

**ANDREWS TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES  
OF A PUBLIC MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 9, 2024**

A public meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Andrews, Indiana convened on September 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Andrews Town Hall in accordance with applicable law and pursuant to appropriate notice.

**ROLL CALL**

Council Members Laura Dillon, Roger Newsome, Jr. and Michael Dean Young were in attendance. Clerk-Treasurer Laury Powell declared a quorum was present and the meeting would continue.

Council President Laura Dillon began by stating this is a regular council meeting that will also include information on the town's work to get safe water from a clean aquifer. At the appropriate time, she will take questions with a 2-minute time limit to speak. Questionnaire forms are also available, if preferred. Dillon emphasized that the three council members are also town residents, only wanting the best for the town in sourcing safe water at an affordable rate.

**APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES**

Roger Newsome, Jr made a motion to approve council minutes for a Regular Session held August 26, 2024. Dean Young seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

**PUBLIC HEARING: 2025 BUDGET FORM 4**

The public hearing opened at 6:03 p.m. with Council President Dillon commenting on next year's appropriations and tax rates as shown on the Form 4 Notice to Taxpayers, a copy of which was made available to everyone prior to the meeting. With no comments or questions from the public, Dillon closed the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. The 2025 Budget Form 4, Ordinance 2024-4, will have its final read and adoption at the September 23 council meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Water Regionalization: Tom Wall was present to read a press release from the Huntington County Board of Commissioners, stating \$1.5M in funding has been secured for preliminary engineering related to the Town of Andrews water main regionalization with the City of Huntington. *See Attachment for Press Release.* Wall said he brought back information from Indianapolis after speaking with Jim McGoff of the IFA and the USDA in December 2021 and was asked what the County is going to do to help Andrews with their water problem. McGoff said we need a regional water system to help them out. The Town does not have enough rooftops to maintain their own system and they need to tie into Huntington for water. Mayor Strick has agreed to work with their plan and is now committed to this project alongside the County Commissioners. Wall clarified that the \$1.5M is IFA (taxpayer) money, not town money, that will be direct pay to Lochmueller Group for the project's preliminary engineering report to identify costs and unknown variables; while also stating that RTX, as the polluter, should pay to bring safe drinking water to Andrews. He doesn't want to see taxpayers and town residents foot the bill and he believes this is the best offer the Town has received to date. Wall said he has worked to bring publicity to the Town of Andrews to acquire as much grant funding as possible and added he is not here for the lawsuit fight, only to bring safe drinking water to the Town of Andrews. Due to the high percentage of water loss, along with no water rate increases for several years (due to the quality of water offered, i.e. contaminants), a situation exists where the State believes that Andrews cannot continue to operate and maintain their own water system and therefore feels a regional solution with the City of Huntington is the only option. No other funding requests for an independent waterworks project will be considered for the Town of Andrews.

Wall next discussed project phasing, a potential project schedule, and the latest estimated potential costs and their possible effect on Andrews customer's water rates. Preliminary conservative estimates for Phases I, IA, and II are expected to run between \$22-24M and would take several years to complete. Phases IIA and III are also planned but have many unknown variables with costs yet to be determined.



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Baker Tilly is working on a 10-year rate plan for the regionalization project. The Commissioners are determined to get clean water to Andrews as soon as possible even if it means the water main from Huntington to Andrews be installed down the middle of Old Andrews Road (County Road 200 N) should difficulties arise in obtaining the required right-of-way.

Dillon stated the Town believes the press release is premature at this time since the agreement between Lochmueller and IFA has only been prepared and has not been signed yet. The \$1.5M is great for the Town, and she thanked Commissioner Wall for his efforts, but there is still a \$23M shortfall in her opinion. Council members all stated promises have been made in the past for funding, and nothing has come to fruition. Promises are broken. In a recent meeting involving all players, USDA, IFA / SRF, Huntington City and County, and Raytheon, it was learned that zero dollars were available from the USDA and the State SRF to fund this project despite being number one on their priority list, only \$1.5M from the IFA in direct pay to Lochmueller Group has come through. "Where does the rest of the \$23M come from", asked Dean Young, pointing out that Raytheon still has not forked anything up for a water project. Although only on paper, with nothing approved or signed off on, Senator Todd Young's \$3M of Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) "pool money" was still in play as possible funding towards the project. Wall has been assured that funding shortfalls for any of the project phases will be addressed at the state or federal level. Wall then advised the Town to get its due diligence done, back what the IFA is doing and move forward. He also added that the County Commissioners have given \$500K in ARPA money to Huntington City to extend water lines to the end of their city limits so the County can hook into their system. Wall reemphasized that IFA is ready to begin work now with Lochmueller to get the preliminary engineering done and the project underway.

