

The Regular Town Council Meeting of the Town of Schererville, President Rob Guetzloff called IN to order at 6:36 p.m. in the Schererville Town Hall, 10 E. Joliet Street Schererville, IN.

Attendance was taken with the following Council Members present: Caleb S. Johnson, Kevin Connelly, Robin Arvanitis, Thomas Schmitt and Rob Guetzloff. Staff members present: Fire Chief Robert Patterson, Police Chief Pete Sormaz, Park Superintendent John Novacich, IT AJ Garcia, Town Engineer Neil Simstad, Director of Public Works Chad Nondorf, Town Manager Jim Gorman, Clerk-Treasurer Michael Troxell and Recording Secretary Robin Thiel.

THEREUPON, Approval of the minutes. Mr. Connelly made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2025 Public Meeting, seconded by Mr. Schmitt. All in favor (5-0).

THEREUPON, Claims

- A. APV #120493 - APV #120899 on the General Docket, Totaling \$2,861,032.50
- B. APV #120496 - APV #120880 on the MVH Docket, Totaling \$319,531.79
- C. APV #120512 - APV #120805 on the Payroll Docket, Totaling \$1,367,037.39
- D. Various Funds, First National Bank of Omaha, Credit Card Charges, \$5,832.29
- E. Various Funds, Austgen Kuiper Jasaitis, June Legal, \$18,747.68
- F. Various Funds, Invoice Cloud, June User Fees, \$225.00
- G. Various Funds, M&J Underground, CCMG #2024-2: Burr Street/Water Main Replacement, \$225,240.30
- H. Various Funds, Various Vendors, Refunds, \$1,706.60
- I. Various Funds, Auto-Wares, Parts, \$15,526.19
- J. Various Funds, Unifirst, Clothes & Towels, \$1,296.32
- K. Various Funds, Grainger, Parts, \$921.61
- L. Various Funds, Menards, Parts, \$3,015.81
- M. Various Funds, Strack's, Supplies, \$373.12
- N. Various Funds, Napa, Parts, \$500.00
- O. CCD, Family Express, Anti-Viral Software, \$33,128.00

Mr. Schmitt made a motion to accept the claims as presented, seconded by Mr. Connelly. All in favor (5-0).

THEREUPON, Correspondence NONE

THEREUPON, Reports

Fire Chief Patterson stated for the month of June, the Schererville Fire Department responded to 266 EMS related calls and 63 Fire related calls for 329 total calls for the month of June.

Mr. Nondorf stated that the Burr Street reconstruction and water main replacement project is proceeding. He stated that 1,800 feet of the 4,000 total feet of water main has been installed. Mr. Nondorf stated that the storm sewer piping and under drains have been installed and next week they will start cutting in the ground for the new pedestrian trail. Mr. Nondorf stated that tomorrow 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue from US 41 to Capri Drive, the CCMG project will be starting. He stated that they will start milling the existing roadway out and then final paving and striping will follow. Mr. Nondorf stated he hopes the project will be completed by next Friday, July 18, 2025.

THEREUPON, Public Comments Regarding Agenda Items

Mr. Minard addressed the Council President and said they had a great conversation when they ran against each other a few years back and they both agreed that God's will would determine

the outcome and you (Mr. Guetzloff) won. Mr. Minard stated that he respects that, but he is just asking you and others to truly think about what's best for the citizens as far as allowing chickens and not give into pressure and just wanted to remind all of the Council that how you vote on this will be used in the next election.

