Town Council of Merrillville
7820 Broadway Ave - Merrillville, IN 46410
Town Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
October 28, 2025, 6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: President Rick Bella called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag was led by President Rick Bella.

INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE: A brief invocation was given, along with a moment of silence, by Pastor Robert Szoke of Impact Church.

ROLL CALL of COUNCIL: – Present at the meeting were Councilors Rhonda Neal, Shauna Haynes-Edwards, Leona Chandler-Felton, Margaret Uzelac, Shawn Pettit, Keesha Hardaway, and Rick Bella. Clerk-Treasurer Eric January was present to memorialize the proceedings. A quorum was attained.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND REMONSTRATIONS:

- **Employee of the Month – October:**
  Town Manager Griffin and Police Chief Nuses presented Officer Christopher Trotter-Borrelli, who works in the Merrillville Police Department, to the council and audience as October's Employee of the Month for the Town of Merrillville. Officer Trotter-Borrelli received a certificate of recognition read by Police Chief Nuses and a gift card.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
No public comments were made at the meeting. A copy of the video from the Town Council Meeting held on October 28, 2025, has been uploaded to the Town's website at:
https://www.merrillville.in.gov/government/town_council/town_council_meetings.php.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Accounts Payable Register Voucher Approval for October 28th, 2025
- Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes October 14th, 2025
- Approval of Workshop Meeting Minutes of October 15th, 2025

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the consent agenda.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The consent agenda was approved.

SPECIAL ORDERS:

a) A Public Hearing on Matters which require legal notice: Ord 25-30 Additional Appropriation.

i. Verification by Town Attorney of the validity of proof of publication dated October 28, 2025:

Attorney Svetanoff reported that he has reviewed the Proof of Publication, and everything is in order and conforms with the Indiana Code. The council may proceed with the public hearing.

Public Hearing Open:

- President Bella opened the hearing for Ordinance 25-30.
- Town Manager Griffin and Director Steven King explained Ordinance 25-30 regarding the purchase of a water tanker insert.
- There were no public comments.

ii. **Public Hearing Closed:**

- President Bella closed the public hearing for Ordinance 25-30 and stated that action will be taken up under General Orders for this ordinance.

BZA & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS*:*

Petitioner: Alvin Lacy
Owner: Elevate Merrillville LLC
Request: Variance of Use Approval
Purpose: To Allow a Sports Athletic Training Facility
Location: 1201 East 86th Place
Zoning: M-1 Limited Industrial Zoning District

Planning and Building Director Sheila Shine reported that the ABZA was approved.

The Petitioner, Alvin Lacy, explained the business.

Upon a question from Councilor Pettit regarding the entire building on the property, the Petitioner responded that he has the entire building. Councilor Pettit informed the council that the building was formerly owned by the Acusil company.

Upon a question from Councilor Pettit regarding remonstrators, Director Sheila Shine responded that there were none. The Petitioner is relocating from Crossroads on 61st Avenue.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve the BZA variance of use.

Upon a roll call vote, there were seven affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Rhonda Neal, Shauna Haynes-Edwards, Leona Chandler-Felton, Margaret Uzelac, Shawn Pettit, Keesha Hardaway, and Rick Bella voted in the affirmative. The motion passed. The BZA variance of use was approved.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

***BUDGET & FINANCE*—NEAL**— Vice President Neal had nothing to report.

STREET DEPARTMENT & PARK MAINTENANCE - UZELAC– Councilor Uzelac reported on the following:

- **Asphalt Patching** - Asphalt patching on Merrillville Road 79th, and Whitcomb has been completed.
- **Park and Bike Trails Maintenance** - Maintenance such as cleaning and picking up trash is still ongoing for the parks and bike trails. The mowing had ended for the fall and winter season.
- **Leaf Pickup** – The Leaf Pickup program started on October 20th and will continue for six more weeks.
- **General Paving** – Depending on the weather, the paving project will continue throughout the Town of Merrillville.

  Councilor Pettit asked Director Steve King to notify the water company of their responsibility to re-pave the streets from curve to curve in Chapel Manor.

