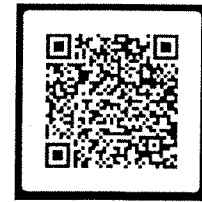


MINUTES
MUNCIE COMMON COUNCIL
300 NORTH HIGH STREET
MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305



AUGUST 4, 2025

REGULAR MEETING: 7:00 P.M., 1st Floor City Hall Auditorium.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by President Harold Mason.

INVOCATION: Given by Minister Lydia Randolph of the Church of the Living God. Councilperson Dale Basham requested a special prayer for Councilors Selvey, Powell, and Mason as they are preparing to start teaching school for the upcoming year. Councilman Green also thanked high school bands in East Central Indiana for their participation in track show, specifically commending Daleville (1st place Class A, visual, general effect, percussion captions), Yorktown (14th place overall in sweet 16), and Muncie Central (second place in sweet 16) for their performances at the Indiana State Fair on August 1st. Directors Dan Sager, John Clark, Tom Crist, and Guard Director Rhonda Reynolds were also acknowledged.

CITIZEN RECOGNITION: Councilperson Selvey presented the City of Muncie Citizen of the Month award for August 2025 to Mr. Jeremy Koons. Mr. Koons, a lifetime Muncie resident and small business owner for over 20 years, was recognized for his selfless efforts in cleaning up the west stretch of the White River. He covered graffiti, removed litter, cleared pathways, and maintained bridges and rest areas without a contract or expectation of reward, doing it simply because he saw a need. Although he later stepped away due to lack of time and frustration from others undoing his work, his impact and the community's gratitude remained. Mr. Koons thanked everyone for their support, noting improvements and new murals, and that the area has mostly stayed clean.

ROLL CALL:	PRESENT	ABSENT
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Dale Basham (At-Large 1)	X	
Ro Selvey (At-Large 2)	X	
William McIntosh (At-Large 3)	X	
Jeff Green (District #1)	X	
Nora Powell (District #2)	X	
Brandon Garrett (District #3)	X	
Sara Gullion (District #4)	X	
Jerry Dishman (District #5)	X	
Harold Mason (District #6)	X	

Dan Gibson (Legal Counsel)	X	
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APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: A motion was made by Green and seconded by Powell to Adopt the Minutes from the July 7, 2025 Regular Meeting. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas, 0 nays. MINUTES APPROVED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

LAND AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

Councilperson McIntosh, Chairperson, reported on a very informative Land and Traffic Committee meeting held on July 23rd. He thanked Jason Donati of the Sanitation Department, Richard Rawlings of the

Building Commissioners Office, Police Chief Sloan, and Code Enforcement Officer Darrin Clark for providing valuable information and explanations on codes and enforcement. The committee gained great answers and understanding.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Councilperson Powell, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that the DLGF budget workshop meeting would be held tomorrow (August 5th). She and Councilperson Basham will attend to review miscellaneous revenues and property tax totals to prepare for budget season.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: No appointments made at this time. A discussion occurred regarding the need to appoint a Councilperson to the Community Center Advisory Committee that was passed last month. It was noted that this appointment would need to be made later.

ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY INTRODUCED:

ORD. 22-25 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF MUNCIE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE FROM THE R-1 RESIDENCE ZONE TO THE R-5 RESIDENCE ZONE ON PREMISES LOCATED AT 2700 BLK N. BENTON RD., MUNCIE, INDIANA 47304.

A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Gullion to Adopt.

Attorney Dan Gibson explained that Mr. Daugherty's request is to move from R-1 to R-5 zoning to allow a multi-family structure to be built. It received a favorable recommendation of 9-0 from the Plan Commission. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. ADOPTED.

ORD. 23-25 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF MUNCIE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE FROM THE R-5 RESIDENCE ZONE TO THE BV VARIETY BUSINESS ZONE ON PREMISES LOCATED AT 2611 & 2619 W. ETHEL AVE, VAC ALLEY, & 700 BLOCK S MANNING AVE, MUNCIE, INDIANA 47304.

A motion was made by Gullion and seconded by Selvey to Adopt.

David Karnes, Dennis Wenger & Abrell P.C., is here on behalf of Robert Huddleston who is the owner of this property and requesting the variance. The ordinance seeks to rezone the locations from R-5 residence zone to BV business variety zone to match adjacent commercial properties. The applicant intends to combine the parcels into a single parcel for commercial purposes as part of the Tillotson Plaza, having already taken down houses on the property. The request received a favorable recommendation of 9-0 from the Planning Commission. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. ADOPTED.