Betsy Hunt, 2413 Capri Drive, stated that regarding the proposed ordinance, she is not sure about chickens in backyards and understands both sides, but her neighbor's property is 40' from her bedroom window. She stated she has an interest in how this ordinance is written. She stated that the neighbors behind her and unincorporated area whose chickens have twice, all twelve of them, have come into her yard. Ms. Hunt stated that she contacted a few towns who currently allow chickens, such as Griffith, Highland, Valparaiso, Hobart and Dyer and here is what she found and believes it should be considered here before we even move forward. She stated the Griffith's ordinance states "The Griffith Town Council wishes to harmonize the interests of those residents desiring to raise chickens on their residential property and the interest of residents who do not wish to be disturbed in the quality and enjoyment of their life". Ms. Hunt stated that our Ordinance says chickens and ducks, there is quite a difference between these two different poultry. Ducks are dirty and loud, especially female ducks, and none of the other Towns include ducks. Ducks should not be included. She stated that Schererville's ordinance states there shall be no more than 10 fowl, it should read chickens, and those with two and a half acres can have no more than 20 chickens. She stated that the language should be clear and state that no one can have chickens unless they have one acre or more of land, period. She stated that Hobart requires registration and permits; anyone wanting chickens must register the coops to get approval from the Town. She said Schererville should definitely require the same. Schererville has language in the ordinance regarding violations, so the need to have a record of where these coops are located is the only logical sense and violations should be spelled out in the ordinance. The Town of Highland allows four to six chickens but no real ordinance. The Town of Griffith also has language regarding getting letters of consent to the Safety Committee from adjoining property owners in certain circumstances. The Town of Dyer currently has one family with chickens; their process is to go through the variance procedure, complete the paperwork, submit to the BZA for approval and then it goes to the Council. The total cost for this is approximately \$500.00. She stated that these changes should be made before going forward.

Mr. Kevin Orze, 1217 Bemis Heights, Schererville resident stated that whenever he hears of a request for a variance or a change in the ordinance, he always wonders, well what is the cause and the reason to do that, especially in this case. Mr. Orze stated that the thought of our original town leaders must have been that livestock inside an urban setting is not good for a variety of safety, health and quality of life issues that could affect all the residents. He asked what has changed, why is there a request for an ordinance, what is the justification. Mr. Orze stated that it is his understanding that the ordinance as written would disqualify the vast majority of residents from having chickens anyway. Those few remaining residents that would qualify tend to be of higher than average income and resources and maybe in political power as well. He believes that passing an ordinance that the overwhelming majority of residents would not qualify for is undemocratic and nonresponsive to our safety. He stated finally, correct me if I am wrong, but his understanding is that Councilman Johnson is one of the few lucky residents who would qualify to have chickens, and in fact, under this ordinance, you have indicated a desire to do just that. It strikes him as being a blatant conflict of interest and he asked Mr. Johnson to recuse himself from the vote.

Tony Oberman, 1528 Tyler Court, Schererville stated he is here to express his opposition to the proposal of allowing backyard chickens in our municipality. He stated that he understands that some residents view backyard chickens as a source of fresh eggs and a way to connect with nature. He stated he believes there are significant and valid concerns that should be considered before permitting such a change. Number one, the noise disturbances. Hens can be surprisingly vocal, particularly after laying eggs, and in a densely populated neighborhood, this could quickly become a serious nuisance. Number 2, odor and sanitation; chicken coops, if not meticulously maintained can produce strong odors. Accumulated waste can also attract flies, rodents and other pests, creating an unhealthy environment for nearby residents. There are health and safety risks; chickens carry diseases such as Salmonella and Campylobacter, which pose risks to both children and adults, especially if proper sanitation is not followed. Mr. Oberman stated there are also broader concerns about the potential for illnesses to spread in urban environments, the impact on property values. Presence of chicken coops, especially if visible or poorly maintained, may deter and reduce overall property values in neighborhoods. He stated that our community is zoned for residential use. The introduction of livestock, no matter how small, alters the character of the area and sets a precedent for further exceptions. Chickens may attract predators such as raccoons, coyotes, hawks and stray dogs and creates an unnecessary hazard for pets, and small children who may be playing outside. Mr. Oberman stated that feathers, dust and droppings could aggravate asthma and allergies, especially in young children or older adults living nearby. Mr. Oberman stated he respectfully urges the Council to oppose any ordinance or policy changes that would permit the keeping of chickens in our residential area.

