



Town of Millersburg Town Council Meeting Minutes  
May 8, 2024

Attendees: MacKenzie Taylor, Dean Smith, Dana Rutter, Larry & Alice Randolph, Avery Ferguson, Matt King, Jon Schlarb, Jim Winkler, Addie Miller, Pricilla & Jeff Hile, Connie Oliphant, Josh Bowens, Amanda Garman, Hollie Bortz, Vernon Miller, Robert Roa, Skyler & Aaron Mullet, Brian Yoder, Kyle Herr, Sonia Ritter, Nate & Haley Wheeler.

Dean called the meeting to order.

Dean made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 24, 2024. Dana seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to adopt the meeting minutes.

**Maintenance:** Matt had Brian Yoder come up to the front near him. Matt acknowledged the flooding issue that is happening on Brian's property. Matt had some maps and showed Brian and explained with the newer tax business that came into town, County had approved those plans. Matt explained, we had an issue at Leon's business too back in the day and had to put a 22-inch tile across the road so the flooding would go in the appropriate direction. Matt assured Brian he is working on this. Not only will Matt have to get in contact with County but also with INDOT to see what can be done about the matter. Brian said, it's unimaginable the amount of run off water I'm getting from these businesses. It makes him nervous to have his children out there playing because he's also getting run off from the diesel company.

Matt mentioned on a side note, he is also mowing like crazy. Matt and Austin have been helping Vernon when they can for the disk golf pads.

**Water:** Avery said he is working on the lead line survey. Alliance has an organization to help out small towns like us. We are going to start getting information together and get this lead line survey turned in by October. Avery said he would like to send out flyers from MapleLeaf Printing to inform resident's of how they can help complete the lead line survey.

Avery spoke with someone from Elkhart County's Environmental Health Services and they told Avery they would like to put another mosquito trap at the wastewater facility and possibly one in Cook Station Park. The EHS wants to test mosquitos that are in the area.

Larry announced that Ronald and Karen Butler experienced a very large utility bill for the month of May. Larry said, he has spoken with the resident's and they were unable to attend the meeting. Avery was aware of the situation and had data logged of their usage for the past month. It was apparent that there was a week-long leak. The total bill was \$328.38 with a consumption of 19,380 gallons. The council asked for a break down, MacKenzie said their sewer portion alone was close to \$200.00. Larry, Dean, and Dana gave MacKenzie approval to deduct their sewer portion by \$100.00 making their new bill \$228.38. MacKenzie said she would make the adjustment tomorrow and call Ron & Karen Butler to let them know.

Avery mentioned he purchased a tool box.

**Wastewater:** Avery said things are running smoothly. There is a pinhole leak that he's waiting to have fixed. As far as testing goes a few adjustments have been made. Avery said he will need to spend a decent amount of money to purchase more chemicals/gas tanks. The council was okay with this.

**Community Development:** MacKenzie said she sent off newsletter information to Terry from MapleLeaf Printing. She's hoping those are ready for pick-up Friday.

MacKenzie told the council the first process of the Stellar Pathway Grant has been submitted to OCRA. She'll be in contact with the Jon Hunsburger and Elkhart County representatives for the next steps.

MacKenzie told the council for the past couple of weeks she's been going to different municipalities to meet with other Clerk Treasurer's and Town Managers to give input and receive feedback about different projects that are going on in other towns. It's been really beneficial and great to build more networking for Millersburg.

Matt told MacKenzie that his phones still are not working properly at his shop. MacKenzie told Matt she would call Bright speed tomorrow and try to get this situation resolved.

**Police:** Robert said he's been observing Lincoln Street and has been giving out citations. Robert mentioned school will be letting out soon and he'll patrol the area heavier over the summer as well. Dana asked what's the status on the Durango? Robert said, it'll be a month or month and a half.

Dean asked about Kyle going to training? Dean asked about the cost. MacKenzie said she was told the training itself doesn't cost anything but the Town will supply Kyle with the hotel stay,

milage, and meals when they don't have them at the training. The Town will also pay him for training hours since he is in our salary ordinance. Dean and the other council members were fine with this.

**Park:** Vernon said he is still mowing. The diamonds are being used up and I am juggling four different teams, but it's good!

**Clerk Treasurer:** MacKenzie said March Bank Rec is complete and balanced. Suzy Bass has signed off and looked over documentation. The council all signed the bank reconciliation sign off form.

**Old Business:** The property on SR-13, the 2-acre land purchase. Larry said there will be some improvement cost as far as that goes. He sees no reason why we shouldn't go for it. Matt told them INDOT has waived the permit fee for the Town if we do acquire the land. Dana said we may as well do it. Larry said the RDC can put \$50,000 towards the land purchase. MacKenzie said EDIT can give the other \$20,000. She mentioned keep in mind; this is the land purchase only. Once the property is purchased maintenance and a driveway entry will need to be within the budget and we may not be able to put all of the money into this until next year. MacKenzie said with acquiring this land, we have to do it right and have a big/beautiful entry way that catches the eye of those passing through on SR-13. Start getting quotes for this project. Dean asked what all do we need to do? MacKenzie said she was unsure; the Town has never purchased land while she's been in office. MacKenzie said she would reach out to the attorney and find out the proper protocol. MacKenzie will need parcel ID information for the land purchase. Dean made a motion to purchase the two acres of land for \$70,000. Dana seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to purchase the two acres of land.