Questions remain unanswered on the grant application process over the next several years, as to who will apply, will there be a waiting period for approval, or will the application process even be required since this is a large multi-phase project seemingly approved and in play. Wall said this project is number one on everyone's lists and he was guaranteed that funding will be available. Also, he said if the Town doesn't go through with the \$1.5M plan, and should the Town say "absolutely not" to the regionalization project, then the Town will never get any grant money, ever, for water lines from the IFA, OCRA, or the USDA. Wall wants Council to say now, let's move forward and spend the IFA money with Lochmueller, get the project rolling, and let's give the people of Andrews hope. Dillon reiterated that Andrews Town Council has not signed a contract with anyone for the regionalization project, and that so far this is all between IFA and Lochmueller. Wall said he would be surprised if the future funding doesn't come through as he has been promised in Indianapolis. He does not see the next governor coming into office and refusing to help Andrews, Indiana. Wall said Mike Braun, Jim Banks, and Todd Young are aware of the situation and willing to help. Mr. Wall admitted that he did not think the project would come together this fast, but he has been pushing in meetings in Indianapolis with the governor, and at meetings at Barnes and Thornburg for his commissioner's association, where he ran into someone (he asked council members to guess who) and said you need to write a check and help us out in Andrews.

Council remarked that four past applications have failed to produce funding and are concerned that it will happen again. Wall replied that the State will be vested in the Huntington-Andrews regionalization project with this \$1.5M project and cannot back out of future funding without egg on their face. Andrews is their number one project now and in the future. Dillon still has reservations on future funding as the Town has waited over a month to hear what Raytheon will put towards the project as discussed at a recent meeting. Dillon was adamant that Raytheon should pay for the entire project, and she knows they can afford to do so. She does not want the town residents or Indiana taxpayers to pay for this project. She added that the water rates were last increased in 2016, just for everyone's information. Newsome and Young agreed with her statements, saying this burden should not be placed upon the town residents. Wall again said he believes Raytheon should pay for their mess and that the Town should continue to fight and get the money



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back from Raytheon if necessary. Wall then remarked, don't think that the State of Indiana isn't working with their Attorney General as they would like to recoup their money from Raytheon also.

Dillon is concerned that Huntington City is facing a \$35M water project in the near future, while at the same time saying they can supply the Town of Andrews with sufficient water. This has the potential to hike projected wholesale water rates further, thus affecting what the Town would pay Huntington for wholesale water. There were no questions or comments from town residents at this time.

Safe Streets for All Grant Update: Excerpted from a draft report presented at today's Safe Streets for All Grant meeting at the commissioner's office, a slide was displayed showing a proposed solution for the Town's public safety concern along Main Street / SR105 north from Andrews to the Dollar General Store. Plans show new lighting at the southeast corner of the bridge and two options to span the walking trail across the river. The first is to realign the road across the bridge to fit the trail. The trail would be separated by a plastic barrier. The second option is to build a cantilevered sidewalk bridge attached to the roadway bridge, obviously providing further separation from the roadway at an added cost. Commissioner Wall led the ensuing discussion on this topic. Although the town's pedestrian walkway project ranks eighteenth out of nineteen public safety concerns under review county-wide, Wall did say it remains a priority project that will be considered for action at upcoming SS4A meetings. The commissioner's office welcomes public comments on the design plan.

United With Love Mobile Food Pantry: Roger Newsome said while some shed / barn pricing has come in, he expects additional quotes before the next council meeting. He asked to have the subject tabled until September 23. Tom Wall added that since his business sells barns, sheds, and carports, he would be happy to speak with Newsome and provide the town with a quote on a barn / shed at his cost. Council agreed to table the discussion for now as there are many options to consider.

Main Street Sidewalk Repair Update: Council Member Newsome reported that the new sidewalk panels have been poured and the repair project is now complete. One minor incident occurred involving some damage to Ed Asher's building at 59 N Main St where the siding rests along the top edge of the sidewalk. The contact was unavoidable while pouring cement in front of the building. Although the contractor offered to fix the problem at his own expense, Asher decided he does not want any work done to his building by the contractor or town. Several people commented on how nice the sidewalks look, including Mirriah Bigelow, business owner at 63 N Main St.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Request for a Second Leak Adjustment: Clerk-Treasurer Powell asked council members to review paperwork and consider approving a utility customer's leak adjustment request, the second since July. This time a receipt documenting repair to the outdoor spigot was presented to her office and the total adjustment is estimated to be around \$70.00. Council members mutually agreed to make an exception to ordinance and permit the adjustment.

### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Police Department: Town Marshal Josh Platt shared that Deputy Marshal Raber continues to do well at the academy and will graduate from ILEA Tier II Training on September 20. He then reported all new security cameras are in operation, and that he is pleased with their performance. Platt also said he will attend a meeting September 18<sup>th</sup> sponsored by Parkview Health and the Bowen Center to learn about a new program offering mental health assistance for those in crisis.



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Fire Department: Fire Chief Evan Schenkel reported the fire department had 15 runs last month. Also, he said the fire station's parking lot was recently paved. Both Schenkel and Dean Young remarked how nice the lot looks, and they thanked the County Commissioners for their contribution of \$50K towards the project.

Utility Department: Colin Bullock turned in a quote from Mike's Tree Service to council to take down several large, unhealthy-looking trees, totaling \$6,200.00. However, Bullock took one of the quoted trees down today reducing the quote by \$900.00. Young motioned to accept the quote for work on 6 trees, totaling \$5,300.00. Newsome seconded the motion, which passed 3-0. Bullock added that he expects activity to begin within the next 2 weeks or so on the water plant's high service pump. Also, his employees are prepping both plants for the upcoming cold weather season.

Clerk-Treasurer: Laury Powell reported that Dallas Township signed the 2025 Fire Protection Agreement at their advisory board meeting on September 4 and is now waiting to hear which meeting date Trustee Kay Schwob can attend here to present the contract to council for signature. Powell then said H&H alerted customers to potential delays or missed pickups due to new drivers filling in for vacations. Customers are advised to immediately contact H&H if their tote is not emptied. The Utility Account Delinquent List was also discussed, along with the difficulties fixed income customers face paying the existing water rates let alone the potential increase estimated to accompany the Huntington-Andrews Regionalization Project. Council members reemphasized they do not support a large water rate increase for residents.

**CLAIMS**

Dean Young made a motion to approve the claims as presented, which was seconded by Roger Newsome. The Motion was approved 3-0.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Laura Dillon discussed Braxton Craft's efforts in creating a community foundation organization in Andrews under the umbrella of the Huntington County Community Foundation. Craft said he, along with volunteers Mike Bartkus and Jody Cormany, have met with Erik Long, Elevate Huntington County, and Matt Ditzler, Executive Director of the HCCF, and are now in the process of applying to HCCF for accreditation. Craft should know more about the status of the group's request soon.

Halloween Trick-or-Treat hours have been set for Thursday, October 31, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Dean Young added that the Fire Department will host a Halloween Party on Saturday, October 26, at the fire station. Hours for the party have not been set at this time.

Erik Long, Elevate Huntington County, said he will contact council members to further discuss their plans and vision for the Town of Andrews so to share with the potential new "Main Street" community foundation group, looking to identify and bring to fruition projects to enhance the quality of life.

Jay Rhoads, 183 E McKeever St, was granted permission to sell low priced pumpkins on the town lot across the street from town hall. He stated he would donate several to the town for use in decorating the front entrance at town hall.

As discussed in today's Huntington County Solid Waste District meeting, Laura Dillon and Tom Wall announced unfortunate changes to the county's recycling program, with the contract for the county-wide recycling bins ending on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Contract expense is a factor, however there is too much trash, including out-of-county garbage, furniture, construction debris, tires, and other unacceptable items being left in and outside of the bins.


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Wall said county residents should begin using the old county landfill on 300 West to drop off their recyclable items during business hours. There will soon be employees to man the site and help sort and unload for you. New information for residents and businesses regarding this change will soon be posted on the HCSWD website.

With no further business, Roger Newsome made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 p.m., which was seconded by Dean Young.

Approved this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September 2024.

APPROVED BY  as  
LAURA A. DILLON COUNCIL PRESIDENT

APPROVED BY  as  
ROGER NEWSOME, JR. COUNCIL MEMBER

APPROVED BY  as  
MICHAEL D. YOUNG COUNCIL MEMBER

ATTEST BY  as  
LAURY L. POWELL CLERK-TREASURER