Christine Nance-Hmurovich, 1900 Govert Drive, stated that she is going to give the Council some very concrete information from David Fame, doctor of veterinary medicine and poultry specialist from Utah State University. She spoke about some information she found out from David Fame. Ms. Nance-Hmurovich stated that she spoke at length about this at last month's Town Council Meeting. She stated that we have a wonderful animal control department here in Schererville, but you realize you are going to exponentially increase the volume of their work.

Mr. Ruben Riza, 3017 Burge Drive, stated he remembers when he was a kid. On US 30 & US 41, there was one light, it flashed red and flashed yellow on the other side. He stated that we had cornfields everywhere, that was farmland, but we are no longer in that time. We have residents, we have kids, and it is a big jump from then to now. He stated that if you want chickens, he is looking at the cost. What is it going to cost the city? He stated that everybody has rights, but now you are going to say some people have more rights than others; I do not think so. He stated that he is against this chicken thing, not just, because he does not want chickens, but other people may want chickens and they cannot have them; in his opinion, that is not correct. He asked "should we all have chickens?" he does not think so. Like he said before, we are not farmland no more, times have changed, and we have to grow up.

Mr. Kevin Dean, 1905 Sir Richard Road, stated that this issue with the chickens, one of the reasons he thinks chickens should be allowed is so people can get their chickens that are humanely treated. If you do some research on the internet, you start to find out that the hens that are laying the eggs you are buying in the stores are stuck in a cage that is 1'x 1' for their entire life. This way you are having chickens producing the eggs for you that are being treated humanely. He stated he understands the concerns people are having about the foul smells. He stated that where he lives, his backdoor neighbor

is actually People's Bank. They have a spraying water fountain out in the front of their building and there have been two geese that put up residency there for about six weeks. He stated he has neighbors who were actually putting out corn for them. Mr. Dean stated that as far as the other animals, he has a big field next to the bank, wooded area and he is getting raccoons, rabbits, fox and possums. He sees them running in his backyard all of the time. He stated that he has seriously considered putting chickens in his garage to see if you guys (the Town) are going to come out and tell him he cannot have them inside. He has a neighbor close to him who has a parrot who is very loud; when that thing decides to start squawking, you can hear it. He asked the Council if they are going to start getting rid of parrots and then the parakeets. He stated that when this issue first came up, eggs were costing about \$8.00 a dozen, now they are way down in price, but again, if someone wants to reasonably source their eggs, he does not see any reason for standing in their way. He stated that the Town could start to tax the chickens, the coops and it could be a source of income for the Town of Schererville.

Shelia Madjecki, 7419 Harvest Drive, stated that she thinks that there has to be some common sense entered into this. You are saying many things that are for the entire town, but we are talking specifically about one-acre properties. She stated if you want to talk about Salmonella, you could get that at the grocery store too. She stated that she agrees with Mr. Dean, there are geese, but no one is picking up those geese, she has plenty of them by her house. She said regarding chickens, she agrees with an acre property, she thinks if you can have it far away from someone's fence, she thinks you can have a chicken coop with a fence. Ms. Madjecki stated that instead of trying to be like communist over other people, we have to be nice to one another, we have to live together. She stated, "Your beliefs may not be my beliefs and my beliefs may not be your beliefs, but we can all work together"

Dawn Light, 225 Deer Trail Lane, stated she wanted to give her opinion on the chickens. She stated she lives in a town home, so she could not have chickens if she wanted to, but if she could, she would. She believes that you should have one acre of land and should have a fenced in area so it does not bother other neighbors. She believes it should be a certain amount away from other neighbors land so it does not disturb them. She stated that they should have a chicken coop and it should be well maintained, otherwise they should get a fine. She stated that they should be checked on at a certain amount of time after they have their coop. She stated that she does not know why you should deter someone from having one, she thinks it is very communistic, she does not believe in it.

