

Town of Darmstadt, Indiana

SETTLED 1822

INCORPORATED 1973

Minutes of November 19th, 2024

These minutes are not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

TOWN COUNCIL

Eric Gries, Council President
Ray Engler, Council Member
Cecil Poag, Council Member
Crystal Kahre, Council Member

CLERK-TREASURER

Mallory Lowe
P.O. Box 20
Darmstadt, In 47618

Darmstadt Town Council President Eric Gries called the town meeting to order on Tuesday at 6:30pm. In attendance were Clerk-Treasurer Mallory Lowe, council members Ray Engler, Cecil Poag, Crystal Kahre and attorney Chandler Lacy.

Kahre made a motion, seconded by Engler to accept the minutes from last month's meetings. Motion passed 4-0 voice vote. Engler made a motion, seconded by Poag to accept last month's financial report. Motion passed by 4-0 voice vote. Engler made a motion, seconded by Poag to approve the accounts payable claims. Motion passed by 4-0 voice vote.

Clerk-Treasurer's Report

Mallory Lowe advised that she and Council attended the AIM Roundtable meeting in BOONVILLE on Oct 23rd. The next roundtable will be beginning of next year. The same week, Lowe also completed the 3-day State Board of Accounts online institute. Those sessions count towards the Clerk-Treasurer's required annual training credits. Lowe stated, as announced this summer, CenterPoint deleted all 99 of our accounts and we were unable to access our electric sewer pump bill to pay them. After several days and several phone calls, they finally found all of our accounts and made them active again. This month they just now reversed all the late fees and credited them back on all of the accounts, so thankfully Lowe won't have to pay those out of her personal pocket at the next audit. On Monday, Nov 4th Lowe advised that she renewed our Federal SAM registration which is required for our Federal ARPA Grant. It sets to expire each year at the end of November, Lowe completed all the necessary paperwork again. Lowe stated our registration is updated now, along with our unique entity ID and CAGE code which are also required. This allows us to remain active until the grant is closed out and audited. Lowe stated that the local community crossings grants were much easier to apply for and usually only required her a year or two of paperwork, but so far, this federal grant is quite complicated, involves several other agencies and has gone on for several years now. Lowe advised, this grant she brought in for Darmstadt, awarded us over \$300,000 but has also caused several years of added workload on her, than the State grants she has received for the same amount.

Lowe stated that Aaron is working on updating the sewer property files from the 80s, which for some reason, were all recorded by homeowner's names instead of property address. It's quite a project and Aaron has been working on it since last winter. Lowe noted that she's been working on the latest major project, which is adding an autopay program for our residents. This has been quite an ordeal between Old National Bank and Keystone Software and they are just getting started. They're requiring something called a NATCHA ACH file formats on the software systems that match with the US Treasury, that Mallory will additionally have to add to the list of billing duties each month as she runs the calculations and submits the NATCHA formatted file to the bank each month, through a special portal they will provide Mallory with, online. Mallory noted, this will be after she gathers all the bank account information from each resident who wants to participate in this program. The autopay costs the sewer dept a software setup fee of \$2,390. Then, Old National Bank will also charge the sewer utility a monthly fee of \$43 plus .35 cents per resident, over the first 50 accounts.

Old National Bank stated they will automatically debit these fees out of our sewer checking account each month based on the number of residents participating in the ACH program. There will also be an annual fee to Keystone software of \$1,000 from the Sewer Dept each year we have the ACH autopay program.

Lowe stated that the Darmstadt Sewer Utility gets absolutely nothing from this program and in fact it will cost our Sewer Utility quite a bit of money, just to give this extra added convenience, to our residents.

Mallory noted that last month, for October, The Town received \$29,006 in tax revenues and the towns expenditures were \$14,004. So, the town did ok for October. Lowe continued to stated that last month, for October, in the Sewer Utility, she brought in \$65,181 in revenue from the sewer bills, and there were expenditures of \$83,125 so we had about a \$17,000 loss in the sewer dept for October. So far, Year-to-Date the Darmstadt Sewer Utility has had a loss of \$96,263.

Lowe added that there is an inauguration ceremony for the newly elected county officials on January 1st at Noon in the Old National Events Plaza, council is to let Lowe know if they want to attend so she can make reservations.

Fire Dept Report

Brandon Zimmer read aloud his fire report that last month they had 10 runs inside the Darmstadt town limits, with carbon monoxide checks, 5 EMS calls, natural gas leak, and average response time 3.56 minutes.

Sheriff's Report

Sheriff Noah Robinson stated that he wanted to thank Darmstadt for working to setup an agreement to send the state opioid revenues to the county sheriff's department for use in their programs. Robinson stated that the attorneys are reviewing the documents Mallory sent over to him for this program, he thanked her and stated hopefully this will get put into action soon.

Maintenance Dept Report

Cecil Poag read aloud the Superintendents reports. There were 35 locates and 21 sewer calls since last meeting, installed deer crossing signs, cleaned up dead trees, installed Osha safety shower at the shop, the septic tank inspections and pumps are ahead of schedule and so are the sewer pump station inspections. The county is responsible for all the bridges in our town and they are looking to replace the bridge on Old State Road near the 4H center in the future. The salt and brine are both ready to go for adverse weather.

Old Business

1. EWSU Mandate Charges Update

Attorney Chandler Lacy noted he will get with Josh Claybourn on this.

2. EWSU Mag Meter Calibration update

Attorney Chandler Lacy noted he will get with Josh Claybourn on this.

3. Summer Sprinkling/Portable Meter Ordinance Draft

Eric Gries advised that the council was open to reinstating the program but that they wanted to make sure it was a good decision for the entire town. Gries stated he's open to it if its timewise feasible and financially feasible.

Poag stated that he wants to reinstate the summer averaging, but as Lowe stated to him, we need council to put in policies, write them out, have forms and stay consistent. Poag advised that he prepared some policies, and forms. Lowe stated that, if she reinstates the summer averaging, with this new council, she would like to use the software program for consistency and fairness, but she had concerns on the software's capabilities, particularly when Keystone stated that some residents would not be able to participate if they didn't meet usage requirements, she thought it should be fairer to the residents.

Ray Engler stated that the next step is to have Josh write up the proper ordinances and then he would need to sit down with the software company and Mallory to see exactly how much more work this will be adding to her plate.

Carol Schlump asked if the sewer department is losing money, why would we restart a program that caused a loss before.

Lowe stated that she offered summer averaging for 15 years for our residents, the sewer utility continued to lose money, the council terminated the summer averaging program and then Council raised the sewer rates 4 times in 3 years.

New Business

1. Autopay Option for Sewer Dept Billing

Lowe noted that the bank and Keystone are working together to get the formats and processes together.

2. New Town Website

Engler noted that the new website is now launched and the meetings are now being live streamed and saved online for residents to view. Engler advised there are more documents being uploaded to make available to the public.

Attorney Comments

No further comments

Board Members Comments

Crystal Kahre advised that she attended the solid waste program and they are planting trees and doing different things in the county. Kahre noted that they are happy with the tree program and working the ash bore problem.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34pm

Attest:

Mallory Lowe

Clerk-Treasurer
