

TOWN OF THORNTOWN

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

February 16, 2026

7:00 PM

The February 16, 2026, meeting of the Council of the Town of Thorntown was called to order by Council President, Dave Williams at 7:00 PM. The meeting was held at the Thorntown Town Hall, 101 W. Main St., Thorntown, IN. The Council and citizens joined together in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following were in attendance:

Dave Williams, Council President	Frank Clark, Thorntown PD	Gene Doctor, APC
Bruce Burtner, Town Council	Derek Babcock, Thorntown PD	Erick Smith, USB
Randy Bruder, Town Council	Tyler Casey, Thorntown PD	Matt Rairdon, USB
Jon Riggen, Town Council	Earl Parsons, Utilities	Jeff Wolfe, Municipal Consultant
Gary Coffman, Town Council	Dalton Humphreys, Utilities	Andrea Kern, Boone Co. EDC
Aly Hickman, Clerk-Treasurer	Don Gray, APC	Dan Cutshaw, CDS Engineers
Jarrold Hall, Krohn & Associates	Sarah Correll, ICE Miller	17 Citizens

Public Comments and Concerns:

Council President, Dave Williams, asked citizens in attendance how many were there regarding the water rate increase. The majority of the room raised their hands. He noted the experts in attendance (Dan Cutshaw/CDS Engineers, Jarrod Hall/Krohn & Associates, and Sarah Correll/ICE Miller) had presentations and were available to answer questions, and he asked the public to avoid finger pointing, swearing, and name calling when speaking. Dave noted the Public Hearing regarding the water rates would be held March 2, but the Council would allow public comments and questions at this meeting. He opened the floor to the public for questions or concerns.

Q: George Gideon, Citizen: Mr. Gideon asked how the town determined that it needed to expand the water treatment plant and if the current plant was sufficient to carry on. He also asked if any grant applications were made to help offset the cost. Lastly, he asked if the rate changes could be made over a period of time instead of all at once.

A: Dave Williams mentioned all three of those questions would be answered during the presentations by the engineer and CPA.

Q: Justin Wright, Citizen: Mr. Wright asked how many gallons/minute were being processed by our current plant and what the town was trying to achieve. He asked why we are being told we need to have a different plant. He also asked what the rush was for the \$750,000 grant. Mr. Wright noted the town's current ordinance does not show the meter base rate fee. He understands it's 2,000 gallons, but noted it isn't listed in the ordinance, and is concerned that it can be changed at a later time. Mr. Wright asked why the hydrant fee is being doubled and doesn't feel the hydrant fee goes hand-in-hand with the water rates. He noted he feels the town is rushing this project to accommodate other projects. Lastly, he noted the town charges for stormwater but there are no projects being completed.

A: Dave Williams noted the first part of Mr. Wright's questions would be answered in the presentation. He noted he was unaware the town proposed to double the hydrant fees.

Q. Ethan Schilling, Citizen: Mr. Schilling had questions related to the Request for Proposals issued by the engineering company, CDS Engineers. Regarding the contract included in the RFP sent to contractors for the Water Treatment Plant Project construction, Mr. Schilling noted there is typically

risk included to mitigate any risk during construction, and he did not see that in this contract. He noted there is typically information regarding substantial completion dictating project milestones, but he did not see this listed in the RFP contract. He was curious as to what action would define substantial completion. Mr. Schilling also inquired about Guarantee of Work in the RFP contract. He noted previous issues with the sewage pond contractor and asked what the remedy is should an issue arise with the work on the water treatment plant. Lastly, Mr. Schilling asked how change orders would be handled and managed.

A: Dave Williams asked Dan Cutshaw if he would be answering those questions in his presentation. Dan responded yes.

Q: Tiffany Greenwell, Citizen: Ms. Greenwell noted that in previous communities she has lived in, budget billing was offered and questioned whether the town would be offering that. She also asked if the website would be updated to show previous bills. Citizen Carol Wilson noted that the budget billing question would be her question as well.

A: Dave Williams noted he did not have an answer but would find out. Earl Parsons, Utility Superintendent, said it would need to be a discussion within the Utility Service Board. Erick Smith, Utility Service Board President, stated there are no plans to offer either at this time.