Laura Grolla, 1831 Govert Drive, stated that people talk about the noise of chickens, but no one talks about the noise of dogs. People have dogs, they bark all day, they leave them outside, they do not pick up the dog poop, it smells, but that is ok. She stated she does not see an ordinance in Town saying no one can have a dog. She does not understand the difference of chickens; chickens actually produce eggs, which are extremely better for us than the eggs we buy in the grocery store. She stated that her daughter has a chicken coop and when she goes there, she never smells it; she does not even hear the chickens.

Kathleen Coe, 84 Redar Drive, Schererville, stated that if somebody wants to have chickens and they are responsible and clean, there should be no problem. As far as people panicking about diseases, give me a break. We got wild turkeys running through the neighborhood, we have the Canadian geese flying around, and backyard chickens are not going to spread disease. She does not see why people should not be allowed to have them.

Vince McClenahan, 1600 Cline Avenue, Schererville, stated that he teaches science in seventh and eighth grade at Highland Christian School. He stated they have a coop right in the foyer between classrooms. He stated that they are able to teach, able to take care of the chickens and they are able to educate the kids on how to raise the animals and do it properly. He stated that it is zero distraction and it is just a wonderful experience. He would love his four kids to be able to do that in they own backyard, teach them responsibility and get some eggs out of the deal.

Councilman Johnson stated he has a letter from a resident he would like to read. The letter is from Adrian Shabet, 413 East Joliet Street, Schererville. It reads: "thank you for the time to review this potential ordinance on chickens. It was very disheartening last year when this was discussed for a variance for a family because the voting seemed to be more about sticking with party lines and not what makes sense for Schererville. I am glad we can look past the letters next to our names and work for the residents. I know having chickens is not important to many of you on the Town Council, nor for the vast majority of residents in Schererville, but for many, it is. Cats and Dogs are not my thing, but I respect the fact that for others it is, because I am not a fan or cats and dogs I am not out petitioning to the city to ban them. I respect what others want to do on their property. There are many ordinances that apply to only a small group of people. This one should not be tossed aside because it does not meet a certain threshold of how many people it affects. I live right down the road here on Joliet and have about 350' of frontage. Before I mow along the road, I have to walk the area to pick up litter and dog poop people leave behind. I do not believe I will have that issue if any of my neighbors have chickens. I also have 22 neighbors whose property touch my property. When I am out enjoying my yard, the sound of dogs barking all day is normal. In fact, some of those neighbors have aggressive dogs that are a concern if they were to get through the fence and come in my yard since I have younger children. I do not think I have ever seen a report about aggressive chickens mauling a neighbor. In addition, the noise is not an issue with chickens. At the end of the day, this is a lot of energy over something that is not going to be a big deal. Paul at Regions News is not going to be posting on his Facebook page about chicken issues in Schererville. If someone is willing to put the time, energy and financial investment to home chickens, it is likely they will be responsible owners and their neighbors will not even realize they have chickens unless they benefit from free eggs. If there is an owner not following the ordinance or abusing it, put in language to reprimand them and take away their ability to have them, but I doubt you will run into that. Thank you"

THEREUPON, Old Business

ITEM A. Ord. #2027, An Ordinance Amending Town Ordinance No. 1549 Being: "An Ordinance for the Humane Control and Regulation of Animals within the Town of Schererville Lake County, Indiana; Repealing all Ordinances or Parts in Conflict Therewith and Declaring an Emergency", Establishing Regulations for Raising Chickens, Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof Repealing all Ordinances and Town Code Provisions, or Parts Thereof, in Conflict Herewith, and all Matters Related Thereto (**Second Reading**)

Mr. Gorman stated that this ordinance will allow chickens and ducks in an area with larger than one acre of land. He stated there would be restrictions such as no roosters, must remain 60' feet from neighboring living structures including decks, porches and pools, unless the coop and run is screened by privacy fence and natural screening. The fence cannot be less than 6 feet in height and then the coop and run may be

located no less than 40' from neighboring living structures including, decks, porches and pools. A coop and run must remain in sanitary conditions.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to adopt Ordinance #2027, seconded by Mr. Connelly.

