

TOWN OF FERDINAND

REGULAR MEETING

August 20, 2024

The Ferdinand Town Council met for a Regular Meeting at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, in the Ferdinand Town Hall. Present were Council President, Ken Sicard; Vice-President, Debbie Johnson; Council Member, Ron Weyer, and Clerk-Treasurer, Tamara Miller.

Debbie moved to approve the Minutes of the July 15, 2024 Special Meeting and July 16, 2024, Council Meeting. Ron seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Janet Schnell, President of the Survivors of Suicide of Dubois County, was presented with the Town of Ferdinand Proclamation proclaiming the month of September in Ferdinand as National Suicide Prevention Month. Schnell read Mary Lou Schmitt's Survivor Story. Mary Lou's son died by suicide at the age of 30. Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE) seeks to prevent suicide through education, training, and peer support programs and serve as a resource to those touched by suicide. Schnell thanked the Council for their participation by increasing community awareness. Ron moved to approve the signing of the Proclamation by the Town of Ferdinand. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

John Hoppenjans, Fire Chief, thanked everyone for supporting the Firemen's Ball. Sicard moved to approve Hoppenjans' request to advertise for new volunteer firefighter members until October 31, 2024. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0. The Council thanked the department for hosting the Fireman's Ball.

Fischer requested the hiring of a high school student, Hudson Hays, as a part-time employee with the electric department. Ron moved to adopt Ordinance 2024-11, An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No 2023-26 Regarding Salaries, Compensation and Wages for Elected Officials, Appointees and Employees of the Town of Ferdinand, providing for the employment of a student/part-time laborer in the electric department following the format given by the high school guidance counselor, at a starting wage of \$12 per hour for 40 hours per week when school is not in session, and 15 hours per week when school is in session, beginning August 9, 2024, at the meeting it was introduced. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Debbie moved to approve Fischer's request for an overnight hotel stay, meals, and transportation to pick up a Christmas tree near Chicago that the Town purchased. Ron seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Tom Lueken, property and street superintendent, stated the fall clean-up will take place according to the flyer given to Council: October 8<sup>th</sup> for the west side, October 9<sup>th</sup> for the east side, and October 10<sup>th</sup> if needed. Debbie moved to approve the fall clean-up dates. Ron seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Debbie moved to approve Chief Blessinger's request for Jones, Clouse, and Blessinger to attend interviewing training for \$250 per person on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> with transportation. Ron seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Blessinger stated the department is hiring for the next two weeks and they are accepting lateral transfers.

Ron moved to allow Brinkman to hire Trenchless Innovations for \$12 per foot flat rate, roughly \$18,000, for boring of approximately 1,500 feet under Northview Drive. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Debbie moved to approve Brinkman's request to advertise for an open apprentice position in his department due to one apprentice leaving his department. Ron seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

The Community Banquet will be held on August 21, 2024, at the Ferdinand Community Center.

Miller reported the CCMG 2023-01 is waiting for the retainage billing and CCMG 2023-02 is complete. CCMG 2024-01 road work will begin in March 2025. CCMG 2024-02 applications have been submitted.

Sicard stated the municipalities have met and will meet again next week to talk about the Local Safety Tax Initiative. The municipalities are in favor of the Tax.

Miller distributed the accounts receivable report to keep the Council informed.

Brinkman stated that the water customer survey second requests are being sent out by WTH.

Debbie stated our READI 2.0 application has been selected to proceed to the next stage of the grant application.

Sicard stated the Redevelopment Commission held its organizational meeting this evening and Dan Collignon is President; Ken Sicard, Vice-President; Debbie Johnson, Secretary; and Tamara Miller, Treasurer. The RDC will meet again on September 11, 2024, at 6:30 PM at Town Hall.

At 7:00 PM the Budget Hearing was held. Miller stated the Advertised 2025 Budget is \$2,918,425 (2024 was \$2,423,164) with an adopted tax rate of .6438 (2024 adopted rate was .7205, the actual tax rate for 2024 ended up being .5353.) per \$100 of assessed value of \$159,656,614 (2024 was \$142,443,065). The Maximum Levy is \$1,041,988 (2024 was \$1,005,462) an increase of 4%. The 2025 Budget Form 3 was posted on Gateway and is available at [www.budgetnotices.in.gov](http://www.budgetnotices.in.gov).