ORD. 24-25 AN ORDINANCE OF APPROVAL TO AMEND THE TEXT OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE REGARDING LOT WIDTH, LOT COVERAGE, SETBACKS, AND MINIMUM FLOOR AREA IN THE R-1, R-2, AND R-3 RESIDENCE ZONES, AND REGARDING ACCESSORY DWELLING USE IN THE R-4 RESIDENCE ZONE.

A motion was made by Powell and seconded by Basham to Adopt.

Kylene Swackhamer, Director of the Planning Commission, explained that the proposed amendment addresses current needs related to housing development. These changes were developed by a committee including Mayor Ridenour, Commissioner Brand, Jim Lowe, and Ms. Swackhamer. The goal is to modernize the 1973 zoning ordinance to fit current needs, increase development opportunities, utilize vacant land, address physical decline of homes, and align with current planning practices. Research on other communities like South Bend (with an award-winning code) and Fort Wayne was conducted for informational purposes. Ms. Swackhamer clarified that the amendment does not address tiny homes as it maintains a minimum dwelling requirement of 600 sq ft and a 24 ft minimum dimension, which would still require a variance for tiny homes.

A summary of the proposed changes for R-1, R-2, and R-3 consist of:

- Lot width from 100, 80, 60 ft to 40 ft in all respective zones.

- Lot Area: From 12,000, 9,000, 7,500 sq ft to 4,800 sq ft in all zones.
- Front Setback: From 30, 30, 25 ft to 20 ft in all zones.
- Side Setback: From 10, 8, 6 ft to 5 ft in all zones.
- Corner Lot Side Setback: From 25, 20 ft to 20 ft in R1/R2, staying 20 ft in R3.
- Rear Setback: From 30, 25, 25 ft to 15 ft respectively.
- Minimum Floor Area: From 860, 760, 720 sq ft to 600 sq ft.
- Lot Coverage Requirement: Removed completely.

Ms. Swackhamer stated these changes would lead to an increase in the tax base and stimulate growth by allowing more buildable lots, increasing housing options, and bringing in more residents to pay taxes on properties.

Tiffany Ford questioned if the smaller lot sizes would truly lead to more affordable homes, expressing concern that greedy developers might still charge high rents, citing an example of a 600 sq ft apartment costing \$1,700/month. She emphasized the need for affordable housing given the local homelessness issue.

Councilperson Garrett and Ms. Swackhamer responded that smaller homes on smaller lots would be geared towards people looking for a lower cost of a home and would save money with reduced floor plans and setbacks. Councilperson Garrett stated the Council would ensure affordability when possible, and noted any issues with landlords not fixing things should be reported to the Building Commissioner.

Attorney Gibson clarified that the ordinance only sets parameters for property development, defining buildable lot sizes and setbacks. It does not regulate rent prices.

President Mason added that these changes open opportunities for low-income individuals to purchase lots and build their own smaller homes, promoting homeownership and civic pride. He also noted that the Building Commissioner's office helps with permits and inspections to ensure proper construction.

Councilperson McIntosh reiterated concerns about affordability for residents, as new homes are being built but people cannot afford them, and jobs are not sufficient to support homeownership.

Ms. Swackhamer explained that the ordinance also changes accessory dwelling use in R4 zones from requiring a variance to being a permitted use, addressing the possibility of two homes on a lot. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 8 yeas and 1 nay (McIntosh). ADOPTED.

ORD. 25-25 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 35, SECTION 22 OF THE MUNCIE CITY ORDINANCES ENTITLED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FEES AND COLLECTION.

A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Selvey to Adopt.

Dan Burford, Muncie Fire Chief, explained that this ordinance responds to House Bill 1385, adopted in 2024, effective January 1, 2025, which changed EMS billing statewide. He clarified that previous conversations with Councilperson Powell and Gullion regarding lift assists at assisted living facilities sparked the Department's review of its billing ordinance, but they did not ask for a rate increase. The increase primarily affects out-of-network and out-of-contract private insurance carriers (about 2% of total call volume), estimated to generate an additional \$150,000 to \$252,000 in annual revenue. Medicare (53%) and Medicaid (30%) rates are negotiated and set by CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid) regardless of what the City bills. The ordinance includes a discounted rate for self-pay individuals (5% of services), and a financial hardship clause allowing the Chief (or designee) to extend services up to bill cancellation or write-off, in working with hospitals for documentation.

Councilperson Powell questioned the financial hardship for residents, especially those with high deductibles, and expressed concern that information about potential fee increases was not disclosed to annexed parcels prior to annexation. Chief Burford stated that Delaware County had already increased their rates, and Muncie's rates would be similar or slightly lower for mileage. The ordinance allows billing up to 400% of the CMS rate. Specific 400% CMS rates were provided: BLS (\$1,625.44), ALS1 (\$1,930.24), ALS2 (\$2,793.76). "Treat no transport" services are covered by most insurances, including Medicaid, but not Medicare.

