November 4, 2025

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 9:05 A.M.

Present: Mayor Dermody, Jessica Romine, Mark Kosior
Absent:

Jim Sims led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes
Each member received an advance copy of the minutes. Mayor Dermody asked if there were any additions or corrections.

Motion/Vote – Approval of October 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Motion/Vote – Approval of October 28, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Public Comment
Bob Sieko, 408 Rockwood – Mr. Sieko reminded everyone that he previously came before the board in July of 2024 to request permission to place a placard in Plaza 618 recognizing Frederick Mennen, of La Porte Indiana, as the inventor of Jiffy Pop. Mr. Sieko noted it took him two years to get approval for the Frederick Mennen marker and he will be working with Director of Community Development and Planning Craigh Phillips on placement of the marker. The installation of the marker should take place in 2026 along with a public dedication ceremony.

Heavy Equipment Operator Mike Fraze commended Street Department employee Tanisha Griffin for her exemplary actions during a workplace incident involving her coworker, Jim Sims. Mr. Fraze stated on October 20, 2025, Jim Sims and Tanisha Griffith traveled to Craftco in Illinois to pick up materials for the crack sealing machine. During the loading process, a forklift operator accidentally moved too quickly while lowering the tailgate of a dump truck. The tailgate fell from the forks, causing the supporting chain to snap. Mr. Sims, who was standing nearby, had his thumb caught in the chain. As a result, part of his thumb was severed. Mr. Sims retrieved the severed portion of his thumb and began to experience shock. Ms. Griffin immediately provided first aid by applying pressure to the wound and worked to keep Mr. Sims calm. She accompanied him to the hospital and remained with him until additional personnel arrived. Mr. Fraze commended Ms. Griffin for her quick response, composure, and care in assisting a fellow employe during a serious emergency.

Mr. Sims expressed his appreciation to Ms. Griffin for her assistance as well as to Mr. Fraze and Mr. Batchelor for their support following the incident. In addition, Mr. Sims provided an update on his recovery, noting that his doctor reported good progress and expected stitches to be removed soon. Ms. Griffin, who has been with the Street Department for approximately six months, humbly accepted the recognition, stating that while the situation was difficult, she was focused on ensuring Jim received proper care.

Mr. Fraze thanked both employees for their professionalism and teamwork. He acknowledged the Street Department staff, noting that many coworkers reached out to check on Mr. Sims' condition and assisted with completing the work following the incident.

Claims Approval
Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented payroll from October 24, 2025 in the amount of $553,574.25.

Motion/Vote – Approval of October 24, 2025 Payroll
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the October 24, 2025 payroll as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of $842,574.09.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Civil City Claims
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the Civil City Claims as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Sewage Claims in the amount of $445,797.82.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Sewage Claims
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the Sewage Claims as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Water Claims in the amount of $230,048.34.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Water Claims
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Water Claims as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Permission to Pay on Misc Docket for Crack Sealing Machine and Materials
Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Permission to Pay on Misc Docket for Crack Sealing Machine and Materials. The City Council approved an additional appropriation from MVH Restricted funds for the purchase of the crack sealing machine and related materials. The item was not included on the docket because it was pending approval of the additional appropriation. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated with the approval of the additional appropriation, permission is requested to proceed with payment for the machine and

materials. A legal opinion will also be obtained regarding the Sourcewell contract. Mayor Dermody asked Attorney Otis about the legal opinion. Attorney Otis stated he will provide a formal legal written opinion stating this is an appropriate way to purchase this equipment. Code Director Jeff Batchelor expressed the need for a new crack sealing machine and noted a crew has been out daily since receiving the rental. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun recognized the Water and Sewage Departments for their help in paying for the crack sealing machine.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Permission to Pay on Misc Docket for Crack Sealing Machine and Materials

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Permission to Pay on Misc Docket for Crack Sealing Machine and Materials as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Permission to Transfer from Civic 6609 to Civic 5504

