

MAY 20, 2025

The Town Council met in a regular session at the Town Hall at 5:30 p.m.

President Smotherman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present in person were: SMOTHERMAN, ARNEBERG, CLARK, WEINZAPFEL and WILLIAMS along with Attorney, Nathan Maudlin and Billing Clerk – Carmen Naas.

Visitors in attendance: Martha Raske, Alvin Blaylock, Jan Kahle, Charles Bandy, Pat Wilson, Jo Briant, Eric Sanders, Diane Sanders, Jeanne Maudlin, David Vonderscher, Caroline Williams, and Audra Lambert.

Councilperson Weinzapfel made and Williams seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2025 Regular Meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Williams reported that the town crew has been prepping trails for rock delivery. Burr Oak removed the downed tree behind the Atheneum. He stated a light was reported out in Murphy Park that is scheduled to be fixed. The crew has been working on the downed tree at the cemetery. American Eagle removed and pruned the contracted hazardous trees. They will be returning to town to grind out the stumps. The online reservations for camping are working well. The Park's Board is reviewing plans for renovating the Murphy Park bathrooms to include family and ADA compliance.

Councilperson Arneberg reported she had attended the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership meeting. They are working on an Art and Cultural Regional plan for SW Indiana and were interested in New Harmony's needs. She also met with the Posey County Community Foundation and learned of new endowment funds becoming available we may be interested in. The Community Grant Cycle has opened and will be open through August 24, 2025. These grants range from \$5,000 to 15,000, and they would like to see applications from New Harmony. Arneberg also attended the Indiana University Center for Rural Development Conference. This organization has 10 people on staff and assists rural communities with services. She learned about the Lilly Endowment for rural communities and congregations. Lilly matches funds for things such as food banks. This is a partnership between communities and a sponsoring church.

Councilperson Arneberg reported that the abandoned trailer on East Street, therefore the owner would have their liens dismissed as previously voted on.

Councilperson Arneberg asked the council to vote on the new website platform which is through the state and free for the basic website. Councilperson Weinzapfel made the motion to add this to the agenda for vote and Clark seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried. Arneberg then made the motion to use the state website platform for the town. Clark seconded it. Arneberg reminded us that this website will not house online billing – that will be a third-party vendor. Weinzapfel recommended four forms be put online: Building permit application, tree concerns, golf cart registration and maybe event permits. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smotherman stated that the Town Marshal will be relocating to a town building located by Koester's. The Marshal is going to start focusing on abandoned vehicles. The council is setting fines. Violation letters will be sent by the Marshal prior to fines being given. Smotherman announced the Deaconess Mobile Breast Clinic will be in New Harmony June 30, 2025, from 8:00am to 2:00 pm. They will be located at the corner of Brewery and Tavern.

President Smotherman announced the budgeting process for the town has started. In December 2023 the town funds were \$3,265,939. As of May 2025, our funds are \$3,138,962, a difference of \$126,000, the majority of which has been spent on the sewer plant. With the town's investments this amount is \$4,329,917. We have secured Baker Tilly to complete a financial study to help us review the amount we should be investing effectively.

Councilperson Weinzapfel was happy to announce that Wilson Auction is refurbishing all the flag poles in the town to recognize their 40 years of business. The town thanks them for this contribution. Mosquito spraying will happen this Friday, weather permitting. The town crew is going to be certified in the application of spraying. Weinzapfel acknowledged the frustration around road repairs. She stated that to effectively apply asphalt the temperature must be the same for a certain amount of time and incur no rain. She is looking into Deig Brothers servicing our streets going forward.

Councilperson Clark mentioned that some residents received incorrect utility bills. There were errors in the feed from our old meter system. He apologized for the inconvenience and stated that we were actively fixing the issue.

Councilperson Clark reported that the sewer plant flooded last Tuesday night. A sump pump went out which has been replaced. The junction boxes got wet – when dried out the pump started again. An electrician looked at the electric and alarm system. There is a pipe that discharges into the river that is full of roots. A firm is coming next Tuesday to assess the pipe. It was suggested that the firm also assess the drainpipes at the cemetery. Clark applied for a grant to conduct an overall study of the sewer plant. The grant will cover 90% of the costs for this study that will look for opportunities for modernization and efficiency.