The 2025 budget adoption meeting will be Monday, September 16, 2024, at 7:00 PM at the Town Hall. There being no further discussion. Ron moved to close the budget hearing. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Johnson stated the comprehensive plan steering committee with TSW will meet on September 25, 2024, at 5:30 pm at the Mobel Room at the Ferdinand Community Center.

EV Charger Hold Harmless Agreement has not been returned.

Sicard reported the DCLA graduation took place on August 14, 2024, and the capstone projects were both very good.

Sicard stated ARPA funds will be used to purchase the MVH truck total price of \$77,774.52 (Uebelhor & Sons \$47,530.18 and IMPCO \$30,244.34) which is under budget by 7,225.48.

Debbie stated the Town received a favorable Anthem health insurance renewal rate with GAB. She moved to approve the HSA contribution of \$200 for employees who chose the lower priced HSA health insurance plan. As part of the benefits offered to Town employees, all employees who did not choose the PPO health insurance option will receive \$200 in their HSA account. If the employee did not choose the PPO plan and does not have an HSA account, the employee will receive \$200 as gross wages. Ron seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Ron moved to approve a \$100 per month stipend to employees who waive health insurance coverage due to alternative coverage. This would be effective October 1, 2024. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Todd Fischer expressed gratitude, on behalf of the employees, for being included in the insurance discussions as part of the health insurance committee.

Miller distributed the ARPA schedule and recapped the uses to date and the planned uses of the remaining funds.

Ron moved to allow the Council to sign the Letter of Support for Framing Ferdinand to be considered for the OCRA's Downtown Affiliate Network (ODAN) application process. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Lauren Mundy, Brittany Rahman, and Tiffany Leonard were in attendance representing Framing Ferdinand. Debbie moved to approve Mundy's request for the Council to sign the Framing Ferdinand Letter of Intent. Ron seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Sicard moved to approve a \$10,000 donation to FF for the 2025 budget year (less funds expended during 2024). Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Sicard requested the Framing Ferdinand group report to the Council in June each year and make their request for funds at that time going forward.

Ron moved to allow the Council to sign the Letter of Support for Traditional Arts regarding

their OCRA application to help address loneliness in rural communities. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Ron moved to readvertise for bids for the 2018 Ford Taurus with approximately 67,000 miles. Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Bids will be opened at the September 16, 2024 Council meeting.

Ken moved to contact Tom Pitman, Barnes and Thornburg LLP, to enter into an agreement to advise the Council regarding Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Debbie seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Miller clarified that the claims include a payment to Kempf Excavating that was initially to be paid to Kersteins for reimbursement for water main installation. Ron moved to pay regular claims. Debbie seconded. Motioned carried 3-0.


**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**


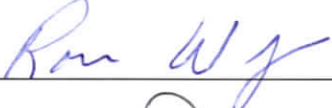
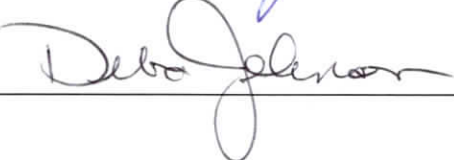
Town Council Meeting	Monday	September 16, 2024 at 6:30 PM
Town Council Budget Adoption	Monday	September 16, 2024 at 7:00 PM
BZA	Wednesday	August 28, 2024 at 6:30 PM
Plan Commission	Wednesday	August 28, 2024 at 7:00 PM
Park Board	Wednesday	September 11, 2024 at 4:30 PM
Redevelopment Commission	Wednesday	September 11, 2024 at 6:30 PM
Comp Plan Steering Committee	Wednesday	September 25, 2024 at 5:30 PM at the Mobel Room
Economic Development Commission	Monday	October 28, 2024 at 6:00 PM

As there was no further business to discuss, Debbie moved to adjourn. Ron seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

ATTEST:

FERDINAND TOWN COUNCIL

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk-Treasurer

  
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**Ferdinand** Est. 1905

## **Police Department**

243 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street Ferdinand, Indiana 47532

Phone: 812-367-1806 / Fax: 812-998-2094

Chief of Police: Kerri Blessinger Assistant Chief: Christian Gogel



The month of July held several projects for the Ferdinand Police Department. While working on hiring, we have also been working on the 2024 Budget for the department as well as preparing for the kids to be heading back to school.

The Ferdinand Police Department applied for and received grant funding to provide more police presence for the schools and provide additional traffic enforcement. The grant, called the SAVE Grant, is state provided funding to be utilized strictly for school zone and bus safety. These working hours for officers are in addition to officer numbers and hours currently utilized for routine patrol.

