February 3, 2026

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

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

David Heinold 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 January 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Public Comment

Claims Approval
Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented 2026 Employee Bonus Payroll in the amount of $141,861.19.

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

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented payroll from January 30, 2026 in the amount of $576,128.02.

Motion/Vote – Approval of January 30, 2026 Payroll
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the January 30, 2026 payroll as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of $1,153,419.11.

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 $957,581.49.

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 $221,498.07.

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.

Funds Transfer from Credit Card Clearing to Civic N/R
Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented a request for funds transfer from the credit card clearing account into the Civic Non-Reverting 5504 account. The transfer amount of $95,663.77 represents credit card revenues collected through the end of December and throughout the month of January. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun noted this action is a standard financial procedure to properly allocate collected revenues into the appropriate non-reverting fund.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Funds Transfer from Credit Card Clearing to Civic N/R
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Funds Transfer from Credit Card Clearing to Civic N/R as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Conflict of Interest: Councilman Franke
Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented a conflict of interest form for Councilman Franke. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun noted that these filings are beginning to be submitted and that several additional disclosures are expected at the start of 2026. The form is required for any individual who holds a contract with the City of La Porte. Councilman Frankie's firm performs work for the City; therefore, this filing satisfies the annual reporting requirement. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun noted that all conflict of interest forms are uploaded to the Gateway website, which is the State of Indiana's transparency portal.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Conflict of Interest: Councilman Franke
Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Conflict of Interest: Councilman Franke as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

New Business:
Request for Use: Live Way of the Cross Walk
Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler presented Request for Use: Live Way of the Cross Walk. Ms. Loffler stated the Diocese will be holding its annual Live Way of the Cross event. The event typically includes approximately 75 to 100 participants and lasts about one hour. Ms. Loeffler noted that participants will primarily use public right-of-way areas, remaining mostly on sidewalks. The route consists of a six-block loop beginning at St. Joseph Church on 2nd Street, proceeding to B Street for two blocks, then to Fourth Street for one block, and returning to the church via C Street for two blocks.

Ms. Loeffler stated no street closures are planned, and the organizers are notifying the City due to the anticipated number of participants. The Diocese may request limited assistance from the Police Department for traffic control at crosswalks and will coordinate directly with the department. Ms. Loeffler noted that Police and Fire personnel have traditionally been supportive of this annual event.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request for Use: Live Way of the Cross Walk

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request for Use: Live Way of the Cross Walk as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

General Services Contract: Lochmueller Group

Mayor Dermody noted that former City Engineer Nick Minich has moved on to new opportunities and expressed his appreciation for all that he did but recognized his absence has left some open opportunities that were started and noted the city would like to continue with those with the assistance of Lochmueller Group. City Attorney Nick Otis stated this is a general agreement establishing overall terms and conditions between the parties. Specific project agreements will be brought forward separately as individual projects arise. Attorney Otis clarified that approval at this time applies only to the general terms of the agreement and there is no specific project currently identified under this agreement. Future projects, if any, will be presented to the Board/Council for separate review and approval.

Ms. Romine noted there is already a task order number one and questioned if that is for a specific project. Mayor Dermody requested Nick Minich to reply. Nick Minich of Lochmueller Group explained that the agreement establishes overall terms and hourly rates, while specific work will be authorized through individual task orders as project needs arise. Task orders will outline the scope and compensation structure appropriate for each project. Depending on the nature of the work, compensation may be structured as lump sum, time and materials, or hourly. The structure will be driven by the City's specific project needs. Approval authority for task orders will depend on the dollar amount. Smaller task orders may be approved by the Mayor, Assistant Director, or Clerk-Treasurer, consistent with their purchasing authority. Task orders exceeding that authority will be presented to the Board of Works for approval. This process is intended to allow smaller projects to proceed efficiently while ensuring Board oversight for larger projects. Mayor Dermody noted that Mr. Minich has been involved from the beginning of certain ongoing projects and is assisting with remaining cleanup and closeout work. Mayor Dermody emphasized that continuing with Mr. Minich for project completion is more efficient than engaging a new engineer unfamiliar with prior work. The General Services Agreement does not authorize independent project initiation; all work will be driven by City requests and formal task orders.