Upon a question from President Bella regarding the cut-off for street paving, Director Steve King stated that the weather will play a role. If the temperature is 40 degrees, the paving will end according to the INDOT specification. The amount of asphalt laid down this year is as follows:

- 42,000 tons of asphalt
- 22,000 feet of curb

Vice President Neal reminded the residents that branch pick-up has ended, but residents can drop off the branches. The information will be posted on the Town's website and the mymerrillville app.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS—PETTIT—Councilor Pettit had nothing to report.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE- HARDAWAY- Councilor Hardaway reported that Director Steve King of the Street Department and Director Jerry McCartney of the Parks Department will discuss open positions during their department report.

If you meet the qualifications, you can apply. The application and job descriptions are available for download on the website https://www.merrillville.in.gov/departments/human_resources.php and the Town of Merrillville app:

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- UZELAC – Councilor Uzelac reported that cleanup on the Taney Place Ditch is complete, and some work still needs to be done on the Kaiser Ditch.

PUBLIC SAFETY—HARDAWAY—Councilor Hardaway had nothing to report.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION - NEAL- Vice President Neal reported that she reached out to Robertson Engineering regarding getting an update on the gateway and parks signs. The update regarding the sign will be given on October 29th.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that a Redevelopment Commission (RDC) meeting was held earlier tonight, and two resolutions for two Interlocal Agreements were approved for the following:

- Town of Merrillville and City of Hobart for the Mississippi 69th Avenue Roundabout Project.
- Town of Merrillville and Gary Public Transportation for the Broadway Corridor Express Route using allocation area funding as the Town's match. The bus service has been running for about 15 years in the Town of Merrillville.

Councilor Pettit also reported that an agreement for engineering design with American Structure Point was authorized for Liberty Estates, where twenty acres are going to be donated to the Town as a Regional Park.

Councilor Pettit also informed the council that there are two resolutions regarding the Interlocal Agreements on tonight's agenda for action.

UTILITY LIAISON –CHANDLER-FELTON – Councilor Chandler-Felton had nothing to report.

PARKS AND DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER - PETTIT – Councilor Pettit informed the council that he will defer to Director Jerry McCartney for the report, and the committee meeting scheduled for October 30th at 5:00 p.m. has been cancelled. The meeting will be rescheduled for November.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

ABANDONED-BLIGHTED PROPERTIES - HAYNES-EDWARDS & CHANDLER-FELTON– Councilor Haynes-Edwards had nothing to report.

SPECIAL TOWN PROJECTS – HAYNES-EDWARDS – Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported on the following events:

- **Trunk-or-Treat** – The Town of Merrillville event was well attended. Over 1,000, up to 1,500 participants and residents attended this event. The costume contest had over thirty participants, and there were five winners. Councilor Haynes-Edwards thanked everyone who helped make this year's Trunk-or-Treat event successful.

Upon a question from President Bella regarding the number of vendors who participated, Councilor Haynes-Edwards responded that there were over sixty vendors.

- **Trick-or-Treat Hours** – The Town of Merrillville's hours will be 5:50 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. on Friday, October 31, 2025.
- **Tree Lighting Ceremony** - The Town of Merrillville tree lighting ceremony will be held on Friday, November 28th, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center. Look for more details to be announced later.
- **Job Fair** – Lake County Clerk's Office, Merrillville Town Prosecutors, and Ross Township will be hosting an expungement and job fair event at Hidden Lake on October 29th from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. For the expungement, pre-registration is recommended.

SEMI-QUINCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE - HAYNES-EDWARDS – Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that she has several volunteers signed up to serve on the July 4th, 2026, Semi-Quincentennial Committee for the United States of America's 250th Anniversary. The first meeting will be in November. If anyone is interested in serving on the committee, you can contact Councilor Haynes-Edwards at shedwards@merrillville.in.gov and on the mymerrillville app.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS:

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE – Director Matthew Lake gave updates on the following.

- **Honorable Congressman Frank J. Mrvan** – Congressman Mrvan met with Director Lake at Stormwater Management on October 9th to discuss utility and operations projects anticipated for 2026 and beyond for potential federal funding.
- **Q.C. Billing Files** - The QC of our billing file for 2025 pay in 2026 for Stormwater billing was finalized. We had a total of 14,114 parcels generating over $2,300,000.00 for 2026.
- **Bon Aire Lake** – The treatment of the lake is winding down. We had to trap and relocate some beavers to keep the water flowing.
- **Trash Racks** -We are working with Lake County on the regulated drains and trash racks.
- **Recertification with Tree City USA** – The recertification documentation will go out this week.
- **Chapel Manor Maintenance** – The maintenance at Chapel Manor and the ditch segment is complete.

NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway had nothing to report.