Presentation – Dan Cutshaw, CDS Engineers:

Mr. Cutshaw passed out to the Council a summary of the bids received for the Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project. A total of 3 bids were received, with the lowest bidder being Ottenweller Contracting from Ft. Wayne. Dan noted he has worked with them on many projects. The base bid from Ottenweller was \$4,162,000, roughly 7% higher than the Engineer's estimate of \$3,862,000. There are roughly \$230,000 of built in contingency, and CDS would be meeting with the contractor to complete some value engineering. Mr. Cutshaw asked the Council if there were any questions concerning bid opening. There were none at that time. He then addressed the previous questions from the room.

Mr. Cutshaw described the water treatment plant as having lived its life, noting the aeration isn't working and the filters didn't have much media left. Dan stated the town is at 80%-90% capacity and once reaching these types of levels, IDEM requires to either get a water ban for no further connections or improve the plant. The current plan operates at 150 GPM, producing roughly 216,000 gallons/day. The new plant will run at 300 GPM, creating about 432,000 gallons per day. The new plant will also be expandable, with two more filters in the building, which are not being installed during this particular project in order to save money. The two additional filters would suffice for the foreseeable future, allowing the town to reach roughly 900 GPM or 1.3 million gallons per day.

Mr. Cutshaw noted that the town did apply for and obtain an OCRA grant. SRF financing was also applied for, but the town did not score well due to a lack of emerging contamination issues. Dan noted the contract documents are standard engineering EJCDC documents with bonds, guaranteeing the town will have a reputable contractor, with change order procedures and liquidated damages. The project was originally projected to be finished by December 31, 2026. However, the timeframe depends on the timeframe for equipment. Dan noted some equipment, most notably the filters, could take 40 weeks – 60 weeks to get in.

Carol Wilson asked Dan if there was a possibility the water would be off for any extended periods of time during construction. Dan said no, with the planned switchover being almost instantaneous. Justin Wright asked if the plant failed tests or is simply at max capacity for the number of homes being added on. Mr. Cutshaw noted the plant isn't really failing tests, and that the plant has no IDEM violations. However, if any repairs are needed, pumps and filters cannot be replaced while keeping the plant operational. Mr. Cutshaw

noted the plant has been maintained very well. Another citizen asked if Thorntown would be providing water to the annexed subdivision (Westfall Place, Arbor Homes). The town is already providing water to Westfall Place and will be serving all homes within the subdivision. Another citizen asked if the town could expect any difference in the quality of water. Mr. Cutshaw believes the town will have better quality of water due to a much better filter, but noted the town has pretty good raw water, under most levels required by IDEM with just raw water. Another citizen asked about projected operating costs for the new plant. Dan said that was looked at, and while the plant will be pumping extra, they believe operating costs will be roughly the same.

There were no further questions for Mr. Cutshaw from those in attendance at that time.

Presentation – Jarrod Hall, Krohn & Associates:

Mr. Hall introduced himself to the room and reviewed the documents he would be discussing; the comprehensive rate study, the schedules, and the presentation packet containing excerpts of the rate study. He reviewed the current rates and noted the reference to 4,000 gallons used throughout the presentation is the apples to apples measure in the industry, although the average customer in Thorntown uses roughly 3,000 gallons.

Mr. Hall reviewed the revenue requirements to be supported by utility rates including pro forma operating disbursements, debt service on bonds, debt service reserve funding, depreciation, and working capital allowance. The water rate study was based on the most recent information, 2025 numbers. Jarrod reviewed the numbers and information used for the pro forma operating disbursements. He noted that he was aware of the significant rate impact and worked to ensure the rates were adequate/sufficient for the requirements but not excessive. The numbers were previously presented to the Utility Service Board for consideration. Mr. Hall noted that if the town moved forward, a public hearing would take place next. The goal with these projected rates is that this rate increase lasts 3-4 years at a minimum.

Jarrod reviewed the funds required for the project and their sources:

Water Treatment Plant Improvements / Construction: \$4,162,000
Engineering and Inspections: \$756,200
Grant Administrative Services: \$85,000
Insurance and Contingency: \$148,800
Total Use of Funds: \$5,152,000

Source of Funds

Proposed Waterworks Revenue Bonds of 2026: \$3,550,000
OCRA Grant Funding: \$750,000
Funds on Hand: \$852,000

He discussed that Arbor Homes prepaid the water capacity fees, providing the town with funds on hand to help buy down the borrowing amount. Had Arbor not paid these fees up front, the town would have needed another 20% included in the rate increase.

