

Benton Township Board
Unionville Senior Center
7616 East State Road 45 Unionville, IN 47468

Meeting Minutes for December 10, 2025

Attendees:

Michelle Bright - Benton Township Trustee

Joe Husk - Board Chair

Jake Dodds - Board Secretary

Sean McInerney - Board Member (Mr. McInerney sat off camera for social distancing during this meeting)

Jason Hawkins - resident

Jennifer Hawkins - resident

This meeting was broadcast live on the Benton Township Youtube page.

Meeting called to order at 6:31pm

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the meeting notes from October 8th, 2025 was made (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Yes, Husk - Yes, McInerney - Yes. The Motion was approved unanimously.

Financial Report

The board received copies and Trustee Bright read aloud for review, the Financial Reports for October and November of 2025. (A summary of these reports is attached to this document.)

The board had no questions regarding the Financial Reports. A Motion was made to approve the financial reports (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Yes, Husk - Yes, McInerney - Yes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Trustee's Report

Trustee Bright read aloud for review, the Trustee's Reports for October and November of 2025.

- Trustee Bright took a moment to recognize the life of former Benton Township Trustee and board member Lynn Stevens who had passed away. The trustee and the board thank Lynn for his service to the community.
- Trustee Bright attended the 2025 Indiana Township Association's educational conference. The trustee attended classes on “ethics in government” “government and AI” “Budgeting amid legislative change and capital improvement planning” and “Internal controls for small and medium Townships”
- Trustee Bright contacted our Shelter Insurance representative regarding the township's covid donation fund use language. Restrictions were reduced from previous years to allow for a more flexible use of the funds when needed to help residents in need.
- A local girl scouts troop has expressed interest in becoming more involved with the food pantry and little library outside the senior center previously managed by 4H Hotshots.
- On Dec. 9 Trustee Bright along with other trustees attended a Monroe County Council meeting to express thoughts and concerns for township funding and structure moving forward.
- The 2026 budget notice was approved as expected.
- Danny Smith Park reached out about reimbursement for projects the township has offered to help fund that have now been completed. As of the Dec 10 meeting trustee Bright had not received any invoicing regarding work At Danny Smith Park. The trustee followed up requesting documents by Dec 20 for payments to be made this year.
- On December 4 Monroe County Commissioners held a meeting to include Bean Blossom township in The Monroe Fire District. Salt Creek, Polk townships were also discussed with decisions said to be “happening soon”.
- Benton Township must hold its annual organizational meeting by the first Tuesday after the first Monday of 2026 per Indiana code. At this meeting the board would be required to elect one Chair and one Secretary of the board. This meeting will be held Monday January 5th. The board will also set meeting dates for all of 2026.

The board had no questions regarding the Trustees' Report. A motion was made to approve the Trustees' report (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Yes, Husk - Yes, McInerney - Yes. The motion was passed unanimously.

Township Assistance Report

The board received copies and Trustee Bright read aloud for review, the Township Assistance Report for October and November of 2025. (A summary of these reports is attached to this document.)

Trustee Bright also gave an update on the counting of requests for assistance that had been discussed in the October meeting. There is a discrepancy about whether requests should be counted when contact is made or only if a final request is presented. The number of requests vs approvals could be important as the Indiana legislature continues to review township governments' funding, mergers and purpose.

Language suggest requests should be counted when they are documented whether or not the individual completes an application.

The board had no questions regarding the Township Assistance Reports. A motion was made to approve the Township Assistance reports (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Yes, Husk - Yes, McInerney - Yes. The motion was passed unanimously.

Old Board Business

There was no old board business at this meeting.

New Board Business

- **Transfer of Appropriation - Township General**
A motion was made to approve the Transfer of Appropriation - Township General (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Aye, Husk - Aye, McInerney - Aye. The motion was passed unanimously.
- **Conflict in Nepotism and Employment**
The board signed the annual Conflict in Nepotism and Employment forms for 2025.
- **Uniform Conflict of Interest**
The board signed the annual Uniform Conflict of Interest forms for 2025

- **North Tunnel Road Property**

- Residents Jason and Jennifer Hawkins have discovered a parcel of land that they have long maintained is a separate parcel of land. They have expressed interest in purchasing the parcel of land. Available title information does not clearly state who owns the parcel currently. In the event there is no proper ownership then property would belong to the township. The board debated the amount it would have to spend to prove ownership. The board feels it is currently the townships responsibility to determine this information and that it would be needed before any transfer or sale would be possible. The Trustee plans to contact a title company to further research the properties ownership.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this meeting.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Aye, Husk - Aye, McInerney - Aye. The motion was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26pm.

FINANCIAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2025	2025 Budget	Month to date Expense	Year to date Expense	Remaining Approved Budget	Cash Balance	Deposits	Local Income	Trust
							Tax	Indiana
Rainy Day Fund	\$ 88,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 88,500.00	89,138.56	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 267.19
Township Fund	\$ 245,000.00	3,286.85	37,766.33	\$ 207,233.67	303,209.15	\$ 848.00	\$ 1,491.25	\$ 1,039.82
Welfare Admin/Direct Asst	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -	9,526.95	\$ 15,473.05	111,209.62	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 278.05
Recreation Fund	\$ 5,000.00	206.63	3,252.21	\$ 1,747.79	12,067.19	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19.80
COVID Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 450.22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Township Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 114.84	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Volunteer Fire Dept Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 3,378.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS					\$ 519,568.28	\$ 848.00	\$ 1,491.25	\$ 1,604.86

OCTOBER 2025	2025 Budget	Month to date Expense	Year to date Expense	Remaining Approved Budget	Cash Balance	Deposits	Local Income	Trust
							Tax	Indiana
Rainy Day Fund	\$ 88,500.00	\$ 46,394.74	\$ 46,394.74	\$ 42,105.26	42,964.73	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 220.91
Township Fund	\$ 245,000.00	193,757.71	231,524.04	\$ 13,475.96	111,791.02	\$ -	\$ 1,491.25	\$ 848.33
Welfare Admin/Direct Asst	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -	9,526.95	\$ 15,473.05	111,487.66	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 278.04
Recreation Fund	\$ 5,000.00	799.98	4,052.19	\$ 947.81	11,287.02	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19.81
COVID Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 450.22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Township Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 114.84	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Volunteer Fire Dept Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 3,378.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS					\$ 281,474.19	\$ -	\$ 1,491.25	\$ 1,367.09

NOVEMBER 2025	2025 Budget	Month to date Expense	Year to date Expense	Remaining Approved Budget	Cash Balance	Deposits	Local Income	Trust
							Tax	Indiana
Rainy Day Fund	\$ 88,500.00	\$ -	\$ 46,394.74	\$ 42,105.26	43,062.52	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 97.79
Township Fund	\$ 245,000.00	3,937.29	235,461.33	\$ 9,538.67	109,695.03	\$ -	\$ 1,491.25	\$ 350.05
Welfare Admin/Direct Asst	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -	9,526.95	\$ 15,473.05	111,745.59	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 257.93
Recreation Fund	\$ 5,000.00	247.1	4,299.29	\$ 700.71	11,058.25	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18.33
COVID Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 450.22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Township Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Volunteer Fire Dept Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 3,378.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS					\$ 279,390.31	\$ -	\$ 1,491.25	\$ 724.10

2025 Additional Appropriations

If Brock Cemetery work is done this year this will need to be done

2025 Transfer to Rainy Day (10% of Jan 1 budget)

None to date

FOLLOW UP - COUNTING TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE FOR ANNUAL REPORT

I found this article recently (attached) that brought up the question of who counts as an applicant for our Annual Report. This article (from March 2025) seems to view the data that townships have a high denial rate when you compare the requests for assistance number to the number of recipients. When I started this position, I was advised to count anyone that reaches out to us -- even if they don't live in our township (we direct them to where they are supposed to be), don't complete an application, don't submit documentation, etc.

When looking at instructions for the TA (which seems to have been updated in the last year or so), the help guide states the following:

"We are not aware of any definitions of "applicant" for the purposes of [IC 12-20-28-3](#). The Attorney for the Township Association has offered the following for consideration: "Applicant" means an individual who requests assistance with Basic Necessities (as defined in [IC 12-7-2-20.5](#)) from a township, where the request has been documented, whether or not the individual completes an application for township assistance."

I reached out to other Monroe County Trustees to see what they do:

Indian Creek – Completed applications only, everything else is a “request for information”

Salt Creek – Only active assistance cases

Bloomington – Completed applications and Food Pantry visits only, other interactions (phone calls, etc.) are counted in “case management hours”

Perry – Online application requests (address validation included in software), appointment requests, food pantry requests, bus ticket requests (for those traveling through township), burial/cremation requests

Township Assistance Report

10/21/2025 - After returning from vacation, I had a note in our mail slot from an ongoing client asking to meet. However, the day and date combination on the note did not match any day and date combination on the calendar and he was not shown on our security cameras coming to the office within the last 2 weeks. I attempted to reach out to him but the phone has been disconnected. I reached out to a local service agency that had been assisting him trying to follow up as well. No follow up from this agency or from the client.

10/27/2025 - A concerned Benton Township resident wanting to help neighbors called asking about ways she can help with SNAP benefits not being granted.

10/27/2025 - A Benton Township resident called to ask how to start an application for utility assistance (CP, #39). Someone later came by the office to pick up an application from the mailbox.

10/28/2025 - A Benton Township resident called to request assistance for over the counter medical expenses (SP, #40). After a lengthy discussion, she decided to wait.

10/29/2025 - The person referred by the highway department (DC, #41) called to ask what type and how to apply for assistance (financial and logistics) for trees to be cut down.

10/31/2025 - A Benton Township resident called to request assistance for rent after a car accident (LH, #42).

11/03/2025 - A FindHelp online request for more information was received and responded to. No address has been provided to see if they are a Benton Township Resident (LG, #43).

11/05/202 - Received a call and a text message from concerned Benton Township residents wanting to help their community. One wanted to donate small bags of items to people and another one was a co-leader of a local Scout troop wanting to take over the Food Pantry.

11/29/2025 – Received a message on a cardboard box in our mailslot from an ongoing client asking if I knew where he could get his land surveyed for free. After trying to call and no pick up or ability to leave a message, I mailed a response and some resources.