Mr. Schmitt stated that in the previous meeting two months ago and after receiving hundreds of calls since that meeting, he just wanted to remind everyone, just like a couple of the speakers tonight, that Schererville is not a rural area and Schererville is not a farm town. He stated that Schererville has 31,100 residents and as a Councilman, he has to represent all 31,000 people's interest. He stated that the chicken ordinance might possibly involve 1 or 2 percent of the population. The way this ordinance is written, allowing it to be 40' from neighbors, that should have been 80' or 100', those numbers are way too close to satisfy any neighbor or any other subdivision nearby. Mr. Schmitt stated to pass legislation for a special group or a small group that is not good practice. He feels that this is a bad Ordinance; therefore, he will be against passing this ordinance.

Mrs. Arvanitis stated that her concern is who would police this. How do we know who is going to go back and check on the coops. She asked if it is going to be Code Enforcement or Animal Control and stated she does not think that the Ordinance is spelled out enough and she is not comfortable with that.

Mr. Guetzloff asked Mr. Troxell for a roll call vote to approve Ordinance #2027. Mr. Johnson - Yes; Mr. Connelly - Yes; Mrs. Arvanitis - No; Mr. Schmitt - No; Mr. Guetzloff stated that before he gives his vote here, he wanted to say thank you to everybody who did take the time out to come here this evening. He stated that it was very surprising to him how many people have contacted him through emails, some personally made an effort to come to his house, had conversations after church with people. Mr. Guetzloff said just as Mr. Schmitt said they have to come here and do what is best for the 30,000 residents and not just a handful of them. Mr. Guetzloff stated his vote is no.

Motion dies (2-3).

Mr. Schmitt made a motion to deny Ordinance #2027, seconded by Mrs. Arvanitis. Roll call vote: Mr. Johnson - No; Mr. Connelly - No; Mrs. Arvanitis - Yes; Mr. Schmitt - Yes; Mr. Guetzloff - Yes. Motion carries (3-2).

THEREUPON, New Business

ITEM A. Res. #2025-7, A Resolution Adopting an Amended Title VI Plan/Non-Discrimination Agreement in Accordance With the Terms, Conditions and Requirements under Applicable Federal Law and all Matters related Thereto

Mr. Gorman stated that this is a plan that we currently have on file that we have updated due to some changes that INDOT made in order to comply with the new updates. He stated there have been a few minor changes such as notifying parties that are involved in complaints that arise, like census data changes that occur since our last update.

Mr. Connelly made a motion to approve Resolution #2025-7, seconded by Mrs. Arvanitis. All in favor (5-0).

ITEM B. Res. #2025-7, A Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Schererville, Lake County, Indiana, Authorizing Execution and Delivery of an Equipment Schedule to the Master Equipment Lease/Purchase

Agreement, with Bank of America, National Association For the Acquisition, Financing and Leasing of Vehicle And Equipment under the terms specified herein, as Well as Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of Other Documents Required in Connection therewith, Authorizing all other Actions required for the Transaction Contemplated and all matters related Thereto

Mr. Troxell stated back in May the Council authorized him through resolution to seek financing options for the \$2.1 million vehicle and equipment financing. He stated it will be for four years, and he reached out to seven different financing entities regarding this financing and he received information back from five of them. Mr. Troxell stated that Bank of America was the most responsive and less costly at 3.88% for financing for four years. He stated that the payment would be from various funds that are affected from various departments for equipment and vehicles. Mr. Troxell stated he is looking for a motion to move forward, this basically allows the president and vice president to sign off on the financing for these documents.

Mr. Schmitt made a motion to approve Resolution #2025-7, seconded by Mrs. Arvanitis. All in favor (5-0).

