August 18, 2026

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor Dermody, Jessica Romine
Absent: Mark Kosior

Charity Hlavsa 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 August 4, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Public Comment
None

Claims Approval
Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of $1,191,564.95.

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

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented payroll from August 14, 2026 in the amount of $591,074.73.

Motion/Vote – Approval of August 14, 2026 Payroll
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the August 14, 2026 payroll as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Sewage Claims in the amount of $793,094.69.

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

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Water Claims in the amount of $249,547.61.

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

Emergency Tree Cleanup
Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented a request for emergency tree cleanup due to the recent storms. She requested permission to use funds that were appropriated for the tree bid for the cleanup. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated this was not bid but because it is an emergency situation, it not required. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated there are currently 7-10 contractors working throughout the city to clean up the downed trees and these funds will be used to pay for those contractors.

Mayor Dermody noted that this cleanup will cost the State and Federal government a hundred times what it would have cost had the city been able to keep the tree grant to bring down a lot of these trees. Mayor Dermody stated the expectation is that every penny spent will come back to the community and this is the first step in making that happen and getting the city cleaned up. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun reminded department heads that are tracking reimbursable costs that there are very specific ways to get funds back. She stated she has received a form that will be sent out to everyone, but it does require pictures, documentation, addresses, essentially as much information as possible.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Emergency Tree Cleanup
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Emergency Tree Cleanup as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Water Shutoffs Suspension
Clerk-Treasurer Parthun requested guidance from the board regarding water shutoffs. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun noted that there are still a lot of people without power and water shutoffs are scheduled to begin today. Mayor Dermody requested the input of Water Director Tim Werner. Mr. Werner stated that he does not believe that any shutoffs should be done this week and recommends waiting a couple of weeks until the next bill is due. Mr. Werner noted that the recent policies and procedures that have been put in place have significantly decreased the number of shutoffs that happen and doesn't necessarily want to back track away from that as the further people get behind, the harder it is for them to get caught back up. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated current policy does not allow an individual to enter into a payment agreement if they have void a payment agreement within the last year. Her recommendation is to allow those individuals that need to enter into a payment agreement even if they have void an agreement within the last year due to extenuating circumstances. Mayor Dermody questioned if the payments could be moved to September 1st. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated the billing cannot be changed, and the board would only be approving suspending the shutoffs. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun recommended being proactive and reaching out to those that will be shut off and letting them know they are eligible to enter into a payment agreement, even if they have void one within the last year. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun clarified if shutoffs are suspended for August, those that do not pay will be on the list

for shutoffs in September. Mr. Werner stated they will red tag anyone that is currently past due as a warning but they will not be shut off until September if they are not current.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Water Shutoffs Suspension
Ms. Romine made a motion to suspend water shutoffs for the month of August; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Department Head Reports
Park: Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schreiber requested individuals still utilizing the parks to avoid any areas where they see a lot of debris and things that need cleaned up. Mr. Schreiber advised anyone in an area with a tree canopy to be aware of their surroundings. Mr. Schreiber stated they are doing their best to get out and clean up areas they have determined as priority areas as they have events coming up that they would like to make sure can happen. There is an arborist that is looking into various areas of the tree canopy but because of the size of the tree canopy within the parks, it is not realistic that they will be able to look everywhere. Mr. Schreiber also advised residents not to play on any playground equipment that may be taped off due to damage. Mr. Schreiber reported that the park office is still without power and they will be closing at 10 AM today so staff can come to City Hall and work but will be reopening later in the day. Mayor Dermody questioned if Arts in the Park will take place this week. Mr. Schreiber stated they had the conversation with the Arts in the Park group, and it is still scheduled to take place this week. This is one area where the arborist did look at the tree canopy for anything concerning. Mr. Schreiber also stated the Tour De La Porte is still scheduled to take place this weekend and if power is not restored the parks department will provide a generator for the event.

