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

CALL TO ORDER: Councilor 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 Councilor Bella.

INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE: A brief invocation was given, along with a moment of silence, by Pastor Robert Szoke of Impact Christian 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. Councilor Clerk-Treasurer Eric January was present to memorialize the proceedings. A quorum was attained.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND REMONSTRATIONS:

- **Impact Fee Advisory Board 2025 Merrillville Park Impact Final Study:**
  Mr. Rashami presented highlights of the following letter given to the council:

TOWN of MERRILLVILLE
Park Impact Fee Advisory Committee

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Mr. Rick Bella, President
Merrillville Town Council
7820 Broadway
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

RE: 2025 Merrillville Recreation Impact Fee Update

Dear Mr. Bella:

The Merrillville Recreation Impact Fee Advisory Committee is pleased to submit the final study for the Town of Merrillville Impact Fee. This document is a continuation of efforts that started about twenty years ago by the Town to better provide recreational services to Merrillville residents. In 2005, the Town enacted the first impact fee ordinance to address unmet recreation needs of the town due primarily to rapid rise in population and lack of available funds.

The 2025 update identifies the recreational level of service, parks and recreation needs, schedule of fees and other information as required by the Indiana state statutes (IC 36-7-4-1300). The document also is prepared to meet in part the requirements of the state statute for an "Impact Fee Zone Improvement Plan." As such it calculates the maximum impact fee that could be adopted by the Town Council based on analysis, review of the needs and rational determination of recreational services costs in the Town of Merrillville. The Arsh Group Inc., as the consultant for the study, has assisted us in development of the study. The firm has relied on several sources to complete the study and to calculate the proposed fee.

In preparation of the Impact Fee study the Advisory Committee has engaged in the following activities:

1. The Committee met three times in its deliberation for the Impact Fee Study. The meetings were held on December 6, 2024, December 20, 2024, and January 10, 2025. The Arsh Group Inc. facilitated all these meetings.
2. The Committee reviewed and discussed background information and conditions, park facility needs, and available funds to meet such needs.
3. The Committee reviewed housing development characteristics as well as development and growth trends and patterns in the Town of Merrillville.
4. The Committee established Town's corporate boundaries for the Impact Fee Improvement Zone as recreational services are provided uniformly on a town-wide basis.
5. The Committee reviewed options for scheduling of fees, evaluated methods of establishing fees and determined the final recommended approach and fee.

The Committee approved the findings of the study in its final meeting on January 10, 2025. The fee recommended by the Advisory Committee is based on these findings. All members of Committee agreed to recommend a graduated fraction of the 100% calculated rate as presented in the following schedule for each equitable unit:

Housing Unit Type	Calculated Base per Unit	Year 1 @ 84%	Year 2 @ 88%	Year 3 @ 92%	Year 4 @ 96%	Year 5 @ 100%
Single Family (Detached/Attached)	$ 1,883.15	$ 1,582.18	$ 1,657.33	$ 1,732.48	$ 1,808.21	$ 1,883.15
2 to 4 Units (Duplex, Townhouse)	$ 1,505.93	$ 1,264.98	$ 1,325.22	$ 1,385.45	$ 1,445.68	$ 1,505.93
Multifamily, Condominium	$ 1,102.00	$ 925.71	$ 969.81	$ 1,013.89	$ 1,057.97	$ 1,102.05
Mobile Home	$ 787.15	$ 661.24	$ 692.70	$ 724.17	$ 755.63	$ 787.10

7820 Broadway Avenue, Merrillville, IN 46410

The Advisory Committee would like to express its appreciation for participation in development of this study and is very pleased to be part of the Council's efforts to improve recreational opportunities in the Town of Merrillville.