The bond is a 20 year bond, and at the time of the meeting, the specific rates were unknown. 4.5% was used. A debt service reserve is also required for the bond, equal to one year of debt service (\$277,000), which the town has 5 years to fund. The Clerk-Treasurer will be responsible for making the monthly transfers. Jarrod discussed the math used to determine the proposed rate increase of 123.2%. A citizen asked for a copy of the presentation packet. Extra hard copies were available at the meeting. **The informational presentation packet will be uploaded with the minutes to the town website.* Mr. Gideon asked how much the rate study cost the

town and if this rate increase could be phased in. Jarrod noted it was roughly \$4,000 - \$5,000. He discussed that the issue with phasing in the rate increase was that payments on the bond need to be made beginning in January, and money must be collected prior to that. The ordinance regarding the rates would need to be adopted, then sent in to update the billing, and then collected. Mr. Tim Williams asked if the rate increase was only for the water, and Jarrod noted this is only for the water and not the other utilities provided.

A citizen asked if a household does not utilize the minimum of 2,000 gallons/month why they need to pay for 2,000 gallons. Jarrod noted he could speak to the high level on that, and the system has a standard operating cost. A household tapped into the system would need to contribute to that cost, whether they utilize the full minimum each month or not. A citizen asked where the minimum of 2,000 was noted in the ordinance and asked that it specifically be noted. Jarrod said the verbiage can be added. A citizen asked why the fire protection fees were increasing. Jarrod responded, saying the fire rate charge was capacity related and felt it was applicable considering the treatment plant project was also capacity related. If the fire protection fees were not increased, the same amount of funds would still need to be raised.

Gene Doctor asked when the rate increase would need to take place, which would need to be immediately in order to begin collecting the funds for the bond payments. A citizen asked if there was a time frame for how long these new rates would need to be in place for, and whether it would come back down after the 20 year bond was over. Jarrod and Erick Smith noted that typically they don't see rates, or the cost of providing water, come back down.

Dave Williams addressed the room, stating this project has been in the works for quite some time. He discussed the location of the wells that currently supply the town with water, along with the location of the third well, which will be dug in the upcoming few weeks/months, as the well site has been cleared of trees. He stated the Arbor addition was not the reason behind the expansion of the water plant. Dave discussed the location of the aquifer and the town's hopes for digging the well over the aquifer. He noted that he doesn't like the rate increase anymore than those in attendance do, but it's something that the town needs to make work. He acknowledged the challenge of increased rates for citizens and that he appreciated the audience attending.

Mr. Gideon asked if the test well is successful, would the other two remain in operation. Dave responded that they would. Ms. Wilson asked about the age of the water meters, and Earl confirmed the water meters have been replaced throughout the last few years. Mr. Gideon noted the battery life on the meters used to be around 10 years and asked if there would be a need to replace all the batteries soon. Earl discussed that they replace the batteries when they no longer give out signal, replacing roughly 2-3 batteries each month.

Department Reports – APC

Don Gray of the APC noted the APC met and worked through and give a favorable recommendation for the Unified Development Ordinance.

Department Reports – Park Board

Alex Visser of the Park Board discussed the subcommittee created for the Fourth of July celebration and the upcoming meeting for the subcommittee.

Department Reports – Fire Department – *Called out prior on a run*

Department Reports – Police Department – *Also called out prior on a run*

Stormwater Board – Nothing to Report

Department Report – Utilities

Erick Smith, USB President, discussed the water treatment plant. He and Earl noted it was built in 1959 and updated in 1990. He discussed the cost of providing water/infrastructure and let the room know about upcoming USB meetings.

Earl Parsons, Utility Superintendent, said IDEM came to visit the Utilities last week. They noted a few things they would like the town to do, including adding quick connections to all the lift stations. IDEM would also like the town to revisit the infiltration inflow in our sewer system, what Accu-Dig completed a couple years ago. Previously 30 locations were provided, with 9 that fit into the town's budget at the time, where work was completed. Earl has contacted Accu-Dig and will be working on another list. He asked the Council to start thinking about what they would like to budget for the project.

Earl also provided an update about the pond, noting it averaged 60% capacity throughout last year. There was a high of 106% capacity in June and a low of 46% in October. The high in June was due to 10 ½" of rain over an 8 day period. If the month of June was removed, the pond ran at an average of 50% capacity throughout the year.