Motion/Vote – Approval General Services Contract: Lochmueller Group

Mr. Kosior made motion to approve General Services Contract: Lochmueller Group as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Rural King Realty Preliminary and Final Plat

Assistant City Planner and ADA Coordinator David Heinold presented Rural King Realty Preliminary and Final Plat. Mr. Heinold stated this is a request from Rural King for preliminary and final plat approval to subdivide the existing large parcel located on West State Road 2 into two lots. The proposed subdivision would create one lot for Rural King and a second lot comprising the remaining eastern portion of the property. Mr. Heinold noted the Plan Commission reviewed the request in October and granted approval contingent upon review and approval of the ECR document. The ECR has since been reviewed by the Legal Department, Wastewater Department, and Planning Department. Mr. Heinold confirmed that the proposed lots meet all applicable standards under the zoning ordinance. Mr. Heinold stated the subdivision request was initiated by Rural King and noted that the eastern portion of the property may be marketed for sale and future development, particularly in the area formerly occupied by Al's Grocery Store. Attorney Otis stated that Rural King has been a responsible steward of the property and that the subdivision may facilitate further redevelopment opportunities. Attorney Otis noted that approval is contingent upon Rural King transferring ownership of the sewer utilities to the city, and he indicated that this requirement delayed the item's earlier approval, as the City seeks to avoid situations where private utility ownership creates disputes between property owners regarding maintenance responsibility. Wastewater Director Jerry Jackson noted that assuming ownership of the sewer infrastructure would involve ongoing maintenance responsibilities; however, there are no known pressing issues with the system at this time. The transfer would provide each parcel with separate public sewer service rather than shared private sewer lines, increasing property value and supporting future development. Mr. Jackson noted this as a "win-win," benefiting both the City and the property owner by encouraging redevelopment and ensuring clear utility ownership and maintenance responsibility.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Rural King Realty Preliminary and Final Plat

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Rural King Realty Preliminary and Final Plat as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Valparaiso for Building Code Inspections

Code Director Jeff Batchelor presented Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Valparaiso or Building Code Inspections. Mr. Batchelor also indicated that a similar agreement will be pursued with the County. Mr. Batchelor noted the request is necessitated by the recent retirement of the City's building inspector approximately two weeks ago, which has resulted in a backlog of inspections. The proposed agreements are intended to provide temporary inspection support until a new inspector is hired. At this time, the agreement presented is with Valparaiso. Mr. Batchelor further requested authorization to execute a similar agreement with the County using substantially the same language, subject to necessary modifications. Mr. Batchelor emphasized the agreements are intended as interim measures to maintain inspection services and prevent further delays.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Valparaiso for Building Code Inspections

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Valparaiso for Building Code Inspections as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Request to Accept Quote for Upgrade to City Hall Fire Alarm System

IT Director Roscoe Hoffman presented Request to Accept to Quote for Upgrade to City Hall Fire Alarm System. Mr. Hoffman reported that a recent inspection of the fire alarm system at City Hall identified an issue with the existing telephone line connection. The current setup includes an outdated telephone line intended to automatically notify 911 in the event of a fire or other emergency occurring after business hours. It was determined that the existing line is part of an older system and is not functioning as intended. As a result, Mr. Hoffman is making a request to install a new, properly functioning telephone line to ensure that emergency alerts are transmitted directly to 911. This upgrade is intended to restore reliable after-hours fire notification capability and ensure compliance with safety standards.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request to Accept Quote for Upgrade to City Hall Fire Alarm System

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Request to Accept Quote for Upgrade to City Hall Fire Alarm System as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Renewal of Open Gov Agreement

IT Director Roscoe Hoffman made a request to table Renewal of Open Gov Agreement pending further review by Clerk-Treasurer Parthun.