Sincerely;

Merrillville Recreation Impact Fee Advisory Committee

Mr. Robert Csanyi
Mr. Randy Hall
Ms. Trista Hudson
Ms. Jennifer Parham
Ms. Lucille Upshaw



Attachment (1)

CC: Margaret Uzelac, President, Merrillville Plan Commission
Mike Griffin, Town Manager
Lisa Roberts, Assistant Parks Director
File

- **Employee of the Month:**
  Town Manager Griffin and Chief Nuses presented Police Officer Nicholas Wright and K-9 Partner Bluer as January's Employees of the Month for the Town of Merrillville to the council and audience. Officer Wright and K-9 Blue received a certificate of recognition and a gift card. Chief Nuses expounded on Officer Wright's and K-9 Blue's exemplary work at the Merrillville Police Department.

PUBLIC HEARING:
NONE

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Accounts Payable Register Voucher Approval for January 28th, 2025
- AP Register Summary for ARP Purchases for January 28th, 2025.
- Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes January 14th, 2025
- Approval of Town Council Committees for 2025
- Request for DISCOUNT of User Charges for the use of Basketball Court at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by Indiana Gam Basketball (Scott Chemma)

TOWN of MERRILLVILLE
Office of Town Administration

Memorandum

Thursday, January 23, 2025

Hon. Rick Bella, President, and the Merrillville Town Council
Merrillville Parks and Recreation Authority (MMC Sec. 13.5-1)
7820 Broadway Ave
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Re: Request for DISCOUNT of User Charges for USE of Basketball Court at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by Indiana Game Basketball (Scott Chemma)

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Town Council:

Hello. I hope this arrives to find you all doing well. I ask your consideration and favor to approve the following:

Attached please see the Event Center Permit, submitted by Scott Chemma d.b.a., Indiana Game Basketball for the use of single basketball court rental at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center on selected Wednesdays, March 26th through July 23, 2025, in order to conduct a basketball practice.

Scott Chemma asks that these fees be discounted from the regular fee to $35 per hour. The regular room rate is $75 per hour. The basis of the request was not given. The revenue differential is at the discounted fee, estimating 136 hours, the total fees would be $4,760. The total collected fees at the regular amount would be $10,200 – a revenue foregone of $5,440.

I am asking that this matter be placed before the Town Council in its role as the Park Authority and that the request for the discount be denied. This is recommended in consultation with the Dean and Barbara White Community Center and Parks Committee.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Griffin, M.P.A., IAMC/MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO
Town Manager/Acting Parks & Recreation Director

- Request for DISCOUNT of User Charges for the use of COMMUNITY ROOM at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, By ROBIN BERNAL, Kick Boxing Class Operator

TOWN of MERRILLVILLE
Office of Town Administration

Memorandum

Thursday, January 23, 2025

Hon. Rick Bella, President, and the Merrillville Town Council
Merrillville Parks and Recreation Authority (MMC Sec. 13.5-1)
7820 Broadway Ave
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Re: Request for DISCOUNT of User Charges for USE of COMMUNITY ROOM at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by ROBIN BERNAL, Kick Boxing Class Operator

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Town Council:

Hello. I hope this arrives to find you all doing well. I ask your consideration and favor to approve the following:

Attached please see the Event Center Permit, submitted by Robin Bernal for the use of the Dean and Barbara White Community Center on for all available Mondays in 2025 in order to conduct a Kick Boxing Class. This is not sponsored or organized by the Park and Recreation Department.

Robin Bernal asks that these fees be discounted from the regular fee to $40 per hour. The regular room rate is $50 per hour. The basis of the request was not given.

I am asking that this matter be placed before the Town Council in its role as the Park Authority and that the request for the discount be denied. This is recommended in consultation with the Dean and Barbara White Community Center and Parks Committee.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Griffin, M.P.A., IAMC/MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO
Town Manager/Acting Parks & Recreation Director

- Request for a Waiver of Charges for Use of Facilities for The Merrillville Community School Corporation for the Parent Resource Fair

TOWN of MERRILLVILLE
Office of Town Administration

Memorandum

Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025

Hon. Rick Bella, President and the Merrillville Town Council
Merrillville Parks and Recreation Authority (MMC Sec. 13.5-1)
7820 Broadway Ave
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Re: Request of a Waiver of Charges for use of Facilities for The Merrillville Community School Corporation for the Parent Resource Fair.

