

# **Town of Darmstadt, Indiana**

SETTLED 1822

INCORPORATED 1973

## **Minutes of February 25th, 2025**

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 Josh Claybourn.

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

### **Clerk-Treasurer's Report**

Mallory Lowe stated she has been in contact with Katelyn at Reedy, who is currently working on the RDA's annual report and bond calculations for the debt report. Lowe advised she and Katelyn decided to include the same information in both reports regarding the debt on the Old State land. Lowe advised that she entered all the capital assets last week and now only needs to conduct final reviews before submitting the reports to the state through the Gateway program. Lowe collaborated with Larry Tippin, the CPA, to calculate the depreciation for streets and storm drainage, as this was a new addition to the capital assets. Last month, Lowe noted, the town received tax revenues of \$30,245, while expenditures totaled \$42,245, resulting in a net deficit of \$12,000. Lowe advised that during the first quarter of the year, all payroll is paid from the Town Fund and not the Sewer Fund. Maintenance payroll will begin being deducted from the Sewer Fund in April. Last month, for the Sewer Utility, sewer bills generated \$54,698 in January, and the sewer department spent \$48,252 for a difference of \$6,446.

Lowe released five sewer liens. The 20 new liens recorded in January have been turned over to the county for collection through the property tax bills of those individuals. Payments for these liens are expected in June and December. Lowe advised that the first autopay for the sewer department went smoothly overall. Although a few customers submitted incorrect account numbers, the process functioned well, and as of this week, 108 customers have signed up for autopay out of the 550 sewer accounts. Lowe has also entered the necessary codes for the customers who wanted to participate in the summer averaging calculations, with 15 individuals signing up for that program.

A new sewer tap is being installed just outside the town limits for the Rexings at 301 W Inglefield Road, Lowe stated. The county contacted Mallory to confirm that the installation remains outside the town limits, as one of the lots is less than an acre. Their minor plat and subdivision review is scheduled for March 3rd with the county.

Mallory Lowe received the final documentation from the last contractor she was waiting for regarding the W-9s. All the 1099 forms have been completed and sent to contractors for tax purposes. A March 1st deadline is approaching to complete the Video Franchise Fee Report for the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission. Lowe stated she plans to finish that report after submitting the annual report to the state.

Additionally, she will work on preparing and mailing out the wipes letter project. This letter includes useful information aimed at saving the town money and will be sent to all 550 residents connected to the sewer system.

Mallory Lowe stated she is also working and preparing to send out well user affidavits to the 61 well users, who must provide a signed and notarized affidavit stating how many people live in their home if they are eligible for the discounted well user rate. This information is needed to determine the appropriate flat sewer fee for properties with wells.

Mallory Lowe has requested that Aaron and Mick conduct the annual inventory of all sewer billing accounts. This annual procedure ensures that every property is billed correctly for flat fees, city water fees, and well user fees. They will also check on any vacant homes using wells for occupancy, and verify that properties comply with regulations to ensure accurate billing. Lowe stated, that the superintendents are the only ones who know how the electricity is wired for each sewer pump station, which relates directly to which homes are to receive a flat electric fee or not.

Mallory noted that the next sewer bills, covering January usage, will be sent out at the end of next week. For those enrolled in autopay, payments will be processed on Monday, March 10th.

In addition, Mallory has completed the required annual bonds for the Redevelopment Commission members and finalized all the paperwork for the Trust Indiana Investment program. After obtaining signatures from Crystal and Eric, Mallory stated she submitted the documents to Cynthia Barger at Trust Indiana on February 12th. She received confirmation of receipt and that everything was completed correctly, and now they will wait to hear back from her.

### **Fire Dept Report**

Brandon Zimmer was unavailable tonight. Eric Gries read aloud the fire department report that Brandon sent to the town. Gries read that the fire department had 5 EMS Transport Calls, 2 Motor Vehicle Accident with Injury Calls, 2 Power line down/Electrical Calls, 2 Severe Weather Related Calls, 2 Smoke Alarm/HazMat Investigation, 1 Community Paramedic Call, Average response time for the month was 6m 34s.

### **Sheriff's Report**

Sheriff Deputy Johnson, stated that there was an animal complaint at St Joseph Ave and Orchard Road, 7 business checks, 4 accidents, 1 hit & run, 2 security checks, 1 death investigation, 1 accident with injury, 4 paper services and 2 burglar alarms. The VCSO had 58 extra patrols in Darmstadt, 2 traffic enforcements, 1 felony warrant and 1 citation.

### **Maintenance Dept Report**

Cecil Poag read aloud the superintendents' maintenance report of 25 service calls, patched pot holes, and septic tank inspections. Mick and Aaron will remove manholes to help cut down on our inflow and infiltration into our sewer system.

### **Old Business**

#### 1. EWSU Mandate Charges Update

Josh Claybourn stated he submitted a demand letter to EWSU and we still haven't heard back. Engler noted that he would like to move this along, Gries agreed. Engler suggested giving Reedy Financial one more week to get back with us.

#### 2. EWSU Mag Meter Calibration Update

Josh Claybourn stated this will be included in the mandate communications that he is working on.

#### 3. Summer Sprinkling/Portable Meter programs update

Josh Claybourn advised that council could have the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of the portable meter ordinance 2025-1.

Eric Gries advised on portable meter first reading and asked council for a motion on first reading. Poag made a motion, seconded by Engler, motion on first reading passed by 4-0 voice vote. Cecil Poag stated that he has a new form for residents to fill out when picking up a portable meter.

#### 4. Autopay Option for Sewer Dept Billing

Mallory Lowe advised that the autopay is going well so far. After 8 weeks, we've already had over a hundred residents sign up. She will continue to also print this option on the comment section of the sewer bills each month and continue to work with Old National Bank to run these payments through as smoothly as possible every month as she prepares the report for upload to ONB's treasury. Old National Bank will charge Darmstadt sewer for this service.

### **New Business**

#### 1. Well User Ordinance and fees

Council discussed current well user flat fees and that they would like to add the admin fee to all well users in addition to city water meter users. Mallory Lowe advised we need the old ordinance wording updated and to also add this admin fee if that is what the council decides. Josh Claybourn will rewrite the well user ordinance and update for next months meeting.

#### 2. Electric Flat Fees on Sewer Billing

Cecil Poag suggested raising the rate on the electric flat fees to mirror the 20% raise in electric rates that CenterPoint is beginning in March. Josh Claybourn will write an ordinance to increase our current electric flat fee of \$14.74 to mirror Centerpoint's rate hike of 20% which will put the new electric flat fees at \$17.69. Council discussed and will decide.

### **Attorney Comments**

No further comments

### **Board Members Comments**

No further comments

Meeting adjourned at 7:32pm

Attest:

Mallory Lowe

Clerk-Treasurer

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