Motion/Vote – Table Renewal of Open Gov Agreement

Mr. Kosior made a motion to table Renewal of Open Gov Agreement as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Recommendation for Consultant for DES No. 2401594 Construction Sign Replacement

Engineering Assistant Project Manager Jamie Novak presented Recommendation for Consultant for DES No. 2401594 Construction Sign Replacement. Ms. Novak presented the RFP scoring tabulation sheets for construction inspection services related to the City's sign replacement project. Ms. Novak noted the scoring results indicate that USI Consultants received the highest ranking among the submitted proposals. Based on the evaluation results, Ms. Novak recommended selection of USI Consultants for construction inspection services, contingent upon approval from INDOT. Ms. Novak noted that the recommendation is subject to INDOT review and concurrence prior to final execution.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Recommendation for Consultant for DES No. 2401594 Construction Sign Replacement

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Recommendation for Consultant for DES No. 2401594 Construction Sign Replacement as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Recommendation for Consultant Selection DES No. 2300725 Preliminary Engineering and ROW Services at Park, McClung and Bach

Engineering Assistant Project Manager Jamie Novak presented Recommendation for Consultant Selection DES No. 2300725 Preliminary Engineering and ROW Services at Park, McClung and Bach. Ms. Novak presented the RFP scoring tabulation sheets for preliminary engineering and right-of-way services associated with the proposed intersection improvements at Boyd, McClung, and Bach. The evaluation results indicate that Lochmueller Group was the highest-ranked consultant for this project. Based on the scoring and review process, Ms. Novak recommended moving forward with the selection of Lochmueller Group, contingent upon approval from INDOT. Final authorization is subject to INDOT review and concurrence prior to execution of the agreement.

Mayor Dermody noted that the individuals that were required to vote or rank this, Mr. Minich was not one of them when he was still employed with the city and therefore there is no conflict of interest.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Recommendation for Consultant Selection DES No. 2300725 Preliminary Engineering and ROW Services at Park, McClung and Bach

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Recommendation for Consultant Selection DES No. 2300725 Preliminary Engineering and ROW Services at Park, McClung and Bach as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Authorization for Merit Commission to Promote

Fire Chief Snyder presented Authorization for Merit Commission to Promote. Chief Snyder requested Board approval for the Merit Commission to proceed with a promotion to the rank of Captain. Chief Snyder noted that the Merit Commission recently completed disciplinary action that created a vacancy at the Captain level. Chief Snyder asked the Board to authorize the Merit Commission to move forward with filling the open position through the promotion process.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Authorization for Merit Commission to Promote

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Authorization for Merit Commission to Promote as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

NIPSCO Interconnection Agreement Level 2/3

Assistant City Engineer Tucker King presented an interconnection agreement with NIPSCO regarding two solar generation facilities located at the City's Water Treatment Plant and the former Cane Wells site. The agreement establishes that any excess power generated by these

facilities, for which the City has no storage capacity, will be sold back to NIPSCO. The buyback rate will be set according to IURC (Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission) standards.
Additionally, Mr. King stated the agreement ensures that the interconnection points at both facilities meet NIPSCO's technical standards for safe and reliable grid integration. This agreement enables the city to maximize the use of its solar generation facilities while complying with regulatory and utility requirements.

Mayor Dermody questioned if there were any issues with this because some of the property is located in the county, outside of city limits, and the county is opposed to alternative energy sources. Mr. King stated that although part of the property is technically in the county, it is still city owned property and there should be no issues.

Motion/Vote – Approval of NIPSCO Interconnection Agreement Level 2/3
Mr. Kosior made a motion to NIPSCO Interconnection Agreement Level 2/3 as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

General Maintenance Quotes
Wastewater Director Jerry Jackson presented General Maintenance Quotes. Mr. Jackson presented maintenance proposals for the City's generators from McAllister Cat and Buckeye Power Systems. Buckeye has been providing services for the past three years, while McAllister has historically worked with the Waterworks and occasionally with the city. McAllister's proposal totals $9,822 annually, compared to Buckeye's $12,515. Buckeye's proposal includes an additional cursory visit to each of the 11 sites, whereas McAllister provides one visit per year. Mr. Jackson noted the city already starts and tests generators weekly via SCADA under load, making the extra visit unnecessary. McAllister has a strong track record of responsive service, with technicians local to La Porte County available by phone for emergencies, ensuring prompt attention during power failures. Mr. Jackson noted that Buckeye's distance and limited local presence can result in slower response times. Based on cost efficiency, quality of service, and responsiveness, Mr. Jackson recommended awarding the generator maintenance contract to McAllister Cat.