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Town Council:

Hello. I hope this arrives to find you all doing well. I ask your consideration and favor to approve the following:

Request of a Waiver of Charges for use of Facilities for The Merrillville Community School Corporation for the Parent Resource Fair.

Pursuant to a request by letter from the Merrillville Community School Corporation, I am writing to seek the waiver of charges for the use by Merrillville Community Schools for its annual Parent Resource Fair in rooms Event Center Rooms 1,2, & 3 at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center on May 8, 2025, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The school corporation seeks this waiver as it the fee was unknown and unbudgeted for this school year. The cost of use was forgone in the amount of **$1,125.00**

This matter be placed before the Town Council in its role as the Park Authority and that a waiver be **granted** for this use. This is in consultation with the Dean & Barbara White Community Center and Parks Committee, which supports the recommendation.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Griffin, M.P.A., MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO
Town Manager / Acting Parks and Recreation Director

MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
6701 Delaware Street, Merrillville, IN 46410
(219) 650-5300 FAX (219) 650-5320
www.mvsc.k12.in.us

Dexter Sugga, Ph.D
Superintendent of Schools

"Once a Pirate, Always a Pirate"

October 15, 2024

Town of Merrillville Town Council
7820 Broadway
Merrillville, IN 46410

Dear Members of the Merrillville Town Council,

I am writing to request a waiver of fees for the use of the Dean and Barbara White Community Center for the Merrillville Community School Corporation Parent Resource Fair scheduled to take place Thursday, May 8, 2025. We understand that maintaining public facilities involves costs, and we greatly appreciate the town's ongoing efforts to support school and community initiatives. As a public school corporation with limited funding, we are seeking your assistance in waiving the associated fees for building use. This support would enable us to allocate more resources toward the Parent Resource Fair.

The Merrillville Community School Corporation is committed to fostering a collaborative relationship with the town, and we greatly value the support we have received in the past. This event aims to bring together students, families, and community members, reinforcing the strong bonds between our school and the town.

I appreciate your consideration of our request. I am happy to provide any additional information or meet to discuss this further. Thank you for your attention and support of initiatives that benefit our students, parents and community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dexter Sugga
Superintendent

- Request for MODIFICATION of User Charges for USES of ROOMs at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by Dave Maravilla d.b.sa BOSCO Youth Basketball (Full Season & Practices)

TOWN of MERRILLVILLE
Office of Town Administration

Memorandum

Thursday, January 23, 2025

Hon. Rick Bella, President, and the Merrillville Town Council
Merrillville Parks and Recreation Authority (MMC Sec. 13.5-1)
7820 Broadway Ave
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Re: **Request for MODIFICATION of User Charges for USES of ROOMS at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by Dave Maravilla d.b.a. BOSCO Youth Basketball (Full Season & Practices)**

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Town Council:

Hello. I hope this arrives to find you all doing well. I ask your consideration and favor to approve the following:

Attached please see the Event Center Permit for Dave Maravilla d.b.a. BOSCO as submitted by Dave Maravilla for the use of the Dean and Barbara White Community Center for several months in 2025.

Dave Maravilla d.b.a. BOSCO asks that these fees be discounted or waived. He asked for a discount from the current regular hourly rate of $50 per hour to $25 per hour, a fifty percent (50%) discount. The basis of the request when I discussed this with him, was that he was concerned about the increase in price being passed on to the young people he charges a fee. BOSCO charges the participants.

I am asking that this matter be placed before the Town Council in its role as the Park Authority and that the request be denied. This is pursuant to consultation with the Dean and Barbara White Community Center and Parks Committee.