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-NEAL– Vice President Neal reported that the next meeting is on November 20th at 6:30 p.m.

THE SHARED ETHICS ENTITY-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardway reported that the 2025 Shared Ethics Entity Summit will be held on Thursday, October 30th, at the Avalon Manor from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. There will be a continental breakfast. The summit is open to the public, and you can still

register for this event. This information is available on the mymerrillville app. This is a free event. The guest speakers are Mayors from the following cities:

- Michigan City, Indiana
- Valparaiso, Indiana
- Crown Point, Indiana

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD - NEAL & HARDAWAY – Vice President Neal and Councilor Hardaway had nothing to report.

CLERK-TREASURER OFFICE - JANUARY – Clerk-Treasurer Eric January reported on the following for September 30, 2025:

- **Town Balance -** (Includes Court, Fire Department, General Fund, Obligated & Non-Obligated Funds, Police Department, RDA, Stormwater, etc.) $84,830,862.01. Legacy Fund 9,092,263.18 is included in the total. This funding is from the Dean and Barbara White Foundation and other gifts.
- **Food and Beverage Tax** – We received another check for $147,494.01.
- **Personnel Services Paid -** $21,787,577.40
- **Licensing and Permits –** The amount is $1,112,135,46.

SSCVA – DEANN PATENA - No Report

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/ TOWN MANAGER:

Director Jerry McCartney – Parks and Recreation Department
Director McCartney reported on the following:

- **Floors at Community Center** – The installation project began last week. The project's anticipated completion date is approximately two weeks.
- **Painting** – Five Star Painting has finished painting the community walls, classrooms, and the hallway for the lockers.
- **Volleyball Net** – Chris Deetur for Core is coming next week to examine the volleyball net holes and connect us with the contractor who did the gym floors.
- **Open Positions** – Part-Time Site Supervisor, Full-Time Site Supervisor, and three Recreation Attendants. The position is posted on the Town's website and the mymerrillville app.
- **Winter Youth Basketball** – Winter Basketball has an early bird registration where you can get $20.00 off the fee until October 31st.
- **Other Programs and Activities** – The list of programs and activities is available on the Town's website under Parks and Recreation and the mymerrillville app.

Chief Nuses– Police Department
Chief Nuses explained the tips for Trick-or-Treat Safety and addresses of houses that are prohibited from participating in Trick-or-Treat in the Town of Merrillville. This information will be posted on the Town's website and the mymerrillville app.

Director Shine – Building and Planning
Director Sheila Shine reported that the JD by Rider (Anthem Church) is ready to start the interior and exterior remolded. Model Drop Forge, which had a building explosion, is ready to start construction on the new building.

Director King - Street Department
Director Steve King added the following to the Street's Report:

- **Job Opening** - Director King informed the council that there is a job opening for a Mechanic in the Street Department. The position is posted on the Town's website and the mymerrillville app.

Town Manager Griffin – Town Administration
Town Manager Griffin reported on the following:

- **Monthly Reports** – Town Manager Griffin reported that the staff reports have been given to the council members and Clerk-Treasurer Eric January.
- **Monthly Staff Meeting** – The monthly staff meetings with Department Heads will be on October 29th at 12:30 p.m. Councilor Hardaway and Financial Advisor Hudson will be attending as speakers. Town Manager Griffin will discuss the purchase code.
- **Capital Plan Note** – Town Manager Griffin reminded the council that the notes are due by the close of business on Friday, October 31, 2025.

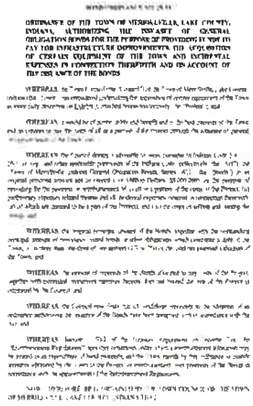
GENERAL ORDERS

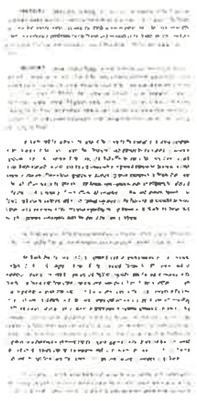
A. **Ordinances: (Discussion and Roll Call Vote):** ***NONE***

Zoning*:* (Motion to adopt or reject; confer IC 36-5-2-10(d)