The places of patrol are based on several factors. One of those factors is data that comes from the NASDPTS annual survey, which is managed by the Indiana Department of Education for the state of Indiana. We also look at current school zones in and around our jurisdiction as well as complaints received from school personnel and school resource officers.

Bottom line, slow down in school zones and pay attention to children walking and school bus stop arms.

The Ferdinand Police Department members attended training with the Prosecutor's Office for law updates on 07-11-24. This training helps everyone stay current with law and procedure.

The Ferdinand Police Department provided extra patrol during the weekend of the Fireman's Ball held at the Ferdinand Community Center. I am happy to report that we did not have any issues.

As a reminder, we are still currently hiring at the Ferdinand Police Department. Applications can be obtained on-line as well as at the Ferdinand Police Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerri Blessinger, Chief of Police

# Ferdinand Police Department

243 W 10th Street, Ferdinand Indiana 47532

Phone: 812-482-9150 / Fax: 812-998-2094

Chief of Police: Kerri Blessinger

Assistant Chief: Christian Gogel

Total Calls For Service	235	Calls For Service Report July 2024 	
Complaint Type	Total	Complaint Type	Total
Alarm		Missing Person Adult/Child	
Animal Complaint	1	Parking Violation	
Assist Other Agency	13	Property Lost/Found/Recovered	
Battery/ Assault		Protective/Restraining Order	
Burglary (attempted)	1	Prowler (report of)	
Burning Complaint		Report to Station	2
Child Abuse/Neglect		Return Messages	24
Civil Matter /Dispute		State Dispatch	11
Citizen Assist	6	Scam	
Debris in Roadway		Security Check	42
Disabled/Stranded Vehicle	3	Suicide/or a Suicidal Person	
Disturbance/Disorderly Person	4	Suspicious Person/Vehicle	3
Drug Complaint		Theft	3
Domestic Problem	2	Traffic Control	
Escort	1	Traffic Warnings	14
Eviction		Traffic Tickets	
Extra Patrol	66	Trespassing	1
Fight		Threats/ Intimidation	2
Finger Printing		Vandalism	
Fire	1	Vehicle Accident	10
General Information	8	Vehicle Accident Leaving the Scene	
Gun Permit		Vehicle Check	4
Harassment			
Hazardous/ Not Chemical		Warrant	
Investigation	2	Weather Related Problems	
Identity Theft		Welfare Check	1
Illegal Dumping		911 false calls	9
Intoxicated Person	1	Pursuit	
Juvenile Incurrigible/Runaway	1		
Lines/ Poles Down			
Lost/ Stolen License Plate			
Mental Subject			



## **FERDINAND FIRE DEPT.**

221 E. Fourth St. P.O. Box 31  
Ferdinand, IN 47532

### **2024 Summary of Incidents**

	<b>FIRE</b>	<b>EMR</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>JANUARY</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>14</b>
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>		<b>24</b>
<b>MARCH</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>17</b>
<b>APRIL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>13</b>
<b>MAY</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>13</b>
<b>JUNE</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>JULY</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>21</b>
<b>AUGUST</b>				
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>				
<b>OCTOBER</b>				
<b>NOVEMBER</b>				
<b>DECEMBER</b>				

**Our annual Firemens Ball had another successful year. We want to THANK the entire community for their support!**

**We received our new SCBA packs and bottles. We are having a training on August 20<sup>th</sup> with the rep coming in and doing the training.**

**Got a quote from Pro Air for \$6,800 to replace our high pressure breathing air bottles. It is in the budget for this year to replace them.**

**Also I need to advertise for new members to apply from now till October 31.**



Town of Ferdinand  
2065 Main Street  
Ferdinand, IN 47532-0007  
Phone 812-367-2280  
Fax 812-367-1303  
E-mail: [twnofferdinand@psci.net](mailto:twnofferdinand@psci.net)  
[www.ferdinandindiana.org](http://www.ferdinandindiana.org)

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## Electric Department Report

August 20, 2024

- no unplanned outages
- Permission to hire part time helper
- 3 phase meter testing to start end of August
- Pole change outs East of Main St
  - 4 kv conversion prep on west side of Main St

KENNETH SICARD, President  
TAMARA M. MILLER, Clerk-Treasurer

DEBBIE JOHNSON, Member  
SHARON BOHNENKEMPER, Attorney

RONALD WEYER, Member





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## Town Council Meeting

August 21, 2024

### **Department Reports:**

Added crosswalk signage at Ferdinand Elementary School and post a school zone speed sign.

