

TOWN OF DUNE ACRES
COUNCIL MINUTES
May 20, 2025

— DRAFT MINUTES ONLY. NOT OFFICIAL UNDER APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL —

The Town of Dune Acres Town Council met for its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at the Clubhouse. Council President Richard Hawksworth called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., with Council members Alexander Stemer and Paul Woidke; Clerk-Treasurer Bonnie Hawksworth; and Town Attorney Adam Mindel in attendance. Commissioners present were Shawn Fitzpatrick (Parks), Lee McKinley (Security), Dick Taylor (Maintenance), Tom Roberts (Building), Robin Tenant (Environment), and Rob Carstens (Beach).

The meeting was broadcast live via Zoom.

Council President Hawksworth opened the meeting by reminding those in attendance that Town Council meetings are meetings of the Town Council held in public—not open forums for general discussion. He stated that the Council values community input that respects the structure of governance and the rights of all residents, not just those who elect to attend meetings.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes for the April 15 Town Council meeting as presented. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

Clerk-Treasurer Hawksworth presented the April month-end financial report. The combined bank account balance as of April 30 is \$747,879.53. The Town has spent roughly 27 percent of its budget. Year-to-date revenue is \$251,107.84, which includes \$144,070 in road-grant funding received in April.

Cender-Dalton provided a first-quarter review. All balances reflected in the Fund Report reconcile with Porter Bank and Trust statements. The Town is in good financial position, having spent less than budgeted for the first quarter. Cender continues to assist with issues related to Keystone workings, as well as State Board of Accounts and Department of Local Government Finance requirements.

It was moved and seconded to approve the financial report. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS:

Clerk-Treasurer Hawksworth asked the Town Council to approve Accounts Payable Vouchers for May (http://duneacres.org/apv/apv_2025-05.pdf) totaling \$53,330.03. It was moved and seconded to approve the claims. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Council President Hawksworth noted that correspondence had been sent to Congressman Mrvan regarding his work to advance the D-BLOC legislation, and to Indiana State Senator Rodney Pol for his role in opposing legislation to impose tolls on local highways.

EXECUTIVE REPORT:

Council President Hawksworth presented his executive report for the preceding month including the following activities:

Rail Crossing: Phone meetings were held with a new point of contact at the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to discuss the frequent blocked crossing at Mineral Springs Road. The STB representative noted the availability of Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant funds for highway-rail and pathway-rail grade-crossing improvements; encouraged the Town to continue working with its congressional representatives on

blocking-related legislation; and offered to liaise with South Shore Freight to honor certain “curfew” hours (windows throughout the day when trains would agree not to block the tracks). The Town is actively exploring several automation options to mitigate the impact of blocked rail crossings on residents.

Garbage Collection - The Town currently has one refuse-collection vendor servicing residents, but there is no exclusive agreement in place, resulting in widely variable pricing for identical services. Bids are being solicited to provide uniform pricing for all Dune Acres residents, based on desired services (e.g., garbage only; garbage and recycling; door-to-door, etc.). These bids will be presented at the June meeting.

Parking Ordinance - It was noted that some contention has arisen related to guest parking permits, likely stemming from a misunderstanding of the discussion. The system of free, single-day guest passes has been in place since the 1980s and remains the only guest-parking-pass option in Town Code. The idea put forth in April would have added the option of paid or free parking “booklets.” Based on comments received from community members, Hawksworth suggested a review of the parking-sticker and guest-pass ordinance, with the intent to codify a permanent solution by March 2026.

Capital Expenditures - New state legislation will result in reduced funding for municipalities, beginning next year. The three-year impact to Dune Acres is estimated at roughly \$50,000. With this information available now, the Town will begin work on its capital budget. Two items for immediate consideration—a new ATV for maintenance and security, and electrical service at East Beach—will be considered under New Business.

Liquor Liability - The Town is reviewing its alcohol policies, liquor-liability insurance coverage, and relevant state regulations, especially as they relate to clubhouse use by private parties. The Clubhouse Coordinator will distribute information to all pending rentals, advising of their responsibility to understand and follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

BEACH:

Commissioner Carstens reported that buoys arrived early this year. Cleanup will be scheduled in preparation for installation of the beach mat. An estimate to bring power to East Beach is \$6,200; work would be completed prior to the July 4 weekend.

