

## Regular Board of Works Meeting In Person and Hybrid/Zoom on September 2, 2025

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session on Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, City of Michigan City, on Hybrid/Zoom and streamed live on the "Access LaPorte County" Facebook page.

The meeting was called to order by President Skyler York

On the call of roll, the following Board Members were found to be present or absent.

**Noted present in person:** Candice Antisdell, Tamiko Smith, Gene Simmons, Peggy Moore, Skyler York (5)

**Absent:** None (0)

### **Also noted in attendance:**

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich; Izabelle Galvin Ellis, Clerk of the Board of Works; Deputy Attorney Ryan Beall; Wendy Vachet, Public Works Director; D'Marcus Briscoe, Code Enforcement Manager; Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department; Melisha Henderson, Human Resources Director; Shante Ivy, Assistant Human Resources Director; Chief Barrett Taylor, Michigan City Fire Department; Drew White, ALCO.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the August 18, 2025 minutes as presented, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Singing Sands Trail Property Acquisition**

The Michigan City Parks Department requested to purchase parcel 4 from Lucas Polka for the Singing Sands trail.

President York explained that this is the procurement of another parcel for the Singing Sands Trail through the Grand Beach Drive area.

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the property acquisition, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Change Order**

The City Engineer requested a change order for the 2025-1 CCMG Paving Project to add Sanders Ave. to the paving list | the amount not to exceed \$18,375.00

President York stated that there is funding available for this change order, and that Sanders St. is a small road that is being added to the 2025-CCMG paving list.

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the Change Order, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Request for Special Purchase**

The Michigan City Police Department requested the special purchase of three (3) Dodge Durango's that are currently being leased by the MCPD and buy them out for a total amount of \$96,539.19.

Assistant Chief Steve Forker, Michigan City Police Department, addressed the Board explaining the purchase of the three (3) vehicles, stating that they are currently part of their fleet and on a three (3) year lease and one of them is currently a K-9 vehicle; further explaining that it would be more cost effective to buy out the vehicles since they are already equipped with the proper police equipment.

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to approve the special purchase of three (3) Dodge Durango's, seconded by President York and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Policy & Procedure Updates**

The Human Resources Department is requesting to update the policies and procedures manual:

- Update Policy #108: Drug & alcohol testing policy with Exhibits A & C
- Update Policy #307: Sick Leave
- Update Policy #318: Health & Welfare Benefits
- Update Policy #505: Tobacco Use

Melisha Henderson, HR Director, addressed the Board explaining the changes with the Drug & Alcohol Policy, stating that currently every employee hired by the City is required to take a drug test, but we want to make a change where employees who are being hired as full-time and part-time for safety-sensitive positions only need to be drug tested; further stating that this is due to the cost of drug tests being \$75 to \$80 per test. Mrs. Henderson explained that an employee will be tested for drugs and alcohol if there is a car accident, whether there is damage or not; further explaining that previously we only tested if there was damage to the vehicle. She listed the positions that will no longer be tested, further stating that safety-sensitive employees will still be randomly tested.

Mrs. Antisdell asked if any employee who drives a City Vehicle will be randomly tested, and Mrs. Henderson stated yes as well as be tested when they first start the position.

Mr. Simmons asked if an employee would be tested if they're in a car accident, and Mrs. Henderson stated yes even if there is no damage to the vehicle.

Mrs. Moore asked if these changes are being made due to financing, and Mrs. Henderson explained the cost it is to drug test every employee; further explaining that this would save the City a lot of money.

Mrs. Henderson explained the update to Policy #307: Sick Leave; further explaining that a schedule has been created for Sick Leave time and how much time an employee would receive based on their start date.

Mrs. Henderson explained the update to Policy #318: Health and Welfare Benefits, stating that previously when somebody was hired they would have to wait 90 days before they received insurance, now there is a 30-day waiting period before receiving insurance; further stating that this makes us a more competitive employer.

Mrs. Henderson asked to table Policy #505: Tobacco Use until the next Board meeting.

Mr. Simmons concurs with all the changes made to the policies.

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mrs. Antisdell and Mrs. Henderson confirmed that every City employee who drives a vehicle would be subject to drug testing.

Mrs. Moore asked if it was possible to offer immediate insurance for new hires, and Mrs. Henderson stated that is something they can look into.

President York made a motion to table updates to Policy #505: Tobacco Use until the next Board meeting on September 15, 2025, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

President York made a motion to approve updates Policy #108: Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy with all exhibits attached, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

President York made a motion to approve updates to Policy #307: Sick Leave, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

President York asked when the Policies would be implemented, and Mrs. Henderson stated that the Sick Leave Policy and Drug and Alcohol Policy would be immediate, but the Health and Welfare Benefits Policy would be implemented January 1, 2026.

President York made a motion to table updates to Policy #318: Health & Welfare Benefits until the next Board meeting on Monday, September 15, 2025, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Summary Plan Description**

The Human Resources Department requested the approval of the amended Summary Plan Description for termination revisions.