ITEM C. Consider Variance of Use to Allow Construction of a 10.5' x 36' Off-Premise Advertising Structure (Billboard) On-Site

Board of Zoning Case #25-6-9  
Petitioner(s): Lamar Advertising (Shawn Pettit)  
Location: 8016 U.S. 41 - Ahlborn's Scenic Addition, Lot 1  
BZA Favorable Recommendation 4-0

Mr. Pettit stated that he is the real estate manager for Lamar Advertising, 9900 Georgia Street in Crown Point, IN. He stated that tonight they are asking for the variance of use to be approved by the Town Council, which received a favorable BZA recommendation last month. Mr. Pettit stated that this is on the west side of US 41 and 80<sup>th</sup> Ct. Mr. Schmitt asked Mr. Pettit if he could tell them some of the Boards that have come down over the last couple of years. Mr. Pettit stated that they did work with Town Management on removing the sign for the Kennedy Avenue project, taking it out of the EJ&E railroad right of way. Mr. Pettit stated that over the years they did trade in many boards in order to install some of their LED digital display units. Mr. Pettit stated that Lamar has had an outstanding relationship with the Town of Schererville. He stated that currently Mr. Novacich benefits by the sign that is up by Target Rentals, where the Town is guaranteed every quarter two weeks of the free advertising on that board for Park and Recreation events. Mr. Pettit stated that Lamar has been very community oriented in advertising and allowing communities to use that advertising space, which is usually on a space available basis when all eight slots of the digital sign are not sold out.

Mr. Gorman asked Mr. Pettit if he would put some landscaping around the base of the sign. Mr. Pettit stated that he believes that is a requirement. He stated yes, they would. Mr. Pettit stated that this is two signs, one facing north and one facing south. It is a single pedestal with two signs and a whole column. He stated that they would be illuminated all the time. Mr. Pettit was asked if these would dim in the evening so that neighbors or anybody complains about the lighting. Mr. Pettit stated that they would shine up similar to what they did when Stan's was operating on the East side of US 41.

Mr. Schmitt made a motion to approve the Board of Zoning Case 25-6-9, seconded by Mrs. Arvanitis. Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Schmitt to add the condition about the landscaping around the bottom and to include the Findings of Fact on the case, seconded by Mrs. Arvanitis. All in favor (5-0).

ITEM D. Consider Acceptance of Donations \$4,552.78

Mr. Troxell read into the record the donations for the month of June 2025.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to accept the donations as read, seconded by Mr. Schmitt. All in favor (5-0).

THEREUPON, Business from the floor

Jeff Minard, 1279 Poppy Field, Schererville stated he wanted to say thanks to whose idea it was on Joliet street to put the restrictions on the road. He stated he did see that it did work, slowing people down. He stated that he uses the trail a lot, so he appreciates it. Mr. Minard stated that he thinks on 73<sup>rd</sup> we need to do something there like rumble strips or something and a flashing light and stuff to make that aware because people are so distracted nowadays on their cell phones and stuff.

Mr. Gorman stated that this is a County road, it is County's property. He stated that the County is aware of the incident and they're taking measures currently to try and fix the issue.

Collin Zackavec, stated he lives in Dyer and is a full-time Firefighter for Schererville and also the Secretary of the Union. He stated that he is here today to let everyone know about the inaugural Schererville Firefighters Golf Outing on August 22<sup>nd</sup> at Scherwood Golf. He stated that sign up will be at 8:00 a.m. and the shotgun start will be at 9:00 a.m. He stated that breakfast and lunch will be provided. He stated they have gotten some amazing sponsors and they also teamed up with Backswing Events. They are going to send a pro out to kind of get some competition going. He stated they will have a \$1,000 hole in one sponsor and anyone who enters that challenge will be entered into a raffle from Promo Sports for tickets to the 2026 Masters. Mr. Zackavec stated they will be hosting a live and silent auction; they already have collect some great items donated. Mr. Zackavec stated that the money they make will be going to the union and they are also going to donate a lot of that money to Project Fire Buddies and Who's your Burn Camp. He explained what both of those organizations are.

Meeting adjourned.

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ROB GUETZLOFF  
TOWN COUNCIL PRESIDENT

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MICHAEL A TROXELL, IAMCA, CMC, ACPFIM, CPFA, CMO  
TOWN CLERK-TREASURER

A TRUE COPY