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented permission to transfer from Civic 6609 to Civic 5504. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun requested to transfer funds from the Civic credit card clearing account (6609) to the Civic non-reverting fund (5504) for cash flow purposes, covering the period from October 22 through the current date. Mayor Dermody noted that both the Civic Auditorium and Beechwood facilities continue to generate their own revenue, reducing reliance on property tax dollars. Mr. Kosior questioned how close these two entities are to breaking even or being profitable. Mayor Dermody stated Beechwood had a great year and the Civic is very close, but they have experienced some struggles in trying some new things.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Permission to Transfer from Civic 6609 to Civic 5504

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Permission to Transfer from Civic 6609 to Civic 5504 as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Department Head Reports

Communications: Communications Director Jess Spoljaric announced that the new website, LaPortInvitational.com, is now live, and tickets are available for purchase for the La Porte Invitational. The event schedule has been adjusted to Friday through Sunday, previously Thursday through Saturday, to hopefully help improve attendance.

Code: Code Director Jeff Batchelor reported ongoing cleanup efforts at La Porte Technologies and the Teledyne property. Owners were given a limited timeframe to remove junk vehicles and address code violations, as the properties are not zoned for such use. The City also coordinated with Norfolk Southern regarding approximately 30 junk vehicles that had been placed on railroad property along Brighton Street. All vehicles have been removed except one bus, and fines are being issued in the meantime. Mayor Dermody recognized the Code Enforcement team, led by Mr. Batchelor, and commended them for their strong work in improving the area. Mayor Dermody also noted that the Teledyne building, long vacant and deteriorating, is likely beyond repair and should be considered for demolition.

Wastewater: Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson reported that the Wastewater Department is removing the distributor from one of the trickling filters (bio towers). The Fire Department assisted by using their ladder truck to ensure the work was performed safely.
In addition, Mr. Jackson reported the Police Department also provided support by using a drone to inspect the top of the dome—allowing staff to assess bolts and lifting points without putting personnel at risk. The drone was further utilized at the solar power plant to perform infrared imaging, which helped identify malfunctioning solar panels. Mr. Jackson commended both departments for their assistance and collaboration.

Water: Water Superintendent Tim Werner reported that the Water Department is winding down its construction season, allowing staff time to address leaks and other problem areas throughout the city. He commended the construction crew for their hard work, long hours, and dedication in completing several major projects over the past year. In addition, Mr. Werner reported the department is also preparing for the upcoming main break season as colder weather approaches. Additionally, geotechnical testing is underway at Plant Two for the planned solar project, with soil drilling in progress to confirm support capacity for the solar panel installation.

LEAP: Eric Nelson introduced Lucas Del Rio, a senior at La Porte High School. He will be shadowing with Mr. Nelson and a few others for his Technical Communications class. Mr. Del Rio expressed his excitement to be shadowing and learning all that he can.

Police: Mayor Dermody requested Captain Favia to speak about his new role in training. Captain Favia reported on his role in officer training, including firearms, less-lethal weapons, rifles, and SWAT/ERT operations. He serves as SWAT team commander and is transitioning into the department's training coordinator role, overseeing year-round training for all officers. Captain Favia highlighted the use of technology, including drones, to enhance officer safety during operations and SWAT callouts. Mayor Dermody commended him for his dedication to training and maintaining department safety standards.

Park: Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber reported that the downtown Ice Rink will open on November 28th at Monroe and State Street and will operate through the end of January. The department is hiring part-time staff for the skate shed and seeking sponsors to support affordable skating through programs like Free Fridays and Buy One, Get One Sundays. Mr. Schreiber stated Last year's participation increased by 80%, and the department aims to build on that success.

Mr. Schreiber highlighted the following Upcoming Civic Auditorium events:

- November 21st – Annual Picnic in the Park, a Parks Foundation fundraiser.
- November 22nd – 10th annual La Porte Brew & Winefest. Information is available at LeaPortCivicAuditorium.com.