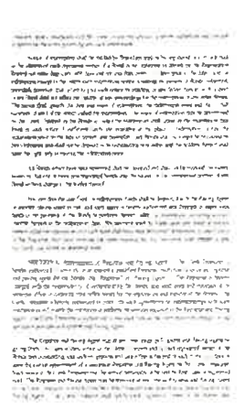
First Reading: **Ordinance (Discussion and Roll Call Vote):**

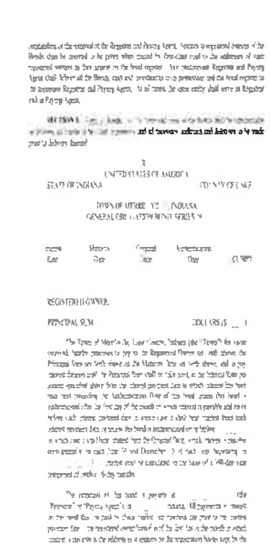
Ordinance 25-33 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)
Ordinance Of The Town Of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Authorizing The Issuance Of General Obligation Bonds For The Purpose Of Providing Funds To Pay For Infrastructure Improvements, The Acquisition Of Certain Equipment Of The Town, And Incidental Expenses In Connection Therewith, And On Account Of The Issuance Of The Bonds.

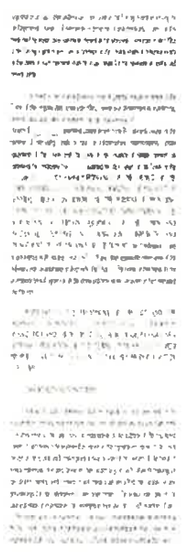


















SECTION 16. Effectiveness. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption and the procedures required by law. Upon payment in full of the principal and interest respecting the Bonds authorized hereby or upon deposit of an amount sufficient to pay when due such amounts in accord with the defeasance provisions herein, all pledges, covenants and other rights granted by this ordinance shall cease.

ALL OF WHICH IS PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS __ DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2025, BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, TOWN COUNCIL

Exhibit A

Project Description

The Project shall consist of the payment of (a) improvements to the Town Hall and Police Offices, (b) Town Hall roof improvements, (c) gateway signs and park signs, (d) cameras as well as other security equipment, (e) vehicles for the Parks department and planning director, (f) park monitors and software, (g) other equipment and maintenance items as determined by the Town and (h) costs related to the issuance of the Bonds.

Town Manager Griffin explained Ordinance 25-33.

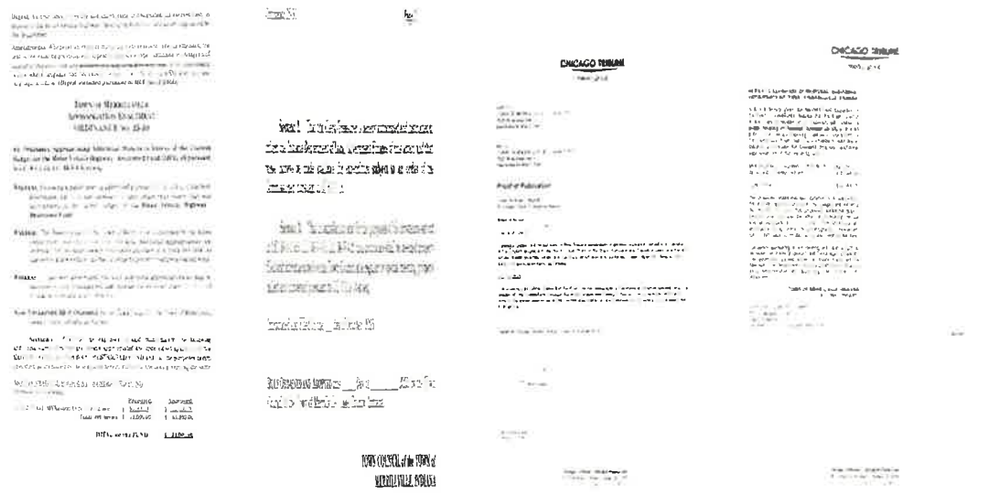
President Bella stated that the principal amount will not exceed $5,000,000.00

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve on first reading Ordinance 25-33.

Upon a roll call vote, there were seven affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Rhonda Neal, Shauna Hayes-Edwards, Leona Chandler-Felton, Margaret Uzelac, Shawn Pettit, Keesha Hardaway, and Rick Bella voted in the affirmative. There were no negatives. The motion passed. The ordinance was approved on first reading.