Replacing all School Zone signs around both Schools

We did some ditch stabilization on both sides of a culvert on east 5<sup>th</sup> street between Florida street and 285 east

Did mowing of right of ways and retention ponds along with weed control

Hauled limbs and yard waste another month of heavy drop off

Working with a drainage issue and together with several home owners in Whippoorwill sub division trying to come up with a plan to make something work

Cut removed and replaced a section of failed pavement at the north west corner of the intersection of 14<sup>th</sup> and Michigan street

Repairing to sinkholes on Virginia Street one on the east side between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> not sure until we dig along the curb this might have happened when Jump Start board in the fiber line. The other one is between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> street on the west side this was likely due to all the heavy rains and a broken bell or separation of a storm pipe

Repaired a storm inlet at 8<sup>th</sup> and Maryland looks like damage occurred from being it with lawn mower several times over time

Working on repairing the pavement on 5<sup>th</sup> street at Georgia and the approach to south on Georgia this area had water main repair or replacement

Did our annual storm water retention basin inspections.

Working on a agreement with a property owner on the south side of west third street between Alabama and Georgia to reshape the bank of the right of way and needing to get on his property to make it where he could mow it easier and safer

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**Water:**

MROs filed with IDEM

Royal Ridge main

Main is installed

Service and fire lines are installed

Waiting on grade work to be finished before installing meter pits

Waiting on Bacteria Samples

Water Loss Audit submitted.

Lead and Copper Samples for yearly testing sent in, waiting for results

Approval to hire boring company for Northview Drive

July usage:

Monthly Water Treatment	
Total Gallons	7,128,000.00
Max. Day	300,000.00
Min. Day	142,000.00
Avg. Daily	229935.4839

- Resident at 2790 Leaf Drive is requesting water for residents, they would be an out of town limits customer that adjoins the new Royal Ridge water main location. Their well is running dry to where some days they do not have any water.

KENNETH SICARD, President

DEBBIE JOHNSON, Vice President

RONALD WEYER, Member

TAMARA MILLER, Clerk-Treasurer

SHARON BOHNENKEMPER, Attorney

**Wastewater:**

Monthly IDEM reports are submitted

Solids discharged 2.1 mg/l per day average

Phosphorus levels of .9 mg/l out of a limit of 1 mg/l average

MONTHLY REMOVAL SUMMARY					Total Monthly Flow: (million gallons) 9.019
Percent Removal	BOD5	S.S.	Ammonia	Phosphorus	
Primary Treatment	NA	NA			
Secondary Treatment	NA	NA			Percent Capacity
Tertiary Treatment	NA	NA			(actual flow/design) 42%
Overall Treatment	99.6	99.2	99.9	89.6	
Phosphorus limit would be 1 mg/l. (compliance achieved)					

All reports have been filled with IDEM

Will have update from Ed Peters on sewer project soon. Meeting this week

*Benjamin J Brinkman*

Ben Brinkman  
Water/Wastewater Superintendent

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August 2024

Working with (VIV) website. Getting close to completion - finishing up on PDF's, waiting on an interactive map that is sourced out.

Meeting with Jill Hahn, (OCRA), Ann Knebel (Traditional Arts), Jess Condra (Indiana 15) on Socially Connected Community Grant.

Main Street Program - Liaison between the town and this new program -  
Meeting with our individual teams as well as meeting with our officers.  
Heading our PR Team - finished logo - working on our first posts - and starting up the website.  
(Cost of website has been donated)  
Working on first event - Movie night at the park - partnering with the Town- October 12th.

Continue to work with Ferdinand Merchants monthly- planning an event in October and working and helping with responsibilities of that event.

Meetings with Visit Dubois County as part of their board of directors -

Working with Tricia Mullis with the marketing of the upcoming Folk Fest

Ribbon cutting for Agaves new addition.

Working with Ferdinand Merchants on the Community Banquet

Finalizing Fall banners for the Town and getting those displayed.

Still on hold with - Homestead Pizza (new owners) and Frick Concrete - they are all on board but coming up with dates that will work for them as they are waiting on improvements to their buildings.

Debbie is working on Cascade Restaurant

Social media posts.

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TAMARA M. MILLER, Clerk-Treasurer

DEBBIE JOHNSON, Member  
SHARON BOHNENKEMPER, Attorney

RONALD WEYER, Member

# Schmitt receives Survivors of Suicide award

By MARTHA RASCHE

Sometimes Mary Lou Schmitt's story begins with her fingernails. Specifically, their being polished purple with turquoise tips.

