The Santa Claus Town Council met in regular session on July 13, 2026, at the Santa Claus Town Hall located at 90 N Holiday Blvd., Santa Claus, In. The meeting was called to order by President, Kevin Burke.

Pledge of Allegiance

YouTube – YES - @townofsantaclaus7938
Audio Recording – Yes, Clerk-Treasurer & Media

Town Council Members Present: Patricia Vaal, Kevin Burke, Michael Johannes and Brian Warran
Absent: Jason Little
Also Present: Clerk-Treasurer, Jane Lindsey; Town Attorney, Kevin Patmore; Police Chief, Chris King; Parks Director, Zach Tischendorf; Fire Chief, Max Meyer and Building Inspector, Todd Hayes.

MINUTES
Michael Johannes made a motion to approve June 8, 2026, minutes and Brian Warran seconded the motion. Ayes: 4 Nays: None Motion carried: 4-0

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
None

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL
Patricia Vaal reminded everyone that the annual meeting for Grow Spencer County will be held on Wednesday, July 8th at 11:30, Tickets are $30/person to attend. Grow Spencer County has started Food Truck Fridays throughout the county. Food trucks will be in the Santa's Lodge parking lot on the third Friday of the month beginning this Friday.
Kevin Burke wanted to go on record as continuing to be opposed to the removal of the annexation and zoning language in the out-of-town service agreements. The Council decided to remove that language in agreement with the Water Board, but Burke remains strongly opposed to that motion. Burke stated that the language has supported and protected the town by taxpaying residents of this town for many years.

REPORTS
Department reports were given to the Council prior to the meeting.

FIRE DEPARTMENT MAX MEYER
Max Meyer reported that the department has been busy with 29 runs in 30 days. Meyer reported that the BBQ dinner was a success and dinners were sold out in 1 hour. Meyer gave an update on the HVAC stating that the system was working well with a few minor punch list items like setting up the app to utilize the system remotely.

PARK & RECREATION/COMMUNITY CENTER ZACH TISCHENDORF

Zach Tischendorf reported that the park held it first co-ed softball game and everyone had a good time and there would be two additional games the two Fridays. The grip strips are all installed and landscaping was completed on the trail close to the Kaspar gate.
Tischendorf is planning to apply for a grant for new lighting at the park. Tischendorf will keep us updated on that. Tischendorf stated that the new park plan would be available at Common Grounds and would be available at the Clerk-Treasurers office. Tischendorf will be replacing the doorknobs and installing handles for ADA compliance. Tischendorf presented 3 quotes for a robot mower and asked the Council to consider approving the one from FJ Dynamics. This mower would replace the mowers from 2015 & 2016. Tischendorf explained that he is experiencing multiple repairs each year on these older mowers. Tischendorf also noted that labor is becoming harder to fill vacancies. Tischendorf stated that this mower has a 40" deck could mow 26 acres in a 3-day period as well as be scheduled to mow outside normal working hours. The robot mower works off GPS and includes anti-theft software. The three quotes are as follows:
Automation Hub $25,000 +$1200 annual service agreement
The Robo Zone $22,999 with no annual service agreement
Ecomow $29,999
Brian Warran expressed his concern about the safety of children with an autonomous mower. Tischendorf responded that the mower includes obstacle detection with automatic stopping and rerouting, slow operation speed and alerts to operators when obstacles are encountered.
Tischendorf would like to pay from Fund 2211 but additional money would need to be appropriated.
Patricia Vaal made the motion to advertise an additional appropriation in the amount of $30,000 for fund 2211 P&R/MISC.

BUILDING INSPECTOR TODD HAYS

Town's strict ordinance on signs was brought to the Council's attention again. Patricia Vaal expressed her concern regarding the removal of the medical facilities signs advertising walk-in appointments. Vaal stated that if a local business is in violation of the placement of signs that a conversation should be had with the business owner and provide them with help on where a legal placement of signs exists. Attorney Kevin Patmore instructed the Council that this should be given to the APC board to review and make changes to the ordinance. Patricia Vaal made the motion to ask the APC board to review the sign ordinance in its entirety. Michael Johannes seconded the motion.
Ayes: 4 Nays: None Motion carried: 4-0
The Council also discussed whether businesses could allow campers to park overnight through programs like Harvest Hosts. The Town currently has one recognized Harvest Host location at the brewery allowing customers to park their campers for one overnight stay. The Council was mixed on its support for allowing one night parking within Town limits. The Council discussed the challenges and opportunities related to allowing overnight stays through programs like the Harvest Hosts. The attorney Kevin Patmore stated that this would require zoning ordinance amendments and APC review before formalizing policy. Overnight camping is currently not permitted in commercial or other zones without specific zoning approval or variances. APC will need to consider amendments defining where and how overnight camping is allowed, number of campers per property and limits on duration. Recommendation was made to refer the issue to APC for detailed zoning

Michael Johannes made a motion to approve Payroll vouchers in the amount of $101,821.50 and Patricia Vaal seconded the motion.
Ayes: 4 Nays: None Motion carried: 4-0

ADJOURNMENT
Michael Johannes made a motion to adjourn the Town Council meeting at 8:25 pm and Brian Warran seconded the motion.
Ayes: 4 Nays: None Motion carried: 4-0

The next Town Council meeting will be August 10, 2026, at 5:30pm.

Kevin Burke, President

Patricia Vaal, Vice President

Michael Johannes

Jason Little

Brian Warran

ATTEST:
Jane Lindsey, Clerk-Treasurer