Second Reading: (Discussion, Public Comments Only If Required & Roll Call Vote):

Ordinance 25-30 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)
An Ordinance Appropriating Additional Moneys in Excess of the Current Budget for the Motor Vehicle Highway-Restricted Fund (2203). All Pursuant to I.C. 6-1.1-18,I.C. 36-5-3-5, et seq.



Chicago Tribune

Printed: 10/10/2025 9:45:18 AM
Page 1 of 2
* Agency Commission not included

Order ID: 7882885

GROSS PRICE * : $26.43

PACKAGE NAME: IN Govt Legal Rates Post Tribune



Town Manager Griffin explained Ordinance 25-30.

It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve Ordinance 25-30 on second and final reading.

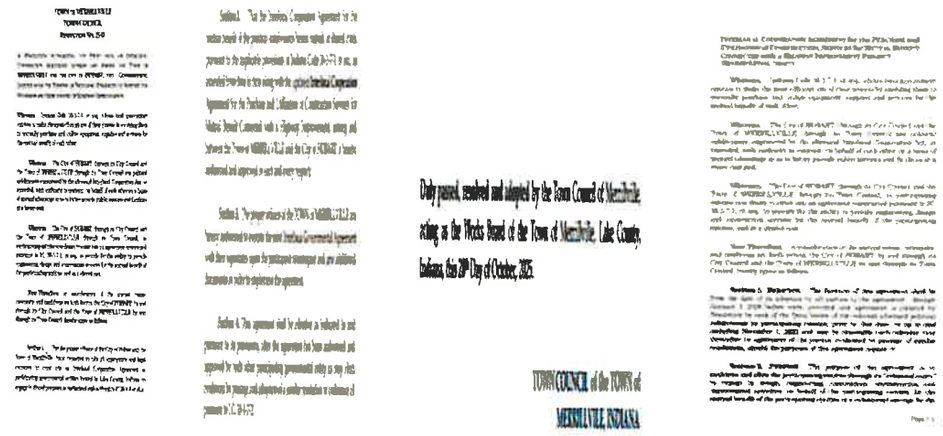
Upon a roll call vote, there were seven affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Rhonda Neal, Shauna Hayes-Edwards, Leona Chandler-Felton, Margaret Uzelac, Shawn Pettit, Keesha

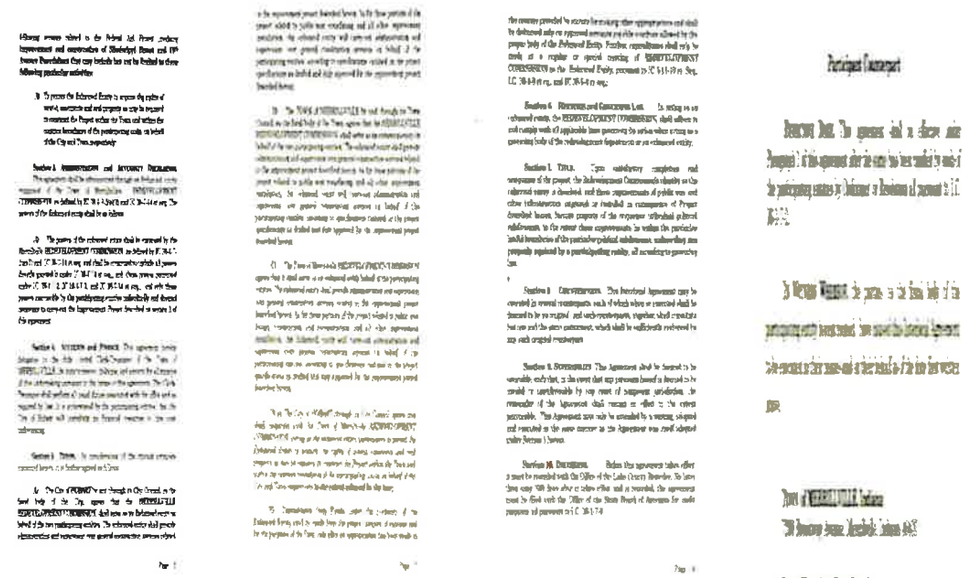
Hardaway, and Rick Bella voted in the affirmative. There were no negatives. The motion passed. The ordinance was approved on second and final reading.