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

Hauled WW Permit Renewals: Pride the Portable Toilet Co., and FreeFlow Environmental, Inc.
Wastewater Director Jerry Jackson presented Hauled WW Permit Renewals: Pride the Portable Toilet Co., and FreeFlow Environmental, Inc. Mr. Jackson stated that both companies have been previous customers, are in good standing, and he recommends approval.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Hauled WW Permit Renewals: Pride the Portable Toilet Co., and FreeFlow Environmental, Inc.

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Hauled WW Permit Renewals: Pride the Portable Toilet Co., and FreeFlow Environmental, Inc. as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

Department Head Reports

Park: Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber thanked all individuals involved in organizing Winterfest, particularly Recreation Director Evan Miller, noting that events were successfully conducted over two weekends due to unusually cold weather. Both indoor and outdoor activities were completed with support from sponsors and volunteers. In addition, Mr. Schreiber reported youth sports registration for T-ball, baseball, girls' softball, and tennis is currently ongoing. Registration is available online at leaportparkandrec.com or in person at the Parks Office, 2550 Pine Lake Avenue, weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mr. Schreiber also announced the upcoming Winter Wonderland Fair at the Civic Auditorium on February 14th, featuring approximately 40–50 vendors in collaboration with local businesses. Event details are available on Facebook or by calling the Civic Auditorium at 362-2325. In addition, Mr. Schreiber highlighted the success of pond hockey on the frozen lakes, made possible by a recent deep freeze, and noted that adult softball activities were also ongoing despite the snow, with participants playing several hours.

Street: Street Supervisor Ian Eldridge reported on ongoing downtown cleanup initiatives, noting that improvements are needed to maintain a clean and accessible downtown area. A recent team effort on Monday, including early morning and late evening work, was highlighted as a productive start. Mr. Eldridge expressed appreciation for the team's dedication and emphasized that new strategies are being explored to enhance cleanliness and support the business district.

Water: Water Director Tim Werner reported that the City is actively searching for a new leak detection/correlation system to replace the existing unit, which has been in service for approximately 15 years and whose loggers now use obsolete batteries. The system identifies leaks by sending frequencies through water mains, allowing staff to pinpoint issues with minimal excavation, improving efficiency and reducing street disruption. Mr. Werner noted that a replacement system from Mueller is being considered and quotes will be brought forward soon. In addition, Mr. Werner also reviewed recent maintenance activity, including multiple main breaks and service leaks over the past weeks. A leak on Lakeside Street was temporarily delayed due to waiting for locate approval and prioritization of another urgent leak on Indiana Avenue; the work was completed safely the following Monday. Mr. Werner emphasized that residents should monitor their basements as warming temperatures may reveal cracks in pipes that froze during the winter. Residents are encouraged to contact the Water Department for assistance, including elderly or vulnerable residents. Mr. Werner noted that while some ice removal over the weekend could have been better, staff responded quickly when contacted directly by residents.

Wastewater: Wastewater Director Jerry Jackson reported that the biotower distributor, recently repaired on an emergency basis, has been operating for two weeks. The bioreactor is beginning to function properly after initial startup in near-zero temperatures. Currently, the system is removing approximately 50% of ammonia, with typical removal rates around 95%. Mr. Jackson anticipates that the biotower may return to full operational capacity within one to two weeks.

Engineering: Assistant City Engineer Tucker King provided an update on the engineering projects, noting that he is currently reviewing and catching up on all ongoing initiatives. He acknowledged the challenge of losing the city engineer but expressed confidence in the team's ability to adapt and continue successfully, viewing the change as ultimately positive for the department.

