

Dillsboro Town Council Meeting

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Water Rate Public Hearing

July 14, 2025

Town of Dillsboro Council meetings are live-streamed and archived on dillsboro.in as required by law.

The regular meeting of the Dillsboro Town Council and the Water Rate Public Hearing was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on July 14, 2025 by Council President, Tim Benning, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Members (CM) present: Tim Benning, Becky Fryman, Charlie Caldwell, Jerri Jackson and Dustin Kitchell. Attorney present: John Watson

Public Hearing – Water Rate Ordinance

Town Manager Derek Walker reported that the Town recently completed a water rate study. The proposed rate increase is intended to fund the rehabilitation of the Town's 75,000-gallon water storage tank, originally constructed in 1958. The estimated cost of the rehabilitation is approximately \$400,000. If adopted, the proposed rate adjustment would result in a 10% increase, equivalent to an additional \$3.57 per month for the minimum bill and \$5.20 per month for a customer using 4,000 gallons monthly. The increase is projected to generate enough revenue to fund the project over a three-year period.

The proposed ordinance also outlines the following fees: Meter deposit - \$150.00, Transfer fee - \$10.00, Reconnect fee - \$25.00, Tap-in fee - \$1,300.00, and Summer meter deposit - \$185.00

Town Manager Walker reviewed the current minimum monthly charge for 2,500 gallons of water and the rate per additional 1,000 gallons.

CT Stevens inquired whether the \$150.00 meter deposit applies to all customers. TM Walker clarified that the \$150.00 deposit is only for commercial or business properties. The deposit for residential accounts will remain unchanged: \$85.00 for property owners and \$100.00 for renters.

Resident Jucinda Willoughby asked whether the proposed rehabilitation was for the smaller water tower, and whether it was necessary for the Town to maintain two water towers given its size. TM Walker confirmed that the project is for the smaller tower and explained that both towers are needed—one must remain operational while the other is taken offline for cleaning, repairs, or maintenance. He also noted that state regulations require municipalities to maintain water storage equal to 125% of daily usage. In response to a question about how long the rehabilitation would last, Town Manager Walker stated the project would extend the life of the tank by 15–20 years. He added that future maintenance costs would be significantly lower following the major rehabilitation.

With no further public comment, Council President Benning closed the public hearing at 6:06 p.m.

Regular Council Meeting

CM Fryman made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on June 9, 2025 and the executive council meetings on June 9, 2025, June 19, 2025 and July 8, 2025. Seconded by CM Jackson. All were in favor, and a motion carried.

Guest

Rod Martin, Navigate Tomorrow, expressed his gratitude to the Town Council from three years ago for providing the opportunity to utilize the property at 12916 North Street. He stated that he regrets not being able to complete the planned renovations within the three-year time frame and acknowledged that there are some concerns regarding the work completed.

Town Manager Derek Walker conducted a building inspection on June 18. Martin provided a written response to the inspection report, which is attached for the Council's review. He concluded his remarks by stating that he intends to vacate the building by the end of the month.

Dave Felts, Director of Aurora EMS, addressed the Council and shared his appreciation for the Town's warm welcome and support. He reported that Aurora EMS has handled 920 calls so far this year, with 260 of those calls in Dillsboro. The Responder 5 Unit, stationed in town, has responded to 105 calls since its deployment on April 21.

Felts noted that the average response time from dispatch to arrival on scene is 4 minutes and 19 seconds. He highlighted a recent cardiac arrest incident in June, where a bystander provided CPR before the Responder 5 Unit arrived within 2 minutes, greatly improving the patient's chance of survival.

In addition to emergency response services, Aurora EMS has actively engaged in the Dillsboro community, participating in the town parade and the recent bicycle giveaway event. The Council expressed their gratitude to Aurora EMS for their dedication and community involvement.

Old Business

Due to Director Dave Felts needing to attend another meeting, the agenda was rearranged to address the Aurora Emergency Rescue items first.

Fuel Use Agreement

Town Manager Derek Walker presented the Aurora Emergency Rescue Fuel Use Agreement. The agreement allows the Aurora EMS Responder 5 Unit to use the Town's onsite fuel tanks for emergency response purposes. Aurora EMS has already agreed to the terms. Under the agreement: Aurora EMS will document all fuel usage; the Town will invoice Aurora EMS quarterly, based on the Town's fuel rate from Laughery Valley Ag Co-op; and the agreement will be renewed annually.

CM Kitchell made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by CM Caldwell. The motion passed unanimously.

Emergency Services Garage

TM Walker also presented quotes for a 40' x 40' Emergency Services Garage with three bays, including one large 12' drive-through bay door. The garage is proposed to serve both the Aurora EMS Responder 5 Unit and the Dillsboro Volunteer Fire Department.

Walker clarified that the quotes do not include concrete flooring or electrical work, which could cost an additional \$15,000–\$20,000.

