

DECEMBER 3, 2025

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Those present:

Laura Rager	Adam Penrod	Craig Walters	Maddie Schultz
Allen Miracle	Carrie Mugford	Jennifer Hotchkiss	Cam Kissinger
Gary Montel	Matt Mize	Shannon Carter	Miriah Tobias
Chalmer Tobias	Nate Birch	Dave McVicker	

Those absent: Jim Smith. A quorum was attained.

The December meeting of the North Manchester Town Council was held at the Public Safety Building, 709 W. Main Street, North Manchester, Indiana, on December 3, 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 Vice-President Laura Rager, who presided.

MINUTES

None.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. 2026 Salary Ordinance, GO#9, Second Reading – Clerk-Treasurer Carrie Mugford read general ordinance #9 by title only on second reading. This ordinance defines the compensation, including benefits, of all town employees and elected officials. Motion to approve GO #9 on second reading: Tobias/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.
2. Stormwater Ordinance Update, GO#10, Second Reading – Clerk-Treasurer Mugford read general ordinance #10 by title only on second reading. Motion to approve GO#10 on second reading: Tobias/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Additional Appropriation/Budget Reduction for Home Rule Funds, Resolution #6 – Clerk-Treasurer Mugford read resolution #6 verbatim. This resolution is done annually, as needed, to increase or decrease appropriations in home ruled funds. Mugford explained that appropriation reductions are used to reduce the current year appropriation so that the cash in the fund can be appropriated in the next year's budget. Additional appropriations are required when the original appropriations were not sufficient, usually due to unexpected revenue that is spent. This year a reduction of \$110,000 was requested in the revolving loan fund. Additional appropriations were requested in: Warvel Park Donation (\$22,100), TLC Operating (\$9,505), and Fire Equipment (\$6,248). Motion to approve resolution #6: Miracle/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously.
2. Creation of Marketing and Events Coordinator Employee – Town Manager Adam Penrod requested permission to create a new Community Engagement and Communications Coordinator position. Penrod explained that with the addition of more parks and the desire to hold more community events, the town needs a central hub to coordinate logistics such as road closures, insurance, and utilities. This position would also market and promote town amenities, collaborate

with other entities and service organizations, and manage digital platforms and public communication strategies. A committee of 2 council members, Mugford, and Penrod will finalize the job description before bringing a recommendation back to council for approval. Council Vice-President Laura Rager agreed, noting the need to plan for utilizing and marketing assets like the new Eel River Commons. Motion to approve the creation of a Community Engagement & Communications Coordinator position: Miracle/Montel. Motion passes unanimously.

3. Employee Handbook Approval Resolution #7 – Town Manager Penrod presented an updated employee handbook, noting the previous version was adopted in 2003. Penrod and Town Hall staff have been working with HR Unlimited for several months to create this handbook. The updated version addresses outdated policies and aligns with state and federal laws. One of the changes Penrod recommended was consolidating sick and personal time into Paid Time Off (PTO). While the days would reduce from 13 to 10 annually, the PTO would allow more flexibility because there is no stipulation on how PTO is used. Also, Penrod recommended a tiered system of payout for accrued PTO at the time of employee separation based on years of service and current wages. This is a much better benefit to the retiring employees from the \$10 per 8 hours of sick time that is in the current handbook. Clerk-Treasurer Mugford read resolution #7 verbatim. Councilmember Allen Miracle made a motion to approve resolution #7 with an amendment to reinstate the 3 additional PTO days, making PTO 104 hours instead of 80, with fire truck drivers getting an additional 24 hours, and allowing a maximum of 80 hours of carryover every year. This would make the new policy match more closely to the former policy. Motion to approve a resolution adopting a new employee handbook, resolution #7, as amended: Miracle/Tobias. Motion passes unanimously.

4. 2025 Utility Account Write-Offs – Clerk-Treasurer Mugford presented the annual list of utility accounts for write off consideration. Mugford assured council that the 4 accounts listed have been thoroughly vetted and are not collectable. The utility staff does an excellent job tracking down customers with past due balances, including using the TRECS system to garnish state tax returns. The total amount to be written off is \$553.16. Two of the accounts have been in TRECS for a few years and have not been matched. One of the customers is deceased. Rager commented that the utility office bills over 2200 customers every month and writing off 4 accounts is very good. Motion to approve the annual list of utility accounts to write off totaling \$553.16: Tobias/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.