Clerk-Treasurer: Clerk-Treasurer Parthun recognized Ashley Knoll for successfully completing the year rollover in the accounting system, highlighting her dedication and teamwork. With year-end closed, the office is now focused on preparing the Annual Financial Report (AFR), which includes all financials and capital assets and is subject to midyear audit. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun noted the preparation of the AFR is expected to take all of February. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun also acknowledged Stephanie Blazek, Jamie Novak, Tucker King, and Roscoe Hoffman for their efforts in training staff on OpenGov. Team members are learning beyond their direct responsibilities to ensure the system functions smoothly, emphasizing the importance of teamwork and staff contributions to maintaining efficient operations.

Legal: City Attorney Nick Otis provided an update regarding a recent council meeting. Attorney Otis noted a minor item on the agenda involving the vacancy of a cul-de-sac on Walton Street. The property owner, Eric Kger, plans to pursue residential development on the approximately eight- to nine-acre site. Attorney Otis highlighted that the proposed development is well-suited to the neighborhood and anticipates it will be a positive project for the town.

Public Comment

Karen Machek-Carlson via Facebook Live, commented on NIPSCO taking advantage of being a monopoly.

Mayor Dermody noted this was discussed at last night's City Council meeting but encouraged anyone to reach out to him to discuss via his call, 219-363-7293. Mayor Dermody noted that the city does not have any authority but emphasized we do fight for our residents. In addition, Mayor Dermody recognized City Attorney Nick Otis on his induction into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame this past Monday.

Code: Code Enforcement Director Jeff Batchelor reported on the status of the former Teledyne building on Philadelphia Street, noting that it was condemned at the end of December with a 30-day period for required changes. While the property has not yet been fully vacated, fines are set to begin. Ongoing concerns include unresolved issues with the

building's water and sprinkler systems, which remain essential for safety even in unoccupied structures. Mr. Batchelor highlighted past incidents, such as the American Rubber fire, emphasizing the importance of maintaining functional fire suppression systems. Mr. Batchelor noted that Spectrum has offered to demolish the building at no cost to Teledyne while retaining the materials. Mr. Batchelor also mentioned collaboration with the ATC and Danny Streer on broader code enforcement and public safety initiatives, including addressing gun violence at other sites. Mr. Batchelor stated the goal is to have the Teledyne building removed by the end of the week.

Police: Chief Drangmeister reported that there were no new operational updates at this time but highlighted recent award recognitions, including the captain's awards for officers demonstrating positive attitudes and strong work ethics over a six-month period. Additionally, the department initiated the Officer of the Year award, which was presented to Corporal Dalton Pflughaupt for his consistent positive energy and willingness to serve. Chief Drangmeister also recognized Officer Devin Hammons Flannagan for off-duty heroism, administering the Heimlich maneuver and CPR for 15 minutes to save a choking individual. Chief Drangmeister emphasized that such dedication and work ethic, even while off duty, exemplify the department's commitment to public safety.

Fire: Chief Snyder added a safety reminder regarding frozen pipes, cautioning against using blowtorches to thaw them due to the risk of causing house fires, citing recent incidents in the area. He also acknowledged the contribution of a firefighter who assisted during the off-duty CPR incident previously mentioned by Chief Drangmeister, expressing gratitude for their involvement.

Unfinished Business

Other Business:
Mayor Dermody addressed concerns about rising energy costs for residents, noting that recent rate increases from NIPCO have exceeded the originally expected 15–16%. Efforts are being made to seek both short-term and long-term relief, including outreach to state and federal legislators, the IURC, and attempts to engage with NIPCO directly. Mayor Dermody noted that assistance for residents, particularly low-income and senior citizens, is available through NIPCO's support line and the township trustee's office. Mayor Dermody also highlighted the partnership between NIPCO and Microsoft in La Porte, clarifying that Microsoft will cover its own infrastructure and energy costs, and stressed the importance of sharing accurate information about such developments to prevent misinformation.

Adjournment: Reminder that the next regularly scheduled meeting is on Wednesday due to the Monday February 16th Presidents Day Holiday. The next regularly meeting is Wednesday February 18, 2026 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: February 18, 2026