The value of the revenue forgone if granted as requested is $2,437.50.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Griffin, M.P.A., IAMC/MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO
Town Manager/Acting Parks & Recreation Director

- Request for MODIFICATION of User Charges for USES of ROOMS at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by Dave Marvilla d.b.a. BOSCO Youth Basketball (Jamboree Tournament)

TOWN of MERRILLVILLE
Office of Town Administration

Memorandum

Thursday January 23, 2025

Hon. Rick Bella, President, and the Merrillville Town Council
Merrillville Parks and Recreation Authority (MMC Sec. 13.5-1)
7920 Broadway Ave
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Re: **Request for MODIFICATION of User Charges for USES of ROOMS at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by Dave Maravilla d.b.a. BOSCO Youth Basketball (Jamboree Tournament)**

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Town Council:

Hello. I hope this arrives to find you all doing well. I ask your consideration and favor to approve the following:

Attached please see the Event Center Permit for Dave Maravilla d.b.a. BOSCO as submitted by Dave Maravilla for the use of the Dean and Barbara White Community Center on October 12, 2025

Dave Maravilla d.b.a. BOSCO asks that these fees be discounted or waived. He asked for a full waiver in exchange for the operation of the concession stand, retaining its receipts and collecting & retaining the gate receipts all by Merrillville. The basis of the request was not given. BOSCO does charge the participants.

I am asking that this matter be placed before the Town Council in its role as the Park Authority and pursuant to the guidance of the Dean & Barbara White Community Center & Park Committee, and that the request for the fee modification be denied.

If granted, the value of the rental revenue forgone is $2,715. There is no estimate as to the gate or the concession stand.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Griffin, M.P.A., IAMC/MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO
Town Manager/Acting Parks & Recreation Director

- Request for DISCOUNT of User Charges for the use of WIESS TURF FIELD at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by INDIANA UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST SOCCER

TOWN of MERRILLVILLE
Office of Town Administration

Memorandum

Thursday, January 23, 2025

Hon. Rick Bella, President, and the Merrillville Town Council
Merrillville Parks and Recreation Authority (MMC Sec. 13.5-1)
7920 Broadway Ave
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Re: **Request for DISCOUNT of User Charges for USE of WEISS TURF FIELD at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, by INDIANA UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST SOCCER**

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Town Council:

Hello. I hope this arrives to find you all doing well. I ask your consideration and favor to approve the following:

Attached please see the Event Center Permit, submitted by Ryan Shelton, Athletic Director of Indiana University Northwest for rental at WEISS FIELD and community flex room located at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center for IUN RedHawks Soccer Practice March 21h through July 30th, 2025; March 10, 2025, to May 2, 2025, and August 1, 2025 through November 5, 2025 in order to conduct a university soccer practice.

Mr. Shelton asks that the initial discount approved for the IUN Soccer be continued for the 2025 season. The discounts are estimated at 33% off the regular fees. The original basis for this relationship included the prospect of soccer team members conducting summer youth soccer camps with our department. Also, there have been representations to add to our concession stand at IUN's cost acquisition of an additional ice maker for the concession stand, that would be available for the team's use for its practices. It is believed that this can still be realized. We now have a staff person (recreation coordinator) to be the contact person to develop the summer soccer camp program.

I am asking that this matter be placed before the Town Council in its role as the Park Authority and that the request for the renewal of the use agreement and discount be **granted.** This is recommended in consultation with the Dean and Barbara White Community Center and Parks Committee.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Griffin, M.P.A., IAMC/MMC/CPFA/ACPFIM/CMO
Town Manager/Acting Parks & Recreation Director

It was moved by Councilor Hardaway and seconded by Councilor Haynes-Edwards to approve the consent agenda.

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

PRESENTATION of DECLARATIONS: ***NONE***

APPOINTMENTS:

- **Executive Appointments**
    - **Plan Commission:** Brian Dearing (D)
    - **Board of Zoning and Appeals:** Pete Guipe
    - **Redevelopment Commission:** S. Pettit, M. Uzelac, Keesha Hardaway
    - **Stormwater Management Board:** L.J. Bud Christ (D)
    - **Fire Protection Territory Board:** Rhonda Neal, Keesha Hardaway
    - **Economic Development Commission:** Dan C. Stevenson
    - **NIRPC:** Keesha Hardaway
    - **Shared Ethics Entity:** Keesha Hardaway, Richard Hardaway

- **Legislative Appointments**
    - **Plan Commission:**

      President Bella reported that S. Pettit, M. Uzelac, and L. Chandler-Felton were the recommended appointments from the council work.