B. Resolutions (Discussion and Voice Vote):

Resolution 25-41 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

A Resolution Authorizing The Entry Into An Interlocal Cooperation Agreement Between And Among The Town Of Merrillville And The City Of Hobart, Two Governmental Entities, With The Purpose Of Providing Resources To Support The Extension And Improvement Of Commuter Rail Services Provided By The Northern Indiana Commuter Transit District.





Participant Counterpart

EFFECTIVE DATE. This agreement shall be effective under Paragraph 1 of this agreement after the same has been ratified by each of the participating entities by Ordinance or Resolution all pursuant to I.C. 36-1-7-2.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties, as the fiscal body of the participating entity herein named, have caused this Interlocal Agreement to be executed in their names and on their behalf as of the date first written above

CITY of HOBART, INDIANA
414 Main Street, Hobart, Indiana 46342

By and Through its City Council

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve Resolution 25-41.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The resolution was approved.

Resolution 25-42 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

A Resolution Authorizing A Transfer To The Park Non-Reverting Operating Fund.

TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of MERRILLVILLE
RESOLUTION NO. 25-42

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TRANSFER TO THE PARK NON-REVERTING OPERATING FUND

WHEREAS, The Town of Merrillville by proper legislative action has established a Park Non-Reverting Operating Fund, pursuant to IC 36-10 et seq.;

WHEREAS, The Town of Merrillville, by proper legislative action did establish a Merrillville Food and Beverage Tax and a Food and Beverage Tax Receipts Fund all pursuant to IC 6-9-54.5 et seq.;

WHEREAS, IC 6-9-54.5-9 provides that among the uses for the revenue received is for parks and recreation purposes;

WHEREAS, The Town Manager and Fiscal Advisor have advised that the Town Council favor the fiscal management outlined in this resolution, which recommendation the Town Council now desires to enacts; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana as follows:

Section 1. That the amount of two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000) be transferred from the cash balance on deposit to the Food and Beverage Tax Receipts Fund (4439) and be deposited to the credit of the Parks Non-Reverting Operating Fund (2211);

Section 2. That, pursuant to the foregoing, the Clerk-Treasurer be authorized and is hereby requested to transfer the amount identified herein;

Section 3. That the Clerk-Treasurer as the disbursing and fiscal officer of the Municipality, is hereby instructed, and authorized to take such steps as necessary to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

DULY RESOLVED and ADOPTED this 28th Day of October, 2025, by the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana.

TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve Resolution 25-42.

Councilor Pettit explained the resolution.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The resolution was approved.

Resolution 25-43 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

An Exigent Resolution Providing For The Transfer Of Appropriation Balances From and Among Major Budget Classifications In The Fire And Hazmat Fund As Requested By The Proper Officer And Forwarded To The Town Council For Its Action Pursuant To I.C. 6-1.1-18

RESOLUTION No. 25- 43
TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

AN EXIGENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING for the TRANSFER of APPROPRIATION BALANCES from and AMONG MAJOR BUDGET CLASSIFICATIONS in the FIRE AND HAZMAT FUND as REQUESTED BY THE PROPER OFFICER AND FORWARDED to the TOWN COUNCIL for its ACTION PURSUANT TO I.C. 6-1.1-18-6.

WHEREAS, It has been determined that certain exigent conditions have developed since adoption of the original budget and it is now necessary to transfer certain appropriations into different categories than were initially appropriated for the various expenditures in the Fire and Hazmat Fund.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, as follows:

Section 1. That for the expenses of said municipality, the following appropriations are hereby transferred and set apart out of the funds hereinafter named for the purposes specified, subject to the laws governing the same, unless otherwise stipulated by law:

Section 2. That it has been shown that certain existing unobligated appropriations of the Fire and Hazmat Fund, which are not needed at this time for the purposes for which originally appropriated, and may be transferred to another category of appropriation in order to satisfy an existing need:

Decrease:			
2504.010.119	F&H/Fire Inspector	$ 24,244.00	
2504.010.130	F&H/Admin. Secretary	18,694.00	
	Total Decrease:	**$ 42,938.00**	
Increase:			
2504.010.453	F&H/Other Equipment		$ 42,938.00
	Total Increase:		**$ 42,938.00**

DULY RESOLVED and ADOPTED by the TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, this 28th day of OCTOBER, 2025.