CDP: Director of Community Development and Planning Craig Phillips announced a public open house regarding the city's comprehensive plan. Residents and city team members are

invited to review progress and provide feedback. The event will be held at the Civic Auditorium on Wednesday, November 19th, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Dermody highlighted a recent meeting with Baker Tilly regarding the city's future amid ongoing property tax reform through 2031. Mayor Dermody emphasized the need for community growth to maintain fiscal sustainability. Strategies include encouraging new housing and job creation, supporting business growth to increase net assessed value, and collaborating with the school system as a key community partner. Mayor Dermody emphasized the focus is on proactive development rather than maintaining the status quo to adapt to changes in property tax policy.

New Business:

Quote Opening for Drainage & Pedestrian Improvements NEC of Michigan & Lincolnway

Assistant City Engineer Tucker King presented Quote Opening for Drainage & Pedestrian Improvements NEC of Michigan & Lincolnway. Mr. King stated this is a drainage and pedestrian improvement project for the northeast corner of Michigan and Lincolnway, across from the courthouse. The project involves replacing older pavers with concrete squares to improve durability and meet ADA accessibility standards. Stormwater improvements, including a green infrastructure storm tree, will also be incorporated. The project reflects the future design pattern for downtown, with a mix of concrete and decorative pavers in certain areas. The goal is to modernize sidewalks, improve safety and accessibility, and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the downtown area. Mr. King noted the project will also address pooling water issues in the area. While the current plan calls for concrete throughout this section, future downtown improvements may include decorative pavers near the roadway as part of the city's pattern book. The concrete used will have a stamped design to maintain an appealing look, rather than a typical plain sidewalk. Overall, the project aims to enhance pedestrian safety, improve stormwater management, and create a more modern and visually attractive downtown environment.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun noted that this was a quoting process, not a bid process, and therefore there was no notice of publication requirements, rather Mr. King and his team solicited vendors directly. Three quotes were solicited, and two quotes were received:

Pavey Excavating in the amount of $102,089.00.

La Porte County Project Management in the amount of $175,296.00.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Quote Opening for Drainage & Pedestrian Improvements NEC of Michigan & Lincolnway

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Quote opening for Drainage & Pedestrian Improvements NEC of Michigan & Lincolnway pending Engineering and Legal review; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Amended Motion/Vote – Award Quote to Pavey Excavating
Ms. Romine made an amended motion to award the quote to Pavey Excavating in the amount of $102,089.00 pending Engineering and Legal review; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Request for Use: Santa Parade
Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Request for Use: Santa Parade. Ms. Loeffler stated the request was made for use of Plaza 618 for the Santa Parade on November 29th from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m., similar to last year. The parade will gather at Tipton on State Street, travel west on State Street to Michigan, then turn onto Lincoln Way, ending at Plaza 618. Activities at the plaza will include hot chocolate and treats. Lincoln Way will not be closed for the entire duration. Ms. Loeffler noted their certificate of insurance is on file in the clerk's office.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request for Use: Santa Parade
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Request for Use: Santa Parade as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Proposed 2026 Holiday Schedule
Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented a holiday schedule for city employees for 2026, including 14 holidays based on federal and state holidays and what makes sense for the city's calendar.

Motion/Vote – Approval of 2026 Holiday Schedule
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve 2026 Holiday Schedule as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Proposed 2026 BOW Meeting Schedule
Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Proposed 2026 BOW Meeting Schedule. The proposed Board of Works meeting schedule was presented, keeping meetings on Tuesday mornings at 9:00 following the Monday night council meetings, with three dates moved to Wednesday due to holidays.