      It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Councilor Chandler-Felton to approve the recommendations of S. Pettit, M. Uzelac, and L. Chandler-Felton to the Plan Commission.

      Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. S. Pettit, M. Uzelac, and L. Chandler-Felton were approved for the Plan Commission appointments.

    - **Town Board of Metro Police:**

      President Bella reported that Michael Rich (R) is the recommended appointment.

      It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the recommendation of Michael Rich (R) to the Board of Metro Police.

      Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. Michael Rich appointment was approved for the Town Board of Metro Police.

    - **Redevelopment Commission:**

      President Bella reported that Leona Chandler-Felton and Shauna Haynes-Edwards are the recommended appointments.

      It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the recommendations of Leona Chandler-Felton and Shauna Haynes-Edwards to the Redevelopment Commission.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. Leona Chandler-Felton and Shauna Haynes-Edwards appointments were approved for the Redevelopment Commission.

- **Solid Waste Management District Board of Directors (same):** Rhonda Neal

President Bella reported that Rhonda Neal is the recommended re-appointment.

It was moved by Councilor Hardaway and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the recommendation of re-appointment of Rhonda Neal to the Solid Waste Management District Board of Directors.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. Rhonda Neal was approved for re-appointment to the Solid Waste Management District Board of Directors.

Upon a question from Councilor Pettit regarding the Executive Appointment of a Democrat and Republican being up at the same time, Town Manager Griffin responded that the cycle is now staggered under the statute.

STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES REPORTS:

President Bella reported that all committee assignments remain the same this year except for Environmental Affairs. Councilor Uzelac is the recommended Chair for the committee and Councilor Pettit will be removed.

It was moved by Councilor Haynes-Edwards and seconded by Vice-President Neal to approve the standing committees' assignments.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The standing committees' assignments were approved.

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

STREET DEPARTMENT- UZELAC– Councilor Uzelac reported the following:

- **Snow Plowing/Salting**– The Street Department did a good job during the snow days.
- **Park Maintenance** – The parks were mowed before the winter weather started, and the bike paths are being maintained.
- **Trash Pickup** – Trash is being picked up on the main roads.
- **Cross Training** – The Street Department staff is being cross-trained on heavy equipment.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS- PETTIT– Councilor Pettit reported that he will speak to Attorney Svetanoff and Town Manager Griffin regarding any pending ordinances.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – HARDAWAY- Councilor Hardaway reported that two candidates will be interviewed for the Parks Director position on February 4, 2025, and positions for the Community Center and Street Department will be posted next week.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- UZELAC – Councilor Uzelac had nothing to report and deferred to Director Matt Lake regarding retention ponds.

Director Lake added that the retention ponds are being maintained, and the department is looking to purchase a tiger mower.

PUBLIC SAFETY- HARDAWAY- Councilor Hardaway reported that a meeting has been scheduled for February 3rd.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION - NEAL- Vice-President Neal reported that a meeting was held on Monday, January 27th regarding the Gateway signs and another meeting has been scheduled for Monday February 6th .

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that a Redevelopment Commission meeting was held before the council meeting where action was taken on four resolutions related to tax increments and financial allocation areas. This is the last step in creating the following new allocation areas:

- North Broadway
- Silos East on 101st Avenue
- Mississippi Street Crow
- Liberty West

Councilor Pettit also reported that a fifth resolution where action was taken in the Redevelopment Commission meeting regarding a developer-backed bond. This is the first step. The next step is the Economic Development Commission will meet in an advertised public hearing on February 18th regarding the $20,000,000.00 developer-backed bond for Liberty West. Public comments in favor or against the bond can be made at the February 18th meeting.

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

- ***PARKS AND DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER - PETTIT*** – Councilor Pettit reported that a meeting was held on January 23rd where several usage issues were taken care of and approved under the consent agenda. The committee also decided, due to lack of usage, the climbing wall will be redeveloped. A spin area was suggested by Chris Geiger.

