Town Council of Merrillville
7820 Broadway Ave - Merrillville, IN 46410
Town Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
November 25, 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 – November:**
  Town Manager Griffin, Captain Thomas Westbury, and Captain Phillip Hasier presented Firefighter Perry Herzog Sr. of the Merrillville Fire Department to the council and audience as November's Employee of the Month for the Town of Merrillville. Firefighter Herzog has nearly fifty years of service at the Fire Department. He received a certificate of recognition, read by Captain Westbury, and a gift card.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
One public comment was made regarding Data Centers at the meeting. A copy of the video from the Town Council Meeting held on November 25, 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 November 28th, 2025
- Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of November 11th, 2025
- Approval Special Town Council Meeting Minutes of November 19th, 2025
- Approval of First Amendment to Amended and Complete Restatement of Development Agreement



5.5 & 7 are completed by the Town allowing for the each Phase to be into Sanitary, Storm, and Ingress/Egress.

All of which is passed and adopted this __ day of ___ 2025, by the TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE TOWN COUNCIL

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

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

SPECIAL ORDERS: ***NONE***

BZA & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS*:*

Petitioner: Donna Webster
Owner: DG Properties LLC
Request: Special Exception Approval
Purpose: To allow a dine-in restaurant
Location: 7187 Taft Street
Zoning: C-2, Community Commercial Zoning

Planning and Building Director Sheila Shine reported that the ABZA approved the special exception anc gave an overview of the business. Director Shine also stated that there were no remonstrators, and the vote for approval was 5-0.

The Petitioner, Donna Webster, explained the business.

Councilor Pettit thanked Petitioner Webster for bringing her business to the Town of Merrillville.

It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Councilor Chandler-Felton to approve the BZA Special Exception.

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 Special Exception 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:

- **Snow: No Parking Signs –** The residents of Foxmoor have been contacting her regarding the snow sign. Director Steve informed Councilor Uzelac that two signs have been installed at the entrance of Foxmoor and two more at all entrances in the subdivision.
- **Leaf Collection** – The leaf collection has resumed for one week on December 1st
- **Snowplow Trucks –** The snowplow trucks are being inspected for any mechanical issues.
- **Paving –** Paving has ended for the year and will resume in the Spring.
- **Streetlights –** President Bella mentioned there are streetlights out in the Town and asked Director Steve King to inform the council if any additional help is needed. Director Steve King responded that NIPSCO has been contacted regarding the streetlight being out, and he has a list of all the outages.
- **Speed Humps –** Director King reported that the speed humps are in the process of being removed from the wards. All the speed humps should be removed by mid next week.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS—PETTIT—Councilor Pettit reported that a Council Affairs committee meeting will be held on December 2, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. There will be several ordinances on the agenda from Town Manager Griffin for discussion.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE- HARDAWAY- Councilor Hardaway encouraged residents to download the mymerrillville app available in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store to be up to date with events, notices, and job openings in the Town of Merrillville. The job openings are also listed on the Town of Merrillville website: https://www.merrillville.in.gov/departments/human_resources.php.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- UZELAC – Councilor Uzelac reported that the following shots are available at Walgreens, CVS, and Meijer Pharmacies:

- COVID-19
- Pneumonia
- Flu

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

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION - NEAL- Vice President Neal reported that the Gateway and Park signs have been delivered. The soil is being evaluated. We are waiting for the test results before installing the two signs. The signs will be installed in the Spring of next year.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that a Redevelopment Commission (RDC) meeting was held earlier tonight. The spending plan for RDC was unanimously approved and will be uploaded to Gateway by December 1, 2025.

Councilor Pettit also reported that Director Angie Chilcott and Joanna Guardiola of Economic Development sent notices to the other taxing districts, and a resolution was passed transferring money from the Merrillville Road Tax Increment Fund into the Community Center's lease line-item.

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

PARKS AND DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER - PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that the championship games are with the Andrea High School, which plays on Friday, and Merrillville High School, which plays on Saturday. A police and fire department escort has been set up with the Police Chief Nuses.

The next Community Center Committee meeting is scheduled for January 2026, and interviews for Park Board candidates will take place soon.