Street: Street Supervisor Ian Eldridge recognized all the departments within the city that have come together to help with the storm damage. Mr. Eldridge reiterated that several contractors, most of whom are local, have been hired to help with storm damage cleanup. Mr. Eldridge noted those contractors have been spread throughout the city. Mr. Eldridge noted that once the roads were clear they recognized there is one area at Monroe and Scott that needs addressed. In addition, Mr. Eldridge reported that brush pickup will begin soon. He stated they will do one round of brush pickup, take a brief pause and allow residents to clean up as much as possible and get it to the curb and then go through again. Water Director Tim Werner stated he has been questioned what are the largest size limbs that can be put on the curb. Mr. Eldridge stated that 4-5 feet is preferable. There are some contractors that have the equipment to pick up larger pieces but if they are 4-5 feet, all crews working should be able to manage them.

TransPorte: Mayor Dermody noted there is a new mechanic at TransPorte that has already made such a difference. TransPorte Assistant Director/Dispatcher Natalie Griffith reported that they currently have five out of six buses that are running. Mayor Dermody questioned when the last time that many buses were fully functional. Ms. Griffith stated she could not remember a time in all her years when there had been five buses running simultaneously. In

addition, Mayor Dermody noted they are working with Paladin to see if they have any affordable buses that are in working order.

Community Development and Planning: Director of Community Development and Planning Craig Phillips reported that work continues at the intersection of Highway 2 and Boyd Boulevard. Despite setbacks from the weather last week, the goal is for the south side of the intersection to reopen Friday August 28th, weather permitting.

Engineering: Assistant City Engineer Tucker King reported that due to the emergency tree removals from the storm, the tree removal project that had been advertised will be postponed until funding and reimbursements are figured out and the tree catalog can be inventoried again.

New Business:

Request for Use: Cousins Maine Lobster

Charity Hlavsa requested approval to use the parking spaces on the east side of HotSpot Café, where they have set up previously. Ms. Hlavsa stated they are requesting barriers to be able to block off the area. The food truck will be there this Sunday from 11 AM until 6 PM.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Request of Use: Cousins Maine Lobster

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request for Use: LPHS FB as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Ticket Appeal

Chief Drangmeister stated commander Blake looked into this ticket appeal. The appeal stated the vehicle was not able to be moved due to mechanical issues. The vehicle owner stated she tried to unsuccessfully jump the vehicle to move it and then had it towed the next day to the shop. Commander Blake followed through on the claims and was able to verify the individual did in fact have the vehicle towed the following morning. Chief Drangmeister stated the individual's excuse was validated, and it is the recommendation of Commander Blake and himself to have the ticket voided.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Ticket Appeal

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Ticket Appeal as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Skillman Proposal

Mayor Dermody introduced the proposal from Skillman in connection with the Microsoft data center project, explaining that the scale of the project requires specialized industrial and commercial inspection services beyond the capacity of the City's existing building department. Mayor Dermody credited Tucker King and Jamie Novak for their work in identifying and evaluating Skillman, including a meeting with the firm at the Amazon data center where Skillman is currently providing similar services. Mr. King explained that while the City's building department can handle residential inspections and has existing

arrangements for industrial and commercial work, the size of the Microsoft project would consume virtually all available staff capacity. Mr. King recommended contracting with Skillman, noting the firm's experience with projects of similar scale. The inspection services would help protect the City and public interests, track complaints, ensure accountability, and verify that construction meets the quality standards expected by the community. Ms. Novak added that Skillman already uses the same program that the city utilizes, OpenGov permitting and reporting system, eliminating the need for City staff to train the firm on the system. This will allow City personnel to remain available for other responsibilities. Skillman is expected to provide two inspectors on a continuous basis, Monday through Friday, with the ability to add a third inspector if necessary. The same inspectors are expected to remain assigned throughout the project. The proposal also includes Skillman's commitment to assist with improving the City's building department and provide services on inspection practices and other projects if requested. Mayor Dermody expressed his appreciation to Skillman for being flexible and working within the financial limits of the city. The initial contract will cover services through the end of 2026, with the ability to extend the agreement. The contract language provides for a two-year term from September 1, 2026, through August 31, 2028, subject to the appropriate funding and continuation of the relationship. The first invoice is not expected until November 5.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun explained the funding requirements. Because the City may only contract for services using funds that are available and appropriated, the City will request that the City Council appropriate the necessary funds through the end of 2026. Building permit and inspection revenues currently deposited into the General Fund will, beginning in 2027, be placed into a newly established Building Department Fund as required by new legislation. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun clarified they will ask Council to appropriate the funds needed for this contract through the end of the year. The City will use available permit revenue in the General Fund for the current-year portion of the contract and the funds that are still available within the general will be budgeted for next year and the remainder of the contract will be budgeted out of the new Building Department Fund as appropriate.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Skillman Proposal