Councilor Pettit also announced a committee meeting for Thursday January 30th at 5:00pm to discuss the HVAC systems and give answers to Core and American Structure Point regarding the HVAC system and hear what they have to say on the matters regarding responsibility and payments.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

SPECIAL TOWN PROJECTS - NEAL – Councilor Neal reported that the committee is preparing for the Town's 2025 Black History Celebration and deferred to Councilor Haynes-Edwards to report the details.

Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that the Town's Black Excellence Family Sneaker Ball will be held on February 28th from 6:00 pm to 9:00pm at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center. The price of tickets is $10.00 and will be available January 29th at Town Hall and the Dean and Barbara White Community Center.

This event includes the Merrillville Community School Corporation and students where they will highlight black excellence and achievements. The following will also be at this event:

- DJ
- Music
- Refreshments

Vice-President Neal added that this is a fundraiser event for the Town of Merrillville Scholarship Fund.

SEMI-QUINCENTENN IAL COMMITTEE - HAYNES-EDWARDS – Councilor Haynes-Edwards had nothing to report.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS:

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES-LAKE – Director Matthew Lake reported on the following:

- **Hickory Ridge Flood Control Project** – Dyer Construction Company is making progress on the construction even with the sub-zero weather conditions.

- **Southmoor Park Drainage Project** – Director Lake has received a draft set of plans, and we are going to save over $400,000.00 in the rebid of this project.

- **Kaiser Ditch** – A quote has been obtained for the repair of the guard rail and installation will be next month.

- **MCD Inter Local Agreement** – This agreement is being drafted by our attorney Jim Meyer and will allow us to share resources and equipment in a time of need.

NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway reported that a meeting was held, and the following items were discussed:

- Election of Officer
- Renewal of the Executive Director Employment Agreement
- Forty-Two Municipalities Project – The Town of Merrillville has one out of the forty-two which is the roundabout at Mississippi and 79th.
- INDOT - Project on 73rd Avenue and State Road 55
- Presentation by Maya Michaelson of the Indiana Arts Commission where a $4,000.00 non-matching grant can be applied for to create murals.
- Job Openings – Several job openings through NIRPC from other municipalities were announced.

Upon a question from Councilor Pettit regarding the 69th and Mississippi project, Director Steve King responded that it is a Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission project in the design stage.

Councilor Hardaway added that the project was not mentioned in the meeting.

THE SHARED ETHICS ENTITY-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway had nothing to report.

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD - NEAL & HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway nothing to report.

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-NEAL– No report was given.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/ TOWN MANAGER

Clerk-Treasurer Eric January – Clerk's Office

Clerk-Treasurer Eric January reported the following:

- W2s – The employees of the Town of Merrillville will have their W2s by Friday, January 31, 2025.
- Annual Payroll 2024 – The annual payroll was $11,949,627.77.
- Monthly Payroll (December 2024) – 892,103.22
- Funds – The Town of Merrillville has 119 funds, and his office is looking to consolidate and reduce the number of funds.
- Cash on Hand – As of December 31, 2024, the Town had a balance of $48,501,331.62.
    - Stormwater - Revenue: 7,240,872.70 Expended: $755,624.04
    - RDC – Revenue: $17,670,749.94 Expended: $13,431,715.57
    - Police Department – Revenue: $923,764,46
    - Fire Department – Revenue: $7,866,896.36
    - Court – Revenue: $129,709.69
    - General Fund – Revenue: $6,303,507.83

Clerk-Treasurer Eric January also reported that his goal is to provide more information in the future regarding the Town of Merrillville finances.

Interim Parks Director Roberts – Parks and Recreation

Interim Parks Director Roberts reported on the following:

- Co-Ed Indoor Volleyball League – We have seven team currently participating and registration will be open until February 7th to everyone including Town of Merrillville Departments. The games are on Fridays from 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm for seven weeks.
- Art Program – The next event will be jewelry making on February 22nd.
- Canvas Painting – The next event will be on March 29th.
- Fitness, Exercise, and Dance – We are looking to start classes in April 2025

Chief Nuses – Police Department

Chief Nuses reported the following numbers for December 2024:

- Calls for Service – 2,348 which resulted in 65 arrests.
- Traffic Stop – 456 which resulted in 174 tickets written.