The lowest quote was from Manchester Metals 48 in the amount of \$61,325.00. However, Walker noted concerns with some of the contract terms, including: A clause stating the agreement would be governed by the laws of the State of Missouri, which could present legal issues; and a requirement that any disputes be resolved through arbitration in Ripley County, Indiana, under the American Arbitration Association rules.

Town Attorney Watson advised that these concerns should not be problematic and recommended contacting the company to request amending the arbitration location to Dearborn County.

TM Walker stated that the main concern is securing funding for the garage. The Township Trustee has verbally indicated the possibility of contributing \$20,000 toward the project. Additionally, the Fire Department may assist with funding.

Fire Chief Jason Sullivan stated that the Fire Department would discuss the funding options at their next regular or special meeting.

Additional quotes received were: Swiss Barns – \$65,507.00, Comer Buildings – \$67,375.00, Gosman – \$69,775.00, and Morton Buildings, Inc. – \$117,316.00.

Clerk-Treasurer Report

A sewer adjustment request was presented to the Council for Danny Roberts (Michelle Lane, Lot #17) in the amount of \$100.07, due to a water leak in a bathroom wall. CM Fryman made a motion to approve the adjustment, seconded by CM Kitchell. Motion carried unanimously.

An annual invoice from Boyce Systems in the amount of \$12,175.00 for Clerk-Treasurer computer software was presented. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows: CCIF - \$2,000.00, Water Utility Fund - \$3,391.66, Sewer Utility Fund - \$3,391.67, General Fund - \$3,391.67.

CM Fryman made a motion to approve the payment as proposed, seconded by CM Jackson. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget & Financial Updates

The 2026 Budget Public Hearing will be held on September 8, and the Budget Adoption will take place on October 13, during regular Council meetings.

Town Manager Walker and Clerk-Treasurer Stevens are scheduled to attend a DLGF Budget Workshop on July 17.

CT Stevens and TM Walker are preparing additional appropriations, which will be presented at the September 8 Council meeting.

Clerk-Treasurer Stevens will attend the ILMCT Annual Conference & State Board of Accounts School, scheduled for August 10–14. Town Manager Walker has approved of the travel. Administrative Assistant Kami Hamilton will be in the office during this time. CT Stevens requested and received Council approval to attend.

The AIM Ideas Summit will be held on October 21–23 in French Lick.

CT Stevens will be on vacation on July 25.

Fund Balances (as of June 30, 2025): General Fund - \$210,827.30, Water Utility Operating Fund - \$146,578.91, and Sewer Utility Operating Fund - \$235,606.30.

Fire Department – Jason Sullivan

Fire Chief Jason Sullivan presented the June Fire Incident Summary Report, noting a total of 20 calls for the month.

Chief Sullivan also addressed the cardiac arrest incident that occurred at the American Legion on June 3. Although an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) was on site, it had not yet been installed at the time of the incident. Since then, the AED has been properly installed, and both Chief Sullivan and his wife, Felicia Sullivan, visited the Legion to ensure it was set up and functioning correctly. They also provided basic training to staff.

Felicia Sullivan, a certified CPR instructor, has offered to provide CPR training to anyone in the community who is interested.

It was also noted that the Ball Park is equipped with an AED, and Chief Sullivan reminded everyone that all AED units should be checked monthly to ensure batteries are functioning and the units are ready for use.

Police Department

No report. CM Benning stated that an officer needs to attend the monthly Council meetings.

Beautification

CM Caldwell was on vacation for 2 weeks and everything went good with watering the flowers.

Main Street – Kami Hamilton, Executive Director

Assistance has been provided with the Munch-a-Lunch program, including shopping and set-up support for volunteers who are new to the process. Food supplies have been regularly picked up from Carol Hughes at the Carpet Store, which has been a key partner in the effort. It was noted that a significant amount of coordination and effort goes into making the program successful.

Additionally, work is ongoing on a Main Street program document report, which is due by July 15.

Legal – John Watson

2025 Interlocal Agreement/LIT Funding

Regarding the LIT funding in the future. Attorney Watson received text messages from Andy Baudendistel which Watson shared them with the council, the commissioners are agreeing to a 30% reduction in the interlocal agreement amount and no increases in the amount from 2025-2027. So, in fiscal year 2027, Dillsboro will pay annually \$22,432.69, the agreement originally asked for \$32,046.70 for this year only. The county is going to need an additional \$800,000 in 2025-2027. The County is figuring on \$200,000 from cities and towns and paying the remainder out of the General Fund. It was also mentioned by Baudendistel that in 2024, the town received \$185,477.03 of Riverboat money from the county, noting that the county has shared a good amount of money with Dillsboro. The LIT certified shares received are \$78,416.00 in 2025 and \$58,730.00 in 2026. 2025 public safety distributions will be going away in 2028. Nobody has really thought about holding back on the Riverboat. In 2028, Aurora and towns will have to ask the county council to propose for additional LIT on their behalf. This is why we are trying to cut a deal through 2027 because in 2028 everybody is going to be in effect.