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:

- **Tree Lighting Ceremony** - The Town of Merrillville tree lighting ceremony will be held on Saturday, December 6th, from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center. You can find information on this event and others on the mymerrillville app and the Town of Merrillville website.

- **Movie Night** – The movie night will be on December 9th. Jerry McCartney will elaborate on the event.

SEMI-QUINCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE - HAYNES-EDWARDS – Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that information regarding the committee meeting will be given at the next council meeting.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS:

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

- State IDM Clean Community
- Disaster Supplemental Funding from Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission
- Stormwater Master Plan
- CRS Activities

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

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT-NEAL– Vice President Neal reported that the scheduled meeting did not have a quorum and had to be cancelled. The new meeting date is December 19th.

THE SHARED ETHICS ENTITY-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardway reported that a meeting was held, and the dues for the year 2026 were discussed and voted on by the members. The vote kept the 2026 rates at the 75% reduced rate.

Councilor Hardaway also reported that 250 people attended the Ethics Summit with a panel of mayors from three counties.

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:

- **Town Budget** – The Town is under budget by 12% for this year.
- **Food and Beverage Tax** – We received another check for $143,629.26. This brings the total received to $2,336,341.75.
- **Collections** - (Comprises Court, Fire Department, General Fund, Obligated & Non-Obligated Funds, Police Department, RDA, Stormwater, etc. Funds) $74,282,625.57
- **Restaurants** – We have ninety-two pure restaurants, and we just added one more tonight, which brings the total to ninety-three.

SSCVA – DEANN PATENA - No Report

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/ TOWN MANAGER:

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

- **Indiana Parks and Recreation Association Conference and Expo** – He attended this conference.
- **Floors at Community Center** – The installation project is completed.
- **Tunnel and Bike Trail Lights** – The lights are installed.
- **Community Center Closed**– The community center will be closed on Thursday, November 27th, and November 28th.
- **Movie Night** – The movie Elf will be shown on December 9th at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center. Children thirteen and under get in for free, and minors must be accompanied by an adult.
- **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.

Police Chief Nuses– Police Department
Chief Nuses reported the following statistics for October:

- **Calls for Service** – 2,516, which resulted in 4,390 officers' responses.
- **Adult Arrest** – 111
- **Juvenile Arrest** – 3
- **Traffic Stops** – 488, which resulted in under five hundred tickets.

Police Chief Nuses also reported that he will be working with Director Steve King during snowy weather where two or more inches of snow have fallen. The Police Department will have vehicles removed if they hinder snow removal efforts.

Director Shine – Building and Planning
Director Sheila Shine had nothing to report.

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

- **Snow Preparation** - Director King informed the council that snow preparation is underway and the department is monitoring the weather.
- **Parked Car Blocking the Snowplow** – Parked cars will be towed that block the snowplow from removing snow from the street.
- **Gateway Signs –** The signs have been delivered, but there was an issue with the foundation. We are waiting to install them until the foundation issue is resolved.

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.

Upon a question from Councilor Pettit regarding the Geo Bond closing and the rest of the Gateway and parks signs, Town Manager Griffin responded that the Gateway and parks signs are a line item in the bond.

GENERAL ORDERS

A. Ordinances: (Discussion and Roll Call Vote):

Zoning: (Motion to adopt or reject; confer IC 36-5-2-10(d): **NONE**

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

Ordinance 25-35 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance Appropriating Additional Moneys in Excess of the Annual Budget for the Several Named Departments of the Corporation General Fund (1101) through reduction, all pursuant to I.C. 6-1.1-18, I.C. 36-5-3-5, et seq.

It was moved by Vice President Neal and seconded by Councilor Haynes-Edwards to approve on first reading Ordinance 25-35.