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the relationship and proposal from Skillman pending Council's appropriation of the funds; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

NIES Engineering Pay Request #5 - Soldiers

Water Director Tim Werner presented NIES Engineering Pay Request #5 – Soldiers in the amount of $71,621.01. This brings the contract to approximately 61% complete. Mr. Werner noted they are currently waiting on power and the buildings to go up before the contract can be closed out.

Motion/Vote – Approval of NIES Engineering Pay Request #5 - Soldiers

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve NIES Engineering Pay Request #5 - Soldiers as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimous carried.

Permission to Purchase Loader
Loader Purchase – Financial Review
Mayor Dermody stated the City has a meeting scheduled with Baker Tilly to review financing rates and financial considerations for the next three years. In light of the upcoming discussion, Mayor Dermody requested this item to be tabled until the City has a better understanding of the projected rates and financial impact.

Motion/Vote – Table Permission to Purchase Loader
Ms. Romine made a motion to table Permission to Purchase Loader; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Change Orders – Boyd Blvd Storm Sewer
A motion was made to table this item due to concerns over poor engineering and available funding.

Motion/Vote – Table Change Orders – Boyd Blvd Storm Sewer
Ms. Romine made motion to table Change Orders – Boyd Blvd Storm Sewer as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Anthem BCBS Renewal
Human Resources Director Andrea Smith presented Anthem BCBS Renewal. Ms. Smith noted that although medical and prescription costs continue to rise nationally, the City's favorable claims experience, utilization, and overall plan performance resulted in the insurance carrier offering a 2027 renewal with no rate increase. Ms. Smith reported that while the typical trend for self-funded health plans is approximately 7%–9% increases, the City's medical claims experience was approximately minus 19%. The City's overall blended medical and prescription drug costs were approximately 9.9% below expected levels. She attributed the favorable results in part to employees utilizing the City's health clinic and available wellness benefits, including free blood draws and other preventive services.

Ms. Smith also recognized the City's employees for their participation in wellness initiatives and credited Brown & Brown for negotiating favorable renewal terms with the insurance carrier. Franciscan was also recognized for its continued partnership and assistance with employee wellness and healthcare services. Ms. Smith noted for 2027, the only anticipated increase will result from required IRS adjustments to high-deductible health plan limits, which will result in relatively minimal deductible increases ranging from approximately $50 to $200, depending on the plan selected. Ms. Smith stated the City plans to continue its wellness programs and efforts to maintain favorable claims and utilization levels. Ms. Smith noted that the results are particularly favorable compared with the increases being experienced by other municipalities and businesses throughout Northwest Indiana.

Motion/Vote – Approval of Anthem BCBS Renewal
Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Anthem BCBS Renewal as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody and unanimously carried.

Unfinished Business

Other Business:
The next Board of Public Works meeting will be held on Wednesday September 9, 2026 at 9:00 AM in Council Chambers; Due to the Labor Day Holiday

Mayor Dermody stated there are two dumpsters provided by WM located on the South side of the Civic for households to bring spoiled food items to toss out. Mayor Dermody advised residents to be responsible and not try to dispose of construction material, drywall etcetera. In addition, Mayor Dermody noted that the majority of La Porte now has power with the remainder expected to have power back on by midnight. Mayor Dermody and Ms. Romine recognized the residents and businesses that came together to help out the community during this past week.

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

Tabled 07-21-2926: Notice to Terminate
08-04-2026: Permission to Replace Emergency Generator

Approve: _____
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: September 9, 2026