Chief Nuses also reported the following numbers for Year-End 2024

- Final Number for 2024
    - Violent Crime – 1 homicide down from 2 in 2023

- Robberies – 6 down from 21 in 2023
- Rape and Sexual Assaults – 6 down from 12 in 2023.
- Assaults and Aggravate Assaults – 217 down from 249 in 2023.
- Non-Violence Crime Category
  - Burglaries 31 down from 43 in 2023
  - Thefts 347 down from 455 in 2023
  - Auto Thefts 83 down from 110 in 2023
  - Fraud 271 up from 256 in 2023
- Call for Service – 30,000 (29,898 calls from the calls 300 were cat calls)
- Traffic Stops - 4,889 resulted in 3,203 tickets being issued.
- Arrest - 944

Director Shine - Building and Planning
Director Shine had nothing to report.

Director King – Street Department
Director King reported that bids were opened today at 12:01 pm for the Community Crossing Project. There were two bidders, and we will be awarding the bid at the next council meeting.

Upon a question from President Bella regarding an update on streetlights on Georgia Street, Director King responded that the order for the lights was received by NIPSCO, and he will be meeting with the NIPSCO representative Angie Wright to get this project started.

Town Manager Griffin – Town Administration
Town Manager Griffin reported the staff report was given to the council members and Clerk-Treasurer Eric January according to section 227 of the municipal code.

GENERAL ORDERS

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

Zoning: (motion to adopt or reject; confer IC36-5-2-10(d)

First Reading: Ordinance (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

1. **Ordinance 25-02 (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)**
   Ordinance To Amend Merrillville Municipal Code sees. 6-291 through 299 Governing Park Impact Fee.

ORDINANCE No. 25-02
of the
TOWN of MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 294 of the MERRILLVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING to RE-ESTABLISHING THE IMPACT FEE FOR PARK INFRASTRUCTURE, REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH, all pursuant to IC 36-7-4-1300 et seq.

WHEREAS, IC 36-7-4-1300 et seq confers upon the Town of Merrillville the authority to adopt and enforce a park improvement fee, which are enacted in Article VIII of the Merrillville Municipal Code;

WHEREAS, The Town of Merrillville Established a Park Impact Fee Advisory Committee, to assist and advise the Town with its renewal and revision of its Impact Fees for park infrastructure improvements, which are particularly enacted in Section 6-294 of the Merrillville Municipal Code, and shall expire in March 2025;

WHEREAS, The Town of Merrillville Park Impact Fee Advisory Committee, upon completion of its review, transmitted a letter to the Town Council recommending revisions to the park impact fees, and suggested certain amendments to Section 6-294 of the Merrillville Municipal Code within the Town of Merrillville;

WHEREAS, Upon receipt of the letter, the Town Council directed the Merrillville Plan Commission to conduct a public hearing and consider the recommendations of the Park Impact Fee Advisory Committee regarding changes to the impact fees currently enacted in Section 6-294 of the Merrillville Municipal Code, pursuant to IC 36-7-4-607(b);

WHEREAS, The Plan Commission of the Town of Merrillville, has reviewed the Revised Park Impact Fee Amendment and now approves and favorably recommends to the Town Council that the same be enacted;

WHEREAS, The Plan Commission of the Town of Merrillville, finds and determines that it is in the best interests of the residents of the Town that the revised park impact fees as set forth in this ordinance be adopted;

[redacted]

(B) The town council hereby makes as a part of the record of these proceedings, all of the data reflected, the calculations made, and the conclusions reached by Arch Group, Inc in the process of developing the zone improvement plan and specifically instructs the employees of the town to make such data and other information exclusively available to anyone for review during regular business hours, pursuant to IC 5-14-3 et seq.