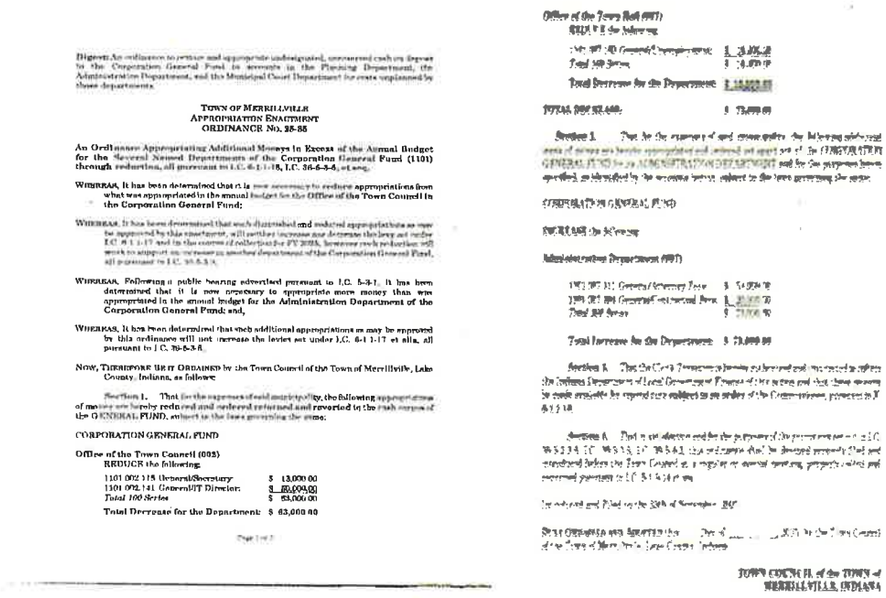
Town Manager Griffin explained Ordinance 25-35

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 25-34 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

Ordinance Providing For The Additional Appropriation Of The General Obligation Bond Proceeds.



Digest: An ordinance to pursue and appropriate undesignated, unreserved cash on hand in the Corporation General Fund to accounts in the Planning Department, the Administration Department, and the Municipal Court Department for costs explained by those departments.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE
APPROPRIATION ENACTMENT
ORDINANCE No. 25-35

An Ordinance Appropriating Additional Moneys in Excess of the Annual Budget for the Several Named Departments of the Corporation General Fund (1101) through reduction, all pursuant to I.C. 6-1.1-18, I.C. 36-5-3-5, et seq.

WHEREAS, It has been determined that it is now necessary to reduce appropriations from what was appropriated in the annual budget for the Office of the Town Council in the Corporation General Fund;

WHEREAS, It has been determined that such diminished and reduced appropriations as may be approved by this enactment, will neither increase nor decrease the levy set under I.C. 6-1.1-17 and in the course of collection for FY 2025, however such reduction will work to support an increase in another department of the Corporation General Fund, all pursuant to I.C. 36-5-3-5;

WHEREAS, Following a public hearing advertised pursuant to I.C. 5-3-1, it has been determined that it is now necessary to appropriate more money than was appropriated in the annual budget for the Administration Department of the Corporation General Fund; and,

WHEREAS, It has been determined that such additional appropriations as may be approved by this ordinance will not increase the levies set under I.C. 6-1.1-17 et alia, all pursuant to I.C. 36-5-3-5.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED 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 of monies are hereby reduced and reduced returned and reverted to the cash surplus of the GENERAL FUND, subject to the laws governing the same:

CORPORATION GENERAL FUND

Office of the Town Council (005)
REDUCE the following:

1101 002 118 General/Secretary	$ 13,000.00
1101 002 141 General/IT Director	$ 50,000.00
Total 100 Series	$ 63,000.00
Total Decrease for the Department:	**$ 63,000.00**

It was moved by Councilor Haynes-Edwards and seconded by Councilor Pettit to approve Ordinance 25-34 on second and final reading.

Town Manager Griffin explained Ordinance 25-34.

President Bella asked Town Manager Griffin to explain how the bond will be paid back. Town Manager Griffin stated that the bond will be paid back through Article 13 debt.