"Do the colors of your nails mean anything?" a new acquaintance might ask.

"They are the colors of suicide prevention," Mary Lou says – and her story begins to unfold.

Nearly 30 years ago, on March 4, 1995, Mary Lou's youngest son died by suicide at age 30.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, and Mary Lou is Survivors of Suicide of Dubois County's Loss Survivor of the Year. She accepted proclamations from the mayors of Jasper and Huntingburg and the Ferdinand Town Council recognizing the month's significance in their respective jurisdictions.

Mary Lou, 82, has been part of Survivors of Suicide of Dubois County since its founding in 1996, after members of the Schmitt family attended an SOS group in Louisville for a year.

"We learned that we were not alone," Mary Lou says of why the SOS meetings were so helpful. ... It helped to hear other people's stories."

Mary Lou and board members of SOSofDC attended training in Georgia in 1997 to learn how to facilitate support group meetings, and Mary Lou has attended a number of in-state conferences on suicide loss, prevention and intervention. SOSofDC became a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 2001.

Attending the meetings, along with appointments with a counselor that she continues to keep every few months, have been part of Mary Lou's coping mechanisms.

"Go for counseling and learn how to cope with the death," Mary Lou advises those newly in grief. "You don't get over it. You learn how to live with it. So many people said, 'It's time to get over it' after a month or two. But no, you never get over losing your son."

Mary Lou had a stint as vice president of Survivors of Suicide and now serves on the advisory board. All the while, she has opened her heart and her Jasper home to others who lost loved ones to suicide.

Two relationships that grew from unwanted commonality were with a woman about Mary Lou's age whose father died by suicide, and with a woman somewhat younger whose son had died.

"She knows what it's like to be a mother in grief," says Mary Lou's daughter Janet Schnell, president of SOS. Janet also is a suicide loss subject matter expert contractor for the federal government. She says Mary Lou has been able to help "normalize" others' grief, to help them realize their feelings are a natural part of their journey.

Anyone Mary Lou helped, helped her in return, as every story she hears reminds her that she isn't alone.

Other members of the Schmitt family also have been involved with the local survivors group. Janet and her sister, Denise Schnell, were part of the group when it

started, Mary Lou's son Allan is on the advisory board, and son Chris helps the organization as he can from his home in California.

Mary Lou's husband, Don, died in 2004 of a heart attack. Denise died in 2021 of Covid-19. That makes three sudden deaths, deaths Mary Lou had no time to prepare for.

In its own way, "each death was a shock, and I'm just learning how to cope with all the deaths," she says. She finds it helps to tell Kent, Don and Denise each night before going to sleep that she loves and misses them.

"You ask why, but you never get an answer," she says. "I'm learning how to accept it. You have bad days, and you have good days."

Mary Lou calls herself a natural worrier and suffers from depression. However, having a part in leading others through loss has helped her find meaning in her life. "I'm doing that out of my heart, helping others," she says, noting that she doesn't need an award for it. "I just wanted to help other people."

Mary Lou was chosen for the award because "she took her grief into hope," according to the board members.

SOSofDC was ahead of its time, as it always has addressed not only suicide prevention but also suicide intervention and postvention. The organization realized before others that suicide loss survivors faced higher risk for suicide themselves.

The group's in-person monthly meetings ended with Covid. Now SOSofDC can be found at [www.sosofdc.org](http://www.sosofdc.org), SOSofDC on Facebook, and sosofduboiscounty on Instagram. Its email address is 1SuicideSurvivor@gmail.com.

Having the group online, members have found, has allowed for a larger involvement, including father-to-father and sibling-to-sibling connections.

Current officers are Janet Schnell, president; Janet Schmidt, vice president; Emily Moreno, secretary and human resource director; and Shelby Gordon, treasurer. Joining Mary Lou and Allan on the advisory board are Joanie Wurster and Jesus Moreno.

Within the past few years research has shown that a single suicide affects 135 people. Mary Lou and SOSofDC board members want to reach as many of them as possible.

The nonprofit agency was one of the first groups in Indiana to form a local outreach to suicide survivors. The team is trained to attend a suspected suicide death scene to offer resources and information on surviving. SOSofDC also sends materials as requested to suicide loss survivors.

"We know that grief trail. We know the impact" that support can make, Janet says.

If you have thoughts of suicide or are having mental health struggles, call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.