Earl passed out photographs to the Council and discussed the addition of the lift station at the Westfall subdivision. The lift station had been active for approximately one month when the pumps started shutting down due to construction wipes clogging up the pumps. The photographs passed out were photos of the pumps wrapped in construction wipes. Earl said the service call to repair this was \$1,245.00. He asked the Council to consider working out something in writing with Arbor Homes about these expenses prior to the town taking possession of the pumps so the town doesn't incur all these costs should construction wipes continue to wind up in the sewer system.

Department Report – Municipal Consultant

Jeff Wolfe told the Council he has been working on pulling together the maps and acreage for the mowing bid. He said the first draft of the Sewer Water District application, but he had some questions he's reached out about. Jeff noted he will be working with Amy (Nooning) on the language.

Department Report – Clerk-Treasurer

Aly Hickman noted the allowance dockets for the previous month, along with the APV register for the previous month, and minutes from previous meetings ready for review and approval by the Council.

Annual Report from the Boone Co. EDC

Andrea Kern, CEO of the Boone Co. Economic Development Committee, introduced herself to the room prior to presenting the annual report. In 2025, the Boone Co. EDC finished the 180 in Color project with the murals around town. The EDC also worked on the 180 Makeover project and celebrated the opening of the storefronts. Andrea noted priorities for the EDC moving forward include behind the scenes tours, replying to interested companies looking to relocate, Business Engagement visits so they can take care of existing businesses, increasing housing stock including mixed-use development and higher density developments to help increase tax rates for municipalities, and the Early Learning Coalition. She noted the fact that there aren't many childcare providers, which is a barrier for the workforce. The Boone Co. EDC also manages their microloan program. They awarded two last year to Pure Life Chiropractic and Rolling Dough Pizza Company in Advance. Andrea noted the businesses appreciate the low interest on the loans that goes back into the program to support future businesses in the county. She noted the Boone Co. EDC is partnering with IU's O'Neill School to conduct retail gap analysis for each municipality in Boone Co in 2026. They are completing a new 3-year strategic plan and also working with the school districts to connect with local employers to provide work-based learning opportunities to students throughout the county. She thanked the Council for their continued partnership.

Introduction of the Bond Ordinances

Sarah Correll of ICE Miller, bond counsel for the town, spoke to the Council regarding the introduction of Ordinance 2026-02 (An Ordinance of the Town of Thorntown authorizing the issuance of waterworks revenue bonds) and Ordinance 2026-03 (An Ordinance Establishing Rates and Charges for the Use of Water Services). She noted this evening’s meeting is the initial introduction to the public so the Public Hearing can be held at the upcoming March 2 meeting. Sarah discussed the bond ordinance and numbers involved. She asked the Council and room for any questions.

Bruce Burtner completed the first reading/introduction of Ordinance 2026-02.

Dave Williams completed the first reading/introduction of Ordinance 2026-03.

Adoption of Minutes

Bruce Burtner made a motion to accept the minutes for January 26, 2026, and February 2, 2026. Randy Bruder seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Review of Allowance Dockets and APV Register

The Council reviewed and signed off on the available Allowance Dockets and APV Register.

Adjournment: With no additional business to discuss, Bruce Burtner made a motion to close the meeting at 8:28 PM. Randy Bruder seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Dave Williams
Council President

Aly Hickman
Clerk/Treasurer

Date: _____

These minutes are a summary of actions taken at the Town of Thorntown Council meeting. The full video archive of the meeting is available for viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/@TownofThorntownIndiana> for as long as this media is supported.

Pursuit to IC 5-14-9 section 6; following is a roster of the current Thorntown Town Council Members’ names, appointing authority and their appointment terms:

Dave Williams, Council President	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>To Fulfill Term Until December 31, 2026</i>
Bruce Burtner, Council Vice President	<i>Elected</i>	<i>To Fulfill Term Until December 31, 2026</i>
Randy Bruder, Council Member	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>To Fulfill Term Until December 31, 2028</i>
Gary Coffman, Council Member	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>To Fulfill Term Until December 31, 2028</i>
Jon Rigger, Council Member	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>To Fulfill Term Until December 31, 2026</i>
Aly Hickman, Clerk-Treasurer	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>To Fulfill Term Until December 31, 2026</i>