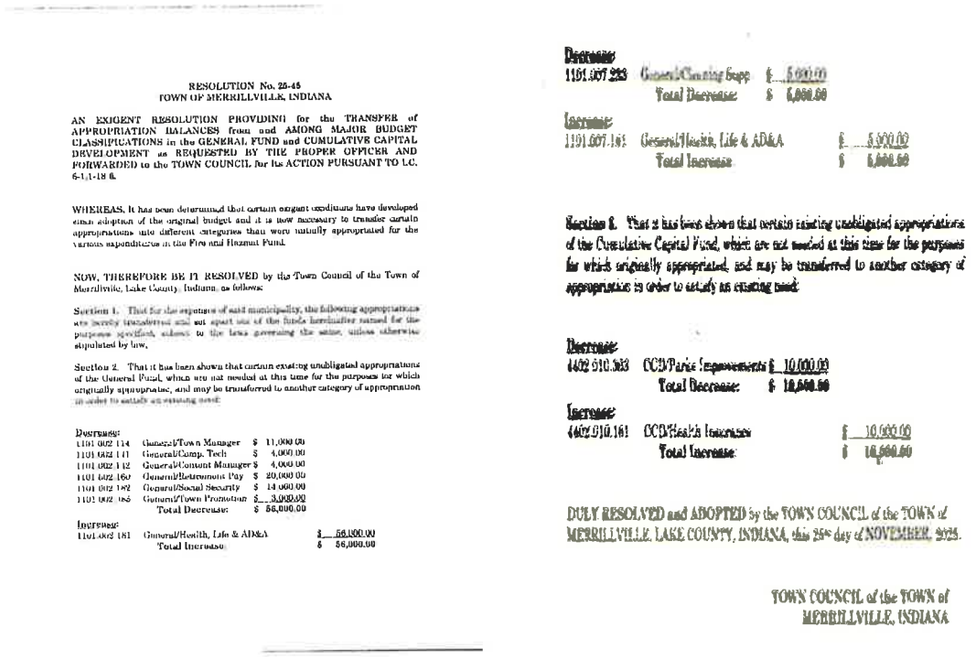
Town Manager Griffin also stated that the Public Hearing was held on November 19th at a Special Town Council Meeting.

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 25-45 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

An Exigent Resolution Providing For The Transfer Of Appropriation Balances From And Among Major Budget Classifications In The General Fund and Cumulative Capital Development Fund As Requested By The Proper Officer And Forward To The Town Council For Its Action Pursuant To I.C. 6-1.1-1-18-6



RESOLUTION No. 25-45
TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

AN EXIGENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING for the TRANSFER of APPROPRIATION BALANCES from and AMONG MAJOR BUDGET CLASSIFICATIONS in the GENERAL FUND and CUMULATIVE CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT 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 General 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:

1101.002.114	General/Town Manager	$ 11,000.00
1101.002.111	General/Comp. Tech	$ 4,000.00
1101.002.112	General/Content Manager	$ 4,000.00
1101.002.160	General/Retirement Pay	$ 20,000.00
1101.002.182	General/Social Security	$ 14,000.00
1101.002.185	General/Town Promotion	$ 3,000.00
	Total Decrease:	$ 56,000.00

Increase:

1101.002.181	General/Health, Life & AD&A	$ 56,000.00
	Total Increase:	$ 56,000.00

Decrease:

1101.007.223	General/Cleaning Supp	$ 5,000.00
	Total Decrease:	$ 5,000.00

Increase:

1101.007.181	General/Health, Life & AD&A	$ 5,000.00
	Total Increase:	$ 5,000.00

Section 2. That it has been shown that certain existing unobligated appropriations of the Cumulative Capital 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:

4402.910.363	CCD/Parks Improvements	$ 10,000.00
	Total Decrease:	$ 10,000.00

Increase:

4402.910.161	CCD/Health Insurance	$ 10,000.00
	Total Increase:	$ 10,000.00

DULY RESOLVED and ADOPTED by the TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, this 25th day of NOVEMBER, 2025.

TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Councilor Haynes-Edward to approve Resolution 25-45.

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:

- Town Council Meeting December 9th, 2025, at 6:30 pm
- Town Hall closed on Thursday, the 27th, and Friday, the 28th in observance of Thanksgiving.
- Christmas Tree Lightning & picture with Santa December 6th from 4-6. Tree lighting ceremony at 5:45 sharp at the D&BWCC.
- Council Affairs Meeting December 2nd at 5:00 p.m.
- Plan Commission Workshop December 2nd at 6:30 p.m.
- RDC Workshop Meeting December 9th at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:
Having completed all items on the agenda, the Town Council President announced the meeting had adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Rick Bella, Town Council President

Eric O. January, Clerk-Treasurer

Respectfully Submitted By Angela Lewis