Attorney Watson noted that he responded back to Baudendistel, “perhaps nobody has considered holding back on the Riverboat money, but I am sure it has not gone unnoticed. Now it appears we are going to lose the LIT distributions in 2028. Sometimes you must bend in this world, but this doesn’t mean you have to like it. My board and maybe some others may see it as a situation. I will let them know about the proposal.”

Attorney Watson thinks this is a direct threat to Riverboat money. Watson noted that all the other towns and cities in the county have paid.

CM Fryman made a motion to pay \$22,432.69 from Riverboat with a letter stating the town will not sign the agreement and revisit this in a year. Second, by CM Caldwell. All were in favor, except CM Benning opposed.

Dillsboro Emergency Unit

Attorney Watson noted that he would like the legal proceedings to move faster and would like to see the inspection of the property done and has been mentioning it to the county.

Town Manager – Derek Walker

TM Walker presented the WWTP Monthly Report for the town’s sewer plant and the monthly water report.

Old Business

A job offer was presented to Russell Earles for the position of Utility Superintendent. The terms of the offer include: an hourly wage of \$31.00, a take-home vehicle, and a requirement to obtain water and sewer licenses within two years

CM Kitchell made a motion to offer the position to Russell Earles under the terms presented. The motion was seconded by CM Fryman. Motion carried unanimously.

12916 North Street Property

The Council discussed the future use of the 12916 North Street property and decided to pursue a new lease of the building again rather than transferring it to the Redevelopment Commission.

Water Rate Ordinance 2025-7-1

Ordinance 2025-7-1, regarding updated water rates, was presented (attached). The only remaining item to be determined was the effective start date.

Clerk-Treasurer Stevens noted that she needs to contact Boyce Systems to have the new rates programmed into the billing system, which typically requires about a month. The ordinance will therefore take effect on July 25, 2025.

CM Fryman made a motion to approve Water Rate Ordinance 2025-7-1, specifying that Section 51.2(B) reflects the effective date of July 25, 2025. The motion was seconded by CM Caldwell. Motion carried unanimously.

Stellar Pathways Public Open House

The Stellar Pathways Public Open House is scheduled for July 28 at the Dillsboro Civic Club. The event is intended to gather public feedback and share the proposed project alternatives. Following the public open house, the Town Council will hold a working session on August 4 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the next steps.

Sidewalk Improvement Project – HWC Engineering Contract

The HWC Engineering contract presented at \$295,000 for the engineering services for the Sidewalk Improvement Project was discussed. The project is federally funded, with 80% of costs covered by the grant and the remaining 20% to be paid by the Town. The total project cost is approximately \$1.2 million. The Council agreed to hold a special meeting on July 21 at 6:30 p.m. to further review and act on the contract.

North Street Streetscaping Project – Clark Dietz Contract

The contract from Clark Dietz Engineering for the North Street Streetscaping Project has not yet been received but is anticipated any day now. No action was taken at this time.

New Business

Salary Ordinance 2025-7-2 (attached) was presented for approval. The ordinance includes the following updates: Russell Earles has been added as Utility Superintendent; Mike Beach and Brian Graver have received their sewer licenses, and their wages reflect this certification; Town Manager Derek Walker will be paid equally from three funds: 1/3 General Fund, 1/3 Water Fund, and 1/3 Sewer Fund; Alexander Sears will be paid 80% from the General Fund and 20% from the Public Safety Fund.

CM Kitchell made a motion to approve Salary Ordinance 2025-7-2, seconded by CM Fryman. Motion carried unanimously.

Dearborn Community Foundation Grant Application – Support Statement

The Park Board is preparing a grant application for the Dearborn Community Foundation for the construction of basketball and pickleball courts at the town park. The grant request will be for \$100,000, with a \$20,000 local match to be contributed by the Park Board. The application deadline is August 4.

CM Fryman made a motion to approve the submission of the grant application, seconded by CM Jackson. Motion carried unanimously.

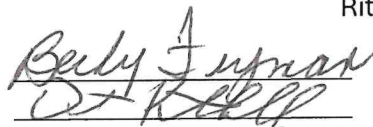
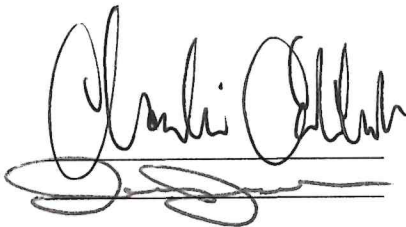
Main Street President Resignation

Kami Hamilton, Executive Director of Dillsboro Main Street, informed the Council that she received a text message from Rod Martin, stating that he has resigned effective immediately from his position as President of Main Street.

Electric Bicycles

CM Benning inquired whether there is a town ordinance regulating electric bicycles, citing recent concerns about individuals riding them unsafely around town. The matter was noted for further review.

There being no further business, CM Jackson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m., seconded by CM Fryman. Motion carried unanimously.



Rita Stevens, Clerk-Treasurer