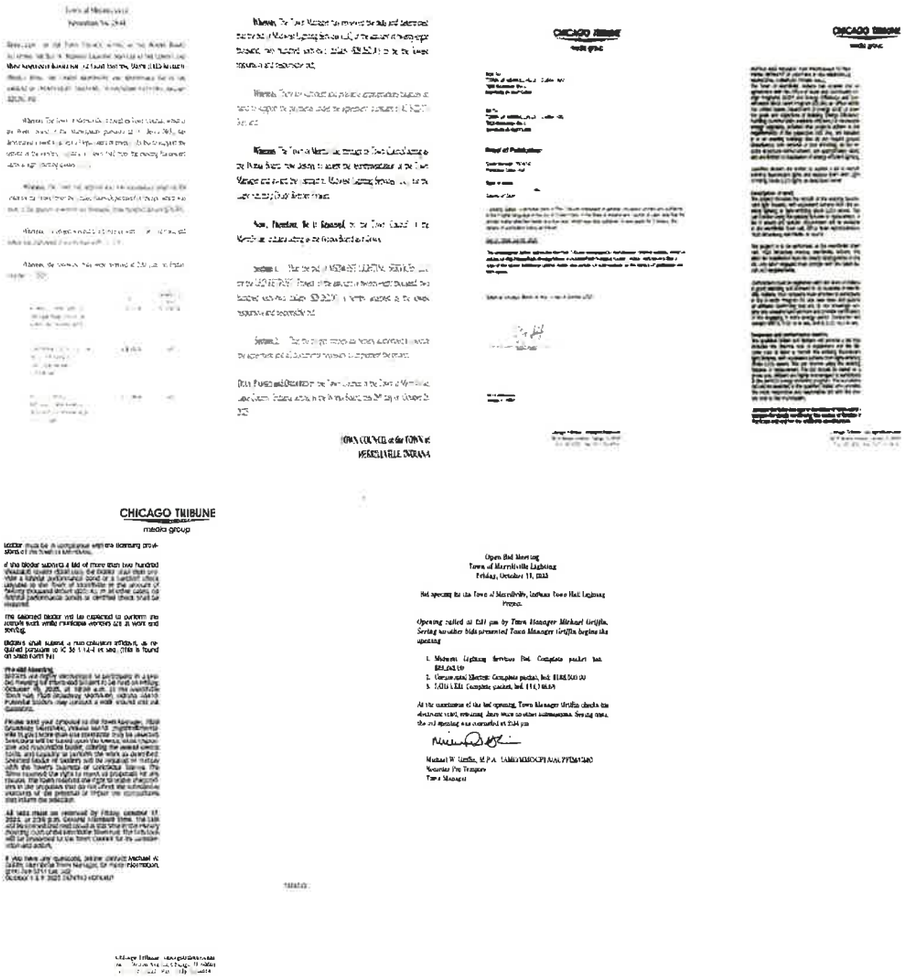
TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

It was moved by Vice President Neal and seconded by Councilor Haynes-Edwards to approve Resolution 25-43.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The resolution was approved.

Resolution 25-44 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

Resolution Of The Town Council Acting AS The Works Board Accepting The Bid Of Midwest Lighting Services As The Lowest And Most Responsive Bidder For The Light Emitting Diode (LED) Retrofit Project, Being The Lowest Responsive And Responsible Bid In The Amount Of Twenty-Eight Thousand, Two-Hundred Sixty-Two Dollars ($28,262.00).



It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve Resolution 25-44.

Upon a question from Clerk-Treasurer Eric January regarding the high discrepancy in the bid prices, Town Manager Griffin responded that at the pre-bid meeting, instructions were given to respond to the bid by taking out every fixture or working with existing fixtures. The winning bid, Midwest Lighting, will work with existing fixtures.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The resolution was approved.

OLD BUSINESS: ***NONE***

NEW BUSINESS: ***NONE***

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Town Council President announced the following:

- Marine Corps Toys for Tots totes are located at Town Hall. Residents, businesses, employees, and Elected Officials may bring an unwrapped toy to donate.

- Town Council Meeting TBD at 6:30 p.m. President Bella will let the Town Manager Griffin, and the council know regarding the meeting changing from Tuesday, November 11th, to Wednesday, November 12th, as Town Manager Griffin recommended.

ADJOURNMENT:
Having completed all items on the agenda, the Town Council President announced the meeting had adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Rick Bella, Town Council President

Eric O. January, Clerk-Treasurer

Respectfully Submitted By Angela Lewis