Town Council of Merrillville
7820 Broadway Ave - Merrillville, IN 46410
Town Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
March 10, 2026, 6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: President Rick Bella called the meeting to order at 6:34 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 Dennis Walton of Faith Temple of Christ 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. Acting Clerk-Treasurer Angela Lewis was present to memorialize the proceedings. A quorum was attained.

Town Attorney Svetanoff was present to provide legal advice.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND REMONSTRATIONS: ***NONE***

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
No public comments were made. A copy of the video from the Town Council Meeting held on March 10, 2026, has been uploaded to the Town's website at:
https://www.merrillville.in.gov/government/town_council/town_council_meetings.php.

MOTIONS ON THE TABLE: ***NONE***

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Accounts Payable Register Voucher Approval for March 10, 2026.
- Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2026 **(the minutes that were approved are for February 24, 2026, not March 10, 2026)**.

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*: NONE*

STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES REPORTS:

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

***BUDGET & FINANCE*—NEAL**— Vice President Neal reported that a budget meeting will be on Monday, March 16, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Budget and Finance meetings are scheduled for the third Monday of every month at 5;00 p.m.

STREET DEPARTMENT & PARK MAINTENANCE - UZELAC– Councilor Uzelac reported that the Street Department is picking up branches and clearing trash from the streets throughout the Town of Merrillville because of the fierce winds.

Upon a question from Councilor Uzelac regarding a resident's request to move polls on 74th Place for ongoing and upcoming traffic, Director Steve King responded that he spoke to the resident regarding the request not being practical and denied the request.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS—PETTIT—Councilor Pettit reported that he must meet with Attorney Svetanoff and Town Manager Griffin regarding any pending ordinances.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE- HARDAWAY- Councilor Hardaway reported that an executive session of the committee will meet on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 11:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- UZELAC – Councilor Uzelac reported that she had some questions for Director Matthew Lake of Stormwater Management regarding Hendrick Street drainage problems, but Director Lake was absent from the meeting.

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

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION - NEAL- Vice President Neal deferred to Director Steve King of the Street Department for the report.

Director King reported that two of the Gateway signs have been installed, one at 93rd Avenue, Merrillville Road, and the other at Stefek Park. Uplighting will be done on the one on 93rd Avenue. The remaining Gateway signs will be ordered upon council approval.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that a workshop will be on March 24th at 5:00 p.m. between the Redevelopment Commission (RDC) and the Fire Territory Board (FTB), before the regular schedule RDC meeting, to discuss concerns of the FTB.

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

PARKS AND DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER - PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that he would defer to Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Jerry McCartney's report under the department's report. The regular fourth Thursday of the monthly committee meeting will resume on March 26th at 5:00 p.m.

Councilor Pettit encouraged President Bell and Vice-President Neal as well as other council members to attend this meeting. He Superintendent McCartney and Town Manager Griffing will develop an agenda based on the executive session held before this council meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

ABANDONED-BLIGHTED PROPERTIES - HAYNES-EDWARDS & CHANDLER-FELTON– Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that Code Enforcement will be going out to look at abandoned properties in the Spring.

SPECIAL TOWN PROJECTS – HAYNES-EDWARDS – Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that she will defer to Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Jerry McCartney's report under the department's report regarding the Black History Celebration events.

SEMI-QUINCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE - HAYNES-EDWARDS – Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that the next meeting is in April. If any resident is interested in being part of the committee, please attend the April 2nd meeting that will be at Town Hall at 5:00 p.m.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS:

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

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT - NEAL - Vice President Neal had nothing to report.

THE SHARED ETHICS ENTITY-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway reported that a meeting will be on Wednesday, March 11th, at 8:30 a.m.

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

CLERK-TREASURER OFFICE - JANUARY – Clerk-Treasurer Eric January was absent.

Upon a question from President Bella regarding a report, Acting Clerk-Treasurer Angela Lewis had nothing to report.

SSCVA – DEANN PATENA - No Report

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/ TOWN MANAGER:

Superintendent Jerry McCartney – Parks and Recreation

- Black History Month – The celebration wrapped up with an exhibit for the last week in February and a Kicking Old School event on February 28th at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center. Over fifty people attended this event.

- Superintendent McCartney also read some of the Dean and Barbara White Community Center upcoming activities from the flyer below:



Director Matthew Lake – Stormwater Management

Director Matthew Lake was absent.

Police Chief Nuses– Police Department

Chief Nuses reported that the Police Department is monitoring the radar for the upcoming storm.

Director Shine – Building and Planning

Director Sheila Shine reported that before residents start any projects with contractors in the Town of Merrillville, especially roofing and siding, they should ensure they have obtained the necessary permits for the projects. The permits must be displayed in a visible location, such as a window. The Building and Planning Department does not want to issue a Stop Work Order, but we will, without a permit being issued and displayed.

Director Shine also informed the council that twenty-five Stop Work Orders were issued last week to commercial building projects doing extensive work without a permit.

Director King - Street Department
Director Steve King reported that the department has been busy picking up leaves and branches. His department is already receiving calls regarding installing the speed humps. Since more snow has been forecasted, the speed humps are still on hold. Weather permitting, the paving project will also start soon in the Town of Merrillville.