Motion/Vote – Approval of 2026 BOW Meeting Schedule
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve 2026 BOW Meeting Schedule as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Resolution Concerning Transfer of Real Estate Within the City
City Attorney Nick Otis presented Resolution Concerning Transfer of Real Estate Within the City. Attorney Otis stated the resolution presented authorizes the transfer of four parcels of real estate from the City of La Porte to the La Porte Redevelopment Commission. The Redevelopment Commission and City Council previously approved the transfer, with the Board of Works serving as the final approving body. Three of the parcels are located in the Beachwood Lakes area as part of an ongoing development project, while the fourth parcel is

adjacent to Truesdale Avenue near the Clear Lake area. This transfer consolidates city-owned land under the Redevelopment Commission to support future redevelopment efforts. Attorney Otis stated the request is for authorization for Mayor Dermody to execute the transfer documents.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Resolution Concerning Transfer of Real Estate Within the City
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Resolution Concerning Transfer of Real Estate Within the City as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Request for Mayor to Sign Closing Docs: 2510 Monroe
Attorney Rachel Doty presented a request to authorize Mayor Dermody to sign all necessary closing documents for the sale of 2510 Monroe Street to The Learning Tree. The closing is expected to occur within the next week or two. Mayor Dermody noted The Learning Tree will assume ownership of the building, allowing for needed improvements and ensuring long-term use of the property. Proceeds from the sale will be placed in a cash savings account for future needs. Attorney Otis stated the purchase agreement has already been approved, and this action authorizes the final closing.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request for Mayor to Sign Closing Docs: 2510 Monroe
Ms. Romine made a motion to give authority to Mayor Dermody to execute all necessary documents for the closing of 2510 Monroe; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Request for Refund for Trash Charges
Cleark-Treasurer Parthun presented Request for Refund for Trash Charges. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated the request comes from the owner of 120 East Shore Parkway, Harborside, for a refund of trash service fees that had been billed since March 2023. The property is a three-unit commercial building that qualifies for city trash service but had instead contracted privately with Waste Management for dumpster service. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun noted all monthly billing has been paid on time since the account was opened. Utility Billing Manager Eman Fokianos confirmed the property had never received city trash collection. The owner requested a full refund of $1,123.83 for all charges assessed since 2023.

After discussion, the Board noted that city policy typically allows refunds up to one year. Given that bills are clearly itemized and issued monthly, and with approximately 9,000 utility customers, responsibility for notifying the city of service discrepancies rests with the customer. The Board agreed to issue a refund for one year of trash service charges, totaling $497.34, to be paid by check from the trash fund. Member Romine abstained due to a conflict of interest.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request for Refund for Trash Charges
Mayor Dermody made a motion to approve refund for trash charges for one year in the amount of $497.34; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior. Member Romine abstained.

Basement Backup Grant – 1534 Second

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Basement Backup Grant – 1534 Second. Mr. Jackson noted this request and the next stem from the four-inch rain that we had a few months back. Mr. Jackson stated the total cost is $4,677, with the city's portion totaling $3,757.75 and the residents' share totaling $919.25. Mr. Jackson recommends approval.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Basement Backup Grant – 1534 Second

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Basement Backup Grant – 1534 Second as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Basement Backup Grant – 1532 Second

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Basement Backup Grant – 1532 Second. Mr. Jackson stated the entire cost is $4975, the city's portion totals $3,981.25 and the resident's portion is $993.75. Mr. Jackson recommends approval.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Basement Backup Grant – 1532 Second

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Basement Backup Grant – 1532 Second as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Tipton Street Bid Report and Recommendation

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented a bid report for the Tipton Street Overpass project involving the relocation of water and sewer utilities. The lowest bid, submitted by Woodruff and Sons, totaled $1,952,767.88, which was 24% lower than the engineer's estimated cost. Of that amount, $1,453,068.29 is allocated to the water portion and $499,699.59 to the wastewater portion. The bids were reviewed with no irregularities found. Based on past successful projects with the contractor, Mr. Jackson recommended awarding the bid to Woodruff and Sons. Mr. Kosior questioned where the financing for this project would come from. Mr. Jackson stated it would come from the water and sewage capital budgets.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Tipton Street Bid Report and Recommendation

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Tipton Street Bid Report and Recommendation as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Stormwater Technical Manual

