastewater Financing Service Contract – Town Manager Penrod acknowledged that in order to get the wastewater funding that has been discussed the town needs a financial advisor. This contract is will be paid through bond proceeds. There will be a parity report (\$6,000), the cost of issuance for bond anticipation notes (\$20,000), and the cost of issuance for the Rural Development bond (\$100,000). This is for all services to get project financing in place. Motion to approve the Baker Tilly contract for wastewater financing: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously.

6. Fire Department Request to Purchase 6 SCBA Units – Clerk-Treasurer Mugford stated that the fire department has completed 2 years of a 5 year plan to incrementally replace all SCBA units. At the end of five years all fire fighters will have new equipment. The quotes presented to the council are to purchase the third installment of 6 sets of gear. Quotes were received as follows: Hoosier Fire Equipment - \$69,855.30 and MES - \$76,006.32. Fire Chief Cam Kissinger recommends approving the purchase from Hoosier Fire Equipment using LOIT – Public Safety funds. Motion to approve the purchase of 6 SCBA units: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously. Rager asked about the life span of this type of equipment. Kissinger confirmed that it would last beyond 15 years.

7. Library Board Appointment – Council President Smith requested council consider reappointing Michael Leckrone to the North Manchester Public Library board with the term beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2029. Motion to approve the reappointment: Rager/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously.

8. JPR/LPA INDOT Engineering Contract for Manchester Mile – Town Manager Penrod explained that JPR will be hired to be the INDOT approved LPA and engineer for the Manchester Mile project utilizing Stellar Pathways federal dollars. Stellar Pathways is contributing \$1.5 million dollars to the project. This contract is not to exceed \$236,000 and will cover services including design, construction documents, permitting, utility coordination, bidding, environmental review, and historic investigation. Penrod recommends approving the JPR contract for the Manchester Mile project. Motion to approve JPR contract for Manchester Mile paid through the Lilly grant: Rager/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.

## **DEPARTMENTAL & COMMISSION REPORTS**

Police Dept. – Report included in packet. Police Chief Nate Birch reported that May had a lower call volume. Officer Cody Egner attended and completed fire arms instructor course. Chasity Lester has been hired to fill the records clerk position. Birch reported that a recent storm damaged the generator and HVAC system in the Public Safety Building. The Dilling Group will be installing a new control panel to stabilize the temperature throughout the building.

Fire Dept. – Report included in packet. Fire Chief Cam Kissinger stated that ladder testing was conducted May 7 & 8. All equipment passed. Aaron Gearhart has been added as a relief driver for the department. Fireworks will be July 4 with a rain date on July 5. Kissinger was proud to report that the Wabash County Community Foundation approved a funding request to replace two 25-year-old thermal imaging cameras. The \$8,200 contribution will be used to replace the equipment in the near future.

Building Commissioner –

Plan Commission – Building Commissioner Dave McVicker reported that the Plan Commission will meet June 23 to consider the phase 1 plat amendment for College Row housing.

Board of Zoning Appeals – BZA met on May 27.

Traffic Commission –

Parks & Recreation – Report in packet. Park Director Jennifer Hotchkiss reported that summer day camp started last week with numbers averaging 29 campers per day. The campers will be utilizing the Center for History again this summer. Hotchkiss reported that Tim McLaughlin was able to raise all the funds for pickleball courts including the Patronicity grant that will be awarded. McLaughlin is continuing to fundraise for lights and additional amenities. Pre-construction has begun with the street department taking down trees on the site. Ground-breaking is scheduled for early July.

Town Life Center –

Tree Advisory – Minutes included in packet.

Grow Wabash County –

Redevelopment Commission – Town Manager Penrod reported that the RDC will meet June 11 to consider contributing to the Holderman Park project being completed by the American Legion. The contribution will go towards the local match portion of a Patronicity grant.

MEDCOR – No meeting.

Solid Waste – Minutes included in packet.

Storm Water Board – Town Manager Penrod reported the Stormwater Board will meet in June to discuss the proposed stormwater plan for College Row housing.

Public Works – Street Superintendent Craig Walters reported that storm cleanup was completed on Monday. It took 11 loads of chips to clean up all the debris.

Water Superintendent Ryan Shock reported that the water main under the river near the water plant is installed and pressure tested and samples are complete. The water portion of the State Road 114 bridge project is almost complete. The two antennas/collectors for the new water meters were installed on the water towers this week. Water meter installation should start as soon as all accompanying installation hardware is delivered.

Wastewater Superintendent Shannon Carter reported that unfortunately there is no progress on the Beckley Street lift station. This project was scheduled to take a week and has now been over 2 months. Upgrades have been completed at the Clear Creek lift station to save on electricity. Several broken down stormwater catch basins have been replaced.

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Town Manager Adam Penrod reported that the State Road 114 bridge will be closed June 9 through June 13 for utility street crossings. This should be the last full closure of the bridge.

Penrod reported three repeat street closures that have been approved:

Manchester Alive closing Market Street from Seventh to Ninth on September 12 from 4:00-9:00 for the Hispanic Heritage Festival.

American Legion closing the parking lot for the car show on June 13 from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm.  
First Brethren Church annual block party on July 4 closing the alley adjacent to their property from 8:00 am to 11:00 pm.

**CLERK-TREASURER'S REPORT**

1. Financial Reports – Approved subject to audit.
2. Claims - The Town claim docket totaling \$639,530.55 and the Public Works docket totaling \$258,118.87 were submitted for payment. Motion to pay our obligations: Tobias/Rager. Motion passes unanimously.

**VISITOR COMMENTS**

None.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Jim Smith acknowledged the long agenda and even longer meeting. It takes a lot of work, but Smith is pleased that the town is making positive improvements and doing forward thinking things. Smith appreciates everyone's contributions.

The next regularly scheduled town council meeting will be July 2.

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.

TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN OF N. MANCHESTER

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Jim Smith, President

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Laura Rager, Vice-President

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Allen Miracle

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Gary Montel

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Chalmer Tobias

ATTEST

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Carrie Mugford, Clerk-Treasurer