**New Business:** Dean started by opening the floor up to discussion on the chicken topic. Dean said he wants to hear pros and cons to the matter. Jeff Hile began the discussion. He introduced himself and began saying he and his ex-wife used to have chickens on their property when they lived in Elkhart. He said it was a small coop, they had six or eight chickens. As far as benefits, they had free eggs and chicken meat. He said a lot of people worried about smell and diseases but it's not that challenging to take care of them. They are low maintenance birds but do require a little TLC. He said he and his wife really enjoyed raising chickens. They never had a complaint in regard to the smell of the birds. Only if it were a neighbor that didn't like us, then they'd complain of course. Personally, to me the benefits outweigh the cons. Our boys enjoyed being able to get involved in the process of raising chickens. They aren't like a typical pet; it's raising an animal for substance and they got a lot out of the experience. When we heard that chickens were going to be a possibility for town resident's we started designing a coop. We

don't want any roosters. If there ever was a concern, I hope people could approach me and I could answer any questions they have. We're just talking about a few birds and enjoying the experience/saving money on eggs.

Amanda introduced herself and gave the town council members a packet of myths and facts about chickens. She said, hello members. My family and I have lived on Blessing Street for 10 years. We have had a few backyard chickens in the past. In 2022 the idea of having chickens was shot down. Within the packet I provided for you I also put in a copy of the 120 signatures and comments I received from town residents in support of having chickens. We are a farming community and should be encouraged.

Kyle Herr began to speak. He identified himself as a Millersburg town resident. He said he has had chickens now for 5 years. He said, no one has ever come to me with a complaint or a concern. There have been no disturbances or pest problems since having them outside. He said, I had more rats and mice in my barns before I got the chickens. Chickens have actually kept the rodent problems down since having them. They aren't smelly as long as you are cleaning the coop and keeping your property clean. It's a responsibility to have them. It's good for the children to have and get them involved in 4H. We wouldn't think of getting a cow or a pig. Chickens are a good learning experience for children to understand how to maintain livestock. You know, these are animals that aren't in your house like a dog or a cat. You have to remember to go outside and feed them/clean their coop and take care of them. He agreed there should be no roosters allowed. He said there have been some instances when he's bought a chicken from TSC, you can't always tell what you're getting. He said I did rehome the roosters eventually. I don't want to throw them out or have them harmed, they're still a livestock. He then said, we all want the best for the town.

Amanda mentioned she has never heard anyone complain about Kyle's chicken or rooster when he did have the rooster for that short time. Amanda said her best friend lives next door to Kyle and hasn't ever heard of a foul odor comment or noise comment. Jeff said, he will vouch for Kyle when he discussed the cut down on rodents. He said they also eat, fleas, ticks, and mosquitos. Kyle said, they're really amazing birds and they do a lot of good for properties handling these rodents/bug matters.

Jon Schlarb said he would be interested in getting chickens because their manure is nice for gardens.

Matt King also said he would love to have chickens.

Hollie Bortz said she doesn't want chickens personally but doesn't mind if her neighbors have them so she can get some free eggs.

Nate and Haley Wheeler said they've never considered the idea of having chickens. If we would be allowed to have them, then they'd definitely consider this. We have farmers day here in town and it just makes sense to be able to have chickens as a farming community. We would never think of having larger or other livestock.

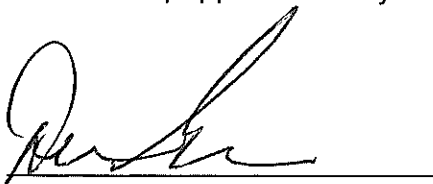
Dana asked, is there anyone that is opposed to having chickens? Jim Winkler said, I'm not opposed as long as these birds are being cared for and properties are being maintained.

Dean said, we wanted to find out how everyone felt and table the vote until the next meeting. Kyle told the council; he thinks it's a bit of a double standard with some of the properties near town (he acknowledged they aren't in town limits) that people have horses and cows and it smells awful and these animals are actually noisy. Jim Riegesecker has mini horses and we need to draw that line somewhere. A registration process was brought up and Jeff said he would agree with that. Robert said, just know regardless of the vote and how it plays out this will be enforced.

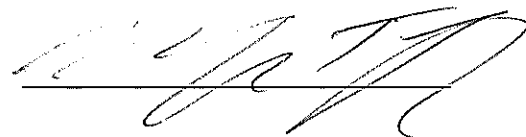
Dean said the next meeting will be May 22, 2024. We will take a vote. If you need to talk in the meantime, you can seek out your ward representative.

Dean made a motion to pay bills. Dana seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to pay bills.

Dean made a motion to adjourn. Dana seconded the motion. Upon voice vote it was unanimously approved to adjourn.



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dean', written over a horizontal line.