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Stormwater Technical Manual. Mr. Jackson stated the storm water technical manual outlines the standards and procedures used to evaluate storm water improvements in development projects, including storage capacity, pipe sizing, and flow calculations. This manual provides developers with clear guidelines for compliance when submitting plans. Although it has been in use informally for nearly two years, it has not yet received official approval from the Board of Works. The request also included permission to bring future updates or revisions directly to the Board for approval as needed, without requiring a formal ordinance process.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Stormwater Technical Manual
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Stormwater Technical Manual as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Solar Project Invoice #1
Assistant City Engineer Tucker King presented Solar Project Invoice #1 in the amount of $275,92.35 less retainage, $27,592.23, for a total payment of $248,330.12. Mr. King stated this covers work at both the old water treatment site on Pumping Station Road and the East Water Treatment Plant, along with project development costs and represents about 21% of the total project cost. This upfront payment secures eligibility for a 30% federal rebate tied to the use of U.S.-manufactured solar components. Mr. King noted the work is being completed by Schneider Electric. Mayor Dermody questioned if this is the same Schneider that did the work at the Civic Auditorium. Mr. King confirmed it is the same Schneider and noted the city has worked with Schneider on various projects in the past throughout the city. Mayor Dermody asked Mr. King to expand on the benefits of solar panels. Mr. King focused on the broader benefits of solar investment and explained that solar increases long-term energy independence, reduces exposure to rising electricity rates, and provides a sustainable, low-maintenance power source. While some concerns were noted, such as concerns from residents about changes in their community and the eventual recycling of panels, Mr. King emphasized that overall environmental and financial impacts are overwhelmingly positive.

Mayor Dermody asked Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson to comment on the solar panels at the wastewater plant and whether he has seen a downside. Mr. Jackson stated that he has not really seen a downside and the wastewater plant, existing solar installations now generate about 91–92% of annual power needs, saving tens of thousands of dollars in utility costs and reducing maintenance on unused land. Mr. Jackson noted during the summer months, they produce more energy than they consume and NIPSCO essentially banks that additional energy and they use it in the winter until it runs out. A typical NIPSCO bill in the summer is $350 and then in the late winter, when the excess energy bank is used, the bill is approximately $25,000. Mr. Kosior question what the life expectancy of the panels are. Mr. Jackson stated the panels have a 25-year lifespan, with a 20-year guarantee, and the main maintenance item, the inverter, typically requires replacement every 10 years. The board expressed support for the project, noting that while the initial investment is significant, the long-term savings and energy independence for the water department make it a prudent and a forward-thinking move.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Solar Project Invoice #1
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Solar Project Invoice #1 as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Unfinished Business

Mayor Dermody reminded everyone of the Toys for Tots collection taking place at City Hall, encouraging donations of new toys or monetary contributions to help families in need this holiday season. He also noted that due to the ongoing federal government shutdown and the suspension of SNAP benefits, there is a heightened need for food and financial assistance. Community members were encouraged to donate canned goods, oatmeal, produce, or grocery gift cards to the Salvation Army, the Center Township Trustee, or drop them off at City Hall for distribution. Mayor Dermody emphasized that during challenging times, local government plays a vital role in supporting residents and helping make a positive difference in the community. In addition, Mayor Dermody also reported on a recent tour of the Hammond YMCA, undertaken as part of discussions about the future of the La Porte YMCA. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun noted the Hammond Y offers a wide range of amenities, including advanced workout equipment, a "resistance river", and a kid zone. Mayor Dermody noted the sliding-scale membership program to ensure affordability for low-income families, and he stated the Hammond YMCA's membership has grown from 2,000 to 35,000 members, highlighting its strong community impact. Mayor Dermody expressed his excitement about bringing a similarly vibrant and accessible YMCA experience to the residents of La Porte.

Other Business:

Next regularly scheduled meeting: Tuesday November 18, 2025 at 9 A.M.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Mr. Kosior made a motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Approve: _____

Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____

Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: November 18, 2025