(C) In the event that any parcel of real estate considered in the creation of the zone improvement plan undergoes a change in use, redevelopment, or a modification which requires a structural building permit and creates a need for new infrastructure, an impact fee will only be assessed for the increase in the burden on infrastructure. [redacted] pursuant to Section 6-294.8.

Section 2. That the Merrillville Municipal Code be amended by adding a new section be styled Section 6-294.7,which shall read as follows:

Sec. 6-294.7. - Establishment of impact fee for Parks and Recreational Purposes.

(A) Based upon the plan previously referred to and which is made a part of this article, the town council determines that the cost per equivalent single family dwelling unit [redacted] Based on the equivalent dwelling unit calculations used by the town, the town council hereby establishes the park and recreation impact fee in the following amounts for the housing unit types described:

[redacted]

(B) The town council hereby determines that the impact fee or fees are calculated pursuant to the requirements and constraints set forth in IC 36-7-4 section 1311, 1320 and 1321. This enactment makes as a part of the record of these proceedings, all of the data reflected, the calculations made, and the conclusions reached by Arch Group, Inc., in the process of developing the zone improvement plan and specifically instructs the town to make such data and other information exclusively available to anyone for review pursuant to IC 5-14-3 et seq.

(C) In the event that any parcel of real estate considered in the creation of the zone improvement plan undergoes a change in use, redevelopment, or a modification

[redacted]

which requires a structural building permit, and creates a need for new infrastructure, an impact fee will only be assessed for the increase in the burden on infrastructure. [redacted]

Section 3. That the amendments set forth in section 1 of this ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage and adoption, as evidenced by the signature of the Town Council President.

Section 4. That with the exception set forth in Section 3, this ordinance shall become and be in full force and effect as follows:

(A) From and after the date of its adoption, passage and expiration of six months after that date, by the Town Council; or

(B) From and after the date of adoption as described in the manner prescribed by IC 36-7-4-607(b) and;

All [redacted]

Certificate of the Municipal Plan Commission

It is hereby certified that the foregoing proposed zoning text amendment modifying the Park Impact Fees of the Town was considered at a regular or special meeting by the Merrillville Municipal Plan Commission, having sustained a vote of __ in favor and __ opposed, and was duly forwarded with a favorable recommendation for adoption to the Town Council of Merrillville by the Merrillville Municipal Plan Commission on the __ day of _____ 2025.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE
Municipal Plan Commission

Action by Legislative Body

Duly Ordained Adopted pursuant to the provisions of IC 36-5-2-9.8 (b)(1), the recommendation of the Plan Commission is noted, and the ordinance is hereby adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, this 28th day of September 2025.

TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

President Bella informed the council that this ordinance would be removed from the agenda because of a procedural error.

Town Manager Griffin explained Ordinance 25-02 will be resubmitted as a zoning change to text.

Second Reading: (Discussion and Roll Call Vote): ***NONE***

B. **Resolutions:** ***NONE***

C. **BZA & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS: NONE**

OLD BUSINESS :
NONE

NEW BUSINESS:
NONE

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. Pablo Payan of Merrillville Indiana voiced his concerns regarding the streetlights request.

2. Bryor Mesarch of Merrillville Indiana voiced his concerns regarding Indiana open door laws for council and RDC meetings , ADA Compliance Printed Materials, Freedom of Information Request, and working together on one accord for the betterment of the community.

3. Maceo Rainey of Merrillville Indiana thanked Clerk-Treasurer Eric January for his transparency, approachability, and all he is doing for the Town of Merrillville.

4. Samuel Payan of Merrillville Indiana voiced his concerns regarding public officials' email addresses.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Council President announced the following:

- Town Council Meeting Tuesday, February 11th at 6:30 p.m.
- BHM Family Sneaker Ball February 28th from 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed all items on the agenda, the Town Council President announced the meeting adjourned 7:25 p.m.

Rick Bella, Town Council President

Eric O. January, Clerk-Treasurer

Respectfully Submitted By Angela Lewis