Councilperson Clark asked the council to reserve June 3, 2025, for a special meeting to meet with Baker Tilly and to review proposed ordinance revisions. The council will also need to set up a special fund, which requires an ordinance to take in fines.

Martha Raske spoke in support of the Comprehensive Plan. She said it addresses housing, transportation, utility infrastructure, recreation, cultural assets, and economic development. She's read the Plan and attended most of the meetings. She said the plan is intentional and aspirational. It sets out a clear plan for future actions and is beautifully written. She thanked the council.

Alvin Blaylock stated that the Masonic lodge received a large gas bill.

Jeanne Maudlin wanted to recognize the Park Board for the success of the online camping program. Last year the Murphy Park campground brought in around \$200, and this year \$887 was collected. The town now has a lot of information to help ensure safety, such as license plate numbers. She wanted to specifically call out Andy Batt for his work on this program and Tom Williams for his support.

David Vonderscher asked the town to consider additional help in keeping the town mowed. President Smotherman said that he had discussed this with the crew and thought they should hire additional help for the summer. Vonderscher thanked the crew for getting the gravel to the cemetery.

Audra Lambert said that she had a neighbor that received a high bill too and because of mobility issues did not get to town hall to report.

Caroline Williams reported some local cars driving too fast on Church Street. She suggested a radar light. President Smotherman said that he and the Marshal were aware of these drivers.

Diane Sanders, representing One New Harmony, was concerned that the trails would not be ready for the Firefly Festival and should they have a plan B. Councilperson Williams assured her the trails will be ready.

Jan Kahle announced the deadline to order a picket fence in Murphy Park will be the end of this month. The last order will go in the first week of June.

President Smotherman asked the Town Marshal to discuss ongoing golf cart registration. Marshal stated that letters will go out to residents that have previously registered carts but have not yet registered for 2025. Residents should call the Marshal to have their cart inspected. The cost is now \$50.

Councilperson Arneberg stated that Nathan Maudlin and Michael Guard have composed an agreement between One New Harmony and the Town for the WIFI grant money. The WIFI grant dollars were given to One New Harmony to administer the funds, who will then report back to the council. Routers will be installed in local businesses to increase the WIFI for visitors and festival vendors' usage. The businesses that participate will have their WIFI bills supplemented by this fund. - \$40 per month. Councilperson Weinzapfel made the motion to approve the agreement between One New Harmony and the Town. Clark seconded it. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smotherman reviewed the Antique Show and Cruise Inn permit for June 14-15, 2025. The primary locations are Ribeyre Gym and Main Street. There will be some street closures for the event. Councilperson Clark made the motion to approve the permit. Arneberg seconded it. Smotherman did not vote. The rest were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smotherman reviewed the permit application for the Family Matters of Posey County Walkathon. It will be held June 18, 2025, from 6:30 to 7:45 AM in Murphy Park. Councilperson Clark made the motion to approve the permit. Arneberg seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Councilperson Clark stated that there was no change to the Salary Ordinance as reflected in the agenda. The proposed salary changes were in compliance with the current ordinance. Clark's proposal covered the following increases:

Johnathon Webber increase to \$29.50 an hour

Terry Brown increase to \$20.75
Christian Mills increase to \$20.75
Duell LaMar increase to \$16.50
Robert Vanlaningham to \$11.34

Councilperson Clark made the motion to approve the increases to be effective June 1, 2025. Williams seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Smotherman reported that the Clerk-Treasurer is working with United Fidelity in securing new CDs when our current CDs mature. Smotherman clarified that Baker Tilly will not give us recommendations on how to invest our funds but will advise us on how much to invest. Baker Tilly recommended how much the Town should keep in reserve.

Agenda item Town Fines – Ordinance will not be addressed in this meeting.

Councilperson Williams made a motion to approve the purchase of rock and gravel not to exceed \$7,000. Weinzapfel seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Williams stated that he secured Bur Oak to remove the downed tree behind the Atheneum. Bur Oak could do it immediately. Councilperson Clark made the motion to approve Bur Oak removing the tree in an amount not to exceed \$2,000. Weinzapfel seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilperson Weinzapfel made a motion to approve the claims. Clark seconded it. Weinzapfel made a correction that a bill would need to be resubmitted excluding the sales tax. All were in favor. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Councilperson Clark made, and Williams seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Jeffrey Smotherman, President of Town Council

Attest:
Ann Huelsmann, Clerk Treasurer