5. 2026 Calendar of Meetings – Clerk-Treasurer Mugford presented a calendar of 2026 proposed meeting dates and asked if there are any conflicts. Hearing no significant reasons to change, the regularly scheduled town council meetings will continue to be the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm.

DEPARTMENTAL & COMMISSION REPORTS

Police Dept. – Report included in packet. Police Chief Nate Birch reported that the new digital radios are in use and working clearly. The Public Safety Building generator and transfer switch are fixed and running properly, allowing the building to be fully powered in case of storms. Several officers recently completed interdiction and intoxication training. Operation Pullover will be active for the coming calendar year.

Fire Dept. – Report included in packet. Fire Chief Cam Kissinger reported that the volunteers retained the same officers for the coming year with the addition of Dave Cordill as lieutenant. The department will be providing classroom space for a Chester Township fire academy class starting February 3. This class is for area fire departments and runs through June.

Building Commissioner – Report included in packet.

Plan Commission – Building Commissioner Dave McVicker reported that there will be a meeting December 22 to consider a variance request.

Board of Zoning Appeals –

Traffic Commission –

Parks & Recreation – Report in packet. Park and Recreation Director Jennifer Hotchkiss reported that the dehumidification system has been reprogrammed to retain the appropriate settings during a power outage. This should make the whole system be more stable and efficient when it's not resetting to factory settings.

Town Life Center –

Tree Advisory – Minutes included in packet. Dave Kreps reported concerns regarding the number of trees being removed, noting 18 were removed for the Manchester Mile project and another 20 are pending removal, most of which are Bradford pears. The Tree Commission is working to increase awareness of the Walrod Tree program to fund tree replacements where a tree was taken down or has never been planted. The commission is also working to amend the Walrod guidelines to ensure an appropriate tree selection for specific locations. Rager asked Kreps if the committee sends letters to homeowners where a tree was removed notifying them of the Walrod program. Kreps confirmed that is one of the strategies they are considering.

Grow Wabash County –

Redevelopment Commission – Town Manager Penrod reported that the RDC did not meet; however, two RDC members met with Wabash County Development Corporation representatives. The discussion included appropriate due diligence and timelines for phase 2 of the housing development. Penrod confirmed that Chester Heights is 2/3 built out with more houses planned in the near future. The group will meet again in the spring to work towards a development agreement.

MEDCOR – Town Manager Penrod reported that Innomed has broken ground on their new building in the industrial park. The goal is to complete as much as possible during good weather.

Solid Waste – Nothing to add. Councilmember Gary Montel reported that collection fees increased about \$20,000 this year.

Storm Water Board – Town Manager Penrod reported that the Storm Water Board met and approved the Innomed storm water plan.

Public Works – Street Superintendent Craig Walters reported that leaf pickup has been halted by heavy snow. They had hauled 140 loads of leaves, but estimate 10-20 loads are still out there to be picked up. Walters reported 75 loads of snow were removed from downtown this morning. Wastewater Superintendent Shannon Carter reported that road cuts on Sycamore and Ninth Streets have been repaired.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Adam Penrod reported that North Manchester was awarded a Community Crossing Match Grant of \$510,000 for the Manchester Mile project. This project will include improvements along College Avenue from Wayne to Market and then East Fourth Street from Market to Bond. This is great news since many communities received less than usual and many other communities received nothing this round. This phase of the Manchester Mile will be bid out in late December and a recommendation will be brought to council for approval in February.

The South Market Street bridge is expected to be closed in less than a week. The closure is expected to last nine months. Businesses on the south side of downtown have been notified of the alley closure and changes to trash pickup. Penrod emphasized again that the town does not own any bridges and that this is a county project. Emergency services are working with neighboring fire stations to ensure there is minimal lapse in coverage around town.

CLERK-TREASURER'S REPORT

1. Financial Reports – Approved subject to audit.
2. Claims - The Town claim docket totaling \$633,475.41 and the Public Works docket totaling \$508,878.65 were submitted for payment. Motion to pay our obligations: Tobias/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.
3. Annual Anti-nepotism Attestation – Clerk-Treasurer Mugford asked council members to sign the annual certifications that they are not hiring or contracting with a direct relative. These forms stay in the audit file for review during an audit.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

The next regularly scheduled town council meeting will be December 17.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN OF N. MANCHESTER

Jim Smith, President

Allen Miracle

Laura Rager, Vice-President

Gary Montel

ATTEST

Chalmer Tobias

Carrie Mugford, Clerk-Treasurer