BUILDING:

Commissioner Roberts submitted two building-permit applications for consideration: Permit 2025-12 for the installation of a funicular at 14 Oak Drive, and Permit 2025-13 for a multi-room remodel at 19 Crest Drive. It was moved and seconded to approve issuance of both permits. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

ENVIRONMENT:

Commissioner Tenant reported that the Town Cleanup produced favorable results. Tenant suggested holding a fall Town Cleanup on an annual basis, with several potential new projects that might attract more participation.

FIRE:

None

MAINTENANCE:

PARKS:

Commissioner Fitzpatrick reported that a meeting will be held to discuss ideas for the playground. He also suggested holding community events—such as a “movie night”—in the Town park. Fitzpatrick asked about mowing an area adjacent to the tennis courts for soccer play. President Hawksworth noted he had been asked the same by Commissioner Taylor and promised to arrange a meeting before the June council meeting to discuss.

ROADS:

President Hawksworth reported on behalf of Commissioner Kudrna. Road paving for Spring 2025 was completed, with a few areas slated for touch up, including parking near the tennis courts. The work was funded in significant part by a \$144,000 grant from the state's Community Crossing program. Hawksworth recounted the transformational effect of the town's \$1M+ grant-writing efforts over the last 10-12 years. He underscored that researching, writing, and managing grants is outside the statutory responsibilities of the clerk-treasurer and volunteer roads commissioner and thanked both of them for their contributions.

SECURITY:

Commissioner McKinley read a letter from security officer, Jeanneen Doherty, who intends to retire at the end of May 2025. Council President Hawksworth noted Ms. Doherty's service and that she will be missed. McKinley then presented the application and background check for a proposed new hire, Mr. Greg Ott. It was moved and seconded to approve the hiring. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed. McKinley read a prepared statement regarding the challenges of recruiting new security-officer candidates and described the Town's careful efforts to interview and fully vet applicants. He asked that residents respect the process and the judgment of the Commissioner and Council.

OLD BUSINESS:**Parking Regulations:**

Council President Hawksworth proposed an interim process for issuing guest-parking passes while permanent measures are developed for implementation in March 2026. It was moved and seconded to authorize Security to issue two annual guest-parking passes per household (valid through March 31, 2026, excluding holiday weekends) and to extend the expiration of current resident parking stickers to the same date. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

Insurance Coverage:

Council President Hawksworth reported that Anton Insurance continues to explore options to close the gap between the town's liability coverage and the state caps on municipal liability.

NEW BUSINESS:**Resolution 2025-02: Contract Fire EMS Uploads Affirmation:**

This resolution is required by the Department of Local Government Finance and authorizes the Clerk-Treasurer to upload contracts for fire services to the Indiana Gateway platform. It was moved and seconded to approve the resolution. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

Capital Expenditures:

Two immediate capital expenditures were considered. The first was installing permanent power for East Beach. The second was the purchase of an ATV with optional attachments including a plow blade, blower, and beach "raking" apparatus. The vehicle would be used by maintenance and security personnel. There was a motion to approve the provision of beach power at a cost of up to \$7,000; and the ATV and accessories purchase up to \$26,000. It was moved and seconded to approve the expenditures. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

Budget Calendar:

Clerk-Treasurer Hawksworth presented the calendar for 2026 budget development, which begins with a Budget Workshop at the July 15 Town Council meeting. The Budget Hearing is scheduled for August 19, with Budget Adoption scheduled for September 16. It was moved and seconded to approve the calendar as presented. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

Clubhouse Rental:

Council members reviewed a request to rent the Clubhouse on July 30, 2025. It was moved and seconded to approve the request. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS:

From the floor, Ms. Evans inquired about her public records request. Council President Hawksworth stated the town’s policy aligns with the Indiana Access to Public Records Act. That is, the town will acknowledge a records request immediately and produce responsive records within a reasonable time.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm. The next regular meeting of the Town Council is on Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at the Clubhouse.

RICHARD HAWKSWORTH, Town Council President

PAUL WOIDKE, Town Council Member

ALEXANDER STEMER, Town Council Member

BONNIE HAWKSWORTH, Clerk-Treasurer