Cameron Grubbs expressed concerns about the 291% increase, lack of public information, and potential for insurance companies to raise rates, effectively becoming an additional tax. He advocated for healthcare as a right and questioned the justification for making EMS self-sustainable or profitable. He suggested tabling the ordinance until more information (like an in-house hardship protocol) could be provided to the public.

Wayne Scafe asked for clarification on the purpose of the increase, the exact nature of the hardship clause, and who approves or denies hardship cases, considering potential Medicaid/Medicare changes. Chief Burford responded that current ambulance costs (now \$260,000, previously \$120,000 in 2019) and supply costs have significantly increased since the initial 2019 billing ordinance. He noted the hardship clause has existed since 2019 but has not been utilized. He reiterated that 98% of the community would see no change in their billing.

Jason Chafin, President of Local #1348, supported the amendment and stated current rates are 10 years old (copied from Delaware County's 2014 ordinance in 2019). He emphasized capturing full amounts from "big insurance" (like Ball State students with out-of-state insurance) rather than leaving money on the table, as most self-pays don't pay anyway. He confirmed that patient care is never denied based on insurance status.

Councilperson Powell reiterated her concern for the middle class and underinsured, highlighting that the Indiana Chamber of Commerce did not support House Bill 1385 due to fears of increased insurance costs for all. She cited instances of veterans facing collections due to delayed VA payments. Chief Burford clarified that in-network insurance bills are at negotiated rates so the 400% billing truly only affects out-of-network providers.

A motion was made by Gullion and seconded by Powell to Table Ordinance 25-25 and send it to the Public Safety Committee to allow Council to receive more information from Chief Burford regarding its effects on residents. A roll call vote showed 4 yeas (McIntosh, Gullion, Powell, Mason) and 5 nays (Selvey, Basham, Dishman, Green, Garrett). MOTION DEFEATED. Questions called on original ordinance with no amendments. A roll call vote showed 5 yeas (Basham, Green, Dishman, Garrett, Selvey) and 4 nays (McIntosh, Gullion, Powell, Mason). ADOPTED.

NEW ORDINANCES:

RESOLUTIONS:

OTHER BUSINESS:

Cameron Grubbs had a multitude of requests such as listing board appointments on future agendas, submission of required documentation for meetings two weeks in advance, and that all packets be complete. He also announced upcoming events: First Thursday, Mary's Miles 5K (August 23rd) benefiting Recovery Cafe, and Minnetrista Farmers Market (Saturdays). He commended council members who upheld their convictions in the previous vote, questioning why waiting for more information was problematic.

Councilperson Selvey announced she would be in the dunk tank for charity during the \$2 tour of the village on August 23rd at 3:30 P.M.

Tiffany Ford advocated for a homeless shelter, criticizing the sale of the old Justice Department for luxury condos for \$100 after a \$600,000 grant. She suggested Garfield Elementary School as a suitable location, offering to write grants despite their tedium, and highlighting its potential for separate male/female/family sections, clinics, and existing commercial kitchen. She also expressed concern about children on the south side lacking running water for showers and baths.

Courtney Marsh announced the annual Mark Kinman Family Fun Night in the Southside neighborhood on Tuesday, August 26th, from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. She invited neighbors and families, encouraged resource tables, games, and sharing the event on social media. She emphasized it's a family fun night, and unaccompanied minors will not be accommodated.

Jeanetta Presley reported a successful kids' laundry drive in partnership with Muncie Folks Collective, with \$200 donated by the Avondale Neighborhood Association. She reiterated concerns about children in her south side neighborhood lacking running water for hygiene and sought ideas for shower access. Councilperson Selvey suggested reaching out to family navigators at each school building, who are funded by the Ball Brothers

Foundation, for assistance with students' needs, including access to locker rooms/showers. Ms. Presley also asked for donations to continue the laundry drive monthly.

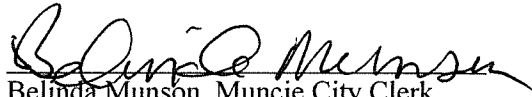
Marion Hammond, a volunteer firefighter and first responder, acknowledged the inevitability of cost increases for EMS. He expressed significant concern over the loss of businesses on the south side (like Dollar General, Walgreens, Speedway) and the urgent need for more businesses in the area. He thanked the City for the recent paving of 27th Street and emphasized the importance of viewing Muncie as "one community".

ADJOURNED:

A motion was made by McIntosh and seconded by Gullion to Adjourn. A vote by acclamation showed 9 yeas, 0 nays. ADJOURNED.



Harold D. Mason, President of the
Muncie Common Council



Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk
of the Muncie Common Council

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