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

- **Monthly Reports** – Town Manager Griffin reported that his Town Manager Report has been given to the council members and Acting Clerk-Treasurer Angela Lewis.

  Town Manager Griffin also explained that Director Matthew Lake of Stormwater Management is out in the field along with members of his staff and the Street Department staff, making sure water grates are clear because of the imminent threat of heavy rain due to the upcoming storm. Director Lake is also checking on any flooding at the Hickory Ridge Project site.

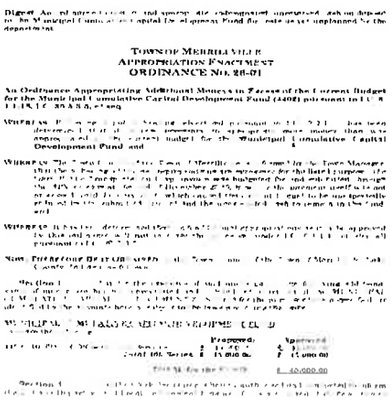
GENERAL ORDERS

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

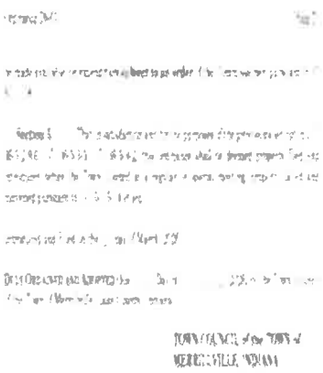
Zoning: (Motion to adopt or reject; confer IC 36-5-2-10(d): **NONE**

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

Ordinance 26-01 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)
An Ordinance Appropriating Additional Money in Excess of the Current Budget for the Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund (4402) pursuant to I.C. 6-1.1-18, I.C. 36-5-3-5, et seq.



TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE
APPROPRIATION ENACTMENT
ORDINANCE No. 26-01



Town Manager Griffin explained Ordinance 26-01.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve Ordinance 26-01.

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

Second Reading: (Discussion, Public Comments Only If Required & Roll Call Vote): **NONE**

B. **Resolutions (Discussion and Voice Vote):**

Resolution 26-07 (Discussion & Voice Vote)
An Exigent Resolution Providing for the Transfer of Appropriation Balance From and Among Major Budget Classifications in the General Fund as Requested By The Proper Officer and Forwarded to the Town Counci for Its Action Pursuant To I.C. 6-1.1-18-6.

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RESOLUTION No. 26-07
TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

AN EXIGENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING for the TRANSFER of APPROPRIATION BALANCES from and AMONG MAJOR BUDGET CLASSIFICATIONS in the COURT (DEPARTMENT 8) in the GENERAL 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 functions of the Town Court (Department 8) in the GENERAL 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, such sums herein transferred unless otherwise stipulated by law;

Section 2. That it has been shown that certain existing unobligated appropriations of the Town Court (Department 8) of the GENERAL Fund, which are not needed at this time for the purposes for which originally appropriated, and may be transferred to a newly authorized category of appropriation in order to satisfy an existing need and further that a new a as follows:

		Decrease	Increase
1101.008.126	General/P-T Secretary	$ 3,111.00	
1101.008.394	General/Contractual		$ 3,111.00
	Totals:	**$ 3,111.00**	**$ 3,111.00**

Section 3. That the Clerk-Treasurer shall take steps needed to execute the changes set forth in this appropriation transfer resolution as this is a change to the budget.

DULY RESOLVED and ADOPTED by the TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, this 10th day of MARCH, 2026.

TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Councilor Chandler-Felton to approve Resolution 26-07.

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

Resolution 26-08 (Discussion & Voice Vote)
A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Authorizing a Transfer of Monies Within the Funds of the Town.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-08
TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, AUTHORIZING A TRANSFER OF MONIES WITHIN THE FUNDS OF THE TOWN

WHEREAS, the Town issued a General Obligation Bond in 2021 in two Series and created Funds 3377 and 3378 from which debt service was to be paid for Series A and Series B, respectively; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has been made aware that while ALL debt service payments had been made timely, there was an error in the December 2025 payments in that the principal and interest payments for both funds were paid from one fund instead of from each, and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to return the equivalent cash to the fund from which both payments were made in order to restore the over-paying fund's cash balance; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, that the following Transfer occur:

	Decrease	Increase
Fund 3378: Sinking(B) 2021 GO Bond Debt Srvc	$ 70,300	
Fund 3377: Sinking(A) 2021 GO Bond Debt Srvc		$ 70,300

This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage. DULY ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, this day of March, 2026.

TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

It was moved by Vice President Neal and seconded by Councilor Haynes-Edwards to approve Resolution 26-08.

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:

- RDC Meeting March 24, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
- Town Council Meeting March 24, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
- Plan Commission Public Meeting March 17th at 6:30 p.m.
- Town Council Workshop March 18, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:
Having completed all items on the agenda, the Town Council President announced the meeting had adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

~~*Rick Bella, Town Council President*~~
Rhonda Neal Acting President

Eric O. January, Clerk-Treasurer

Respectfully Submitted By Angela Lewi