Melisha Henderson, HR Director, addressed the Board explaining the changes made with the Summary Plan Description, stating that an employee would keep their insurance for (1) month after being terminated from their employment instead of immediately.

Mrs. Smith asked what happens currently when an employee is terminated, and Mrs. Henderson said that currently it ends on their last day of work.

Mrs. Moore asked if the City offers Cobra, and Mrs. Henderson stated yes.

Mrs. Smith asked if Cobra is time dependent, and Mrs. Henderson stated yes, they can stay on it for up to 18 months.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the amended Summary Plan Description for termination revisions, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Employee Benefits Renewal**

Highstreet Insurance Services requested the approval of employee benefits renewal and plan changes.

Eric Gibson, Highstreet Insurance Services, addressed the Board explaining the options for insurance renewal; further explaining that the revised renewal is recommended and

would be a overall fixed cost increased by 22%, due to the Stop Loss Program being increased by 28%, the administrative costs decreased by 4% and the overall claims liability increased by 20%, so the overall total increase on expected cost is 20%. Furthermore, Mr. Gibson stated that 80% of the entire spend of the program is based on claims that are going to happen throughout the year, so some changes are being implemented that will hopefully curtail the increase.

Mr. Gibson stated that within the UMR renewal, there's a short-term disability renewal so there will be an increase and there is an update to the light duty requirement just to clarify some language within the contract.

Mr. Gibson stated that for plan changes, a new thing that will be instituted is "Paid Health", which is a program that sources alternate funding for expensive drugs and this would help bring down the overall cost and save the City \$400,000.00.

Mr. Gibson stated that an additional HSA plan will be added for members to choose from that has higher deductibles and higher out-of-pocket costs.

Mr. Gibson stated that there will be no more new enrollees into the PPO plan, but people who are currently enrolled will be able to stay enrolled.

Mr. Gibson stated that the Spousal Carve-Out Secondary Coverage language has been added; further explaining that if a spouse has other group coverage, they must enroll in that other group coverage to then be eligible to the City's Plan and then the City would be secondary for that individual.

Mr. Gibson stated that they are switching to the Standard Drug List from the Expanded Drug List to save the City about \$70,000.00, and these drugs will still be available just not at a zero-dollar cost share for employees.

Mr. Gibson stated that with Life A D&D Insurance the City currently has a \$50,000 group life insurance through Dearborn and recommends moving it to Equitable due to saving \$8,000.00 a year and would streamline administratively during to already have services through Equitable.

Lastly, Mr. Gibson stated that he recommends continuing with MetLife for the vision insurance renewal.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Gibson, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Antisdell and President York on the details of the "Paid Health" program.

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the insurance renewals recommended by Mr. Gibson, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

#### **Request for Traffic Signs**

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, requested "No Parking Between Signs" posted on the East side of the alley between the LaPorte County Courthouse and the Michigan City Public Library, to prevent vehicles from parking near the sally port entrance and allow for transport vehicles to enter and exit safely.

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, addressed the Board explaining the issues the Sheriff Deputy's have been having with their sally port with cars parked along the alleyway, making it difficult for them to get in and out, and explained where the signage would be; further stating that there was an accident in the alley way due to cars being parked along there.

Captain Jesse provided a picture of where the signage would be.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to approve the no parking signs, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

#### **Request for Traffic Sign**

Rafael Gamez requested a stop sign at Hendricks St. and Francis St. to allow neighborhood children to cross safely for their school bus.

Nobody was present to address the request.

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, addressed the Board stating that there have not been any traffic incidents at the intersection since 2020 and found that there were no speeding problems in that area when a collected during the month of June, recommending against the stop sign.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to deny the request for stop sign, seconded by Mrs. Antisdell and was denied with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Road Closure for Special Event**

The Minority Health Partners of LaPorte County requested to host their annual breast cancer awareness walk on Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The route will start at 2722 Wabash St. and go North up to Pytina Pkwy, then East to Franklin St., then South to West Coolspring Ave, then West to Wabash St. and finish back at 2722 Wabash St.

Albertine Allen, Assistant Director for Minority Health Partners of LaPorte County, addressed the Board explaining the event, stating that it's a walk to support breast cancer awareness and is an annual event; further stating that the walk will only be on the sidewalk on the route.

President York asked how many people attend the event, and Mrs. Allen stated that last year there were 36 people, but the first year there was 102 so they are trying to get the attendance level back up.

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, stated that he approves of the walk on the sidewalks.

Mrs. Allen explained that you can sign up on their website online or just show up to the event on October 4<sup>th</sup> to walk, everybody is welcome.

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the walk on the sidewalks, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Removal of Collection Box**

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., requested the removal of the apparel donation collection box on St. John Rd. in the parking lot North of the former Sears store at Marquette Mall.

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., addressed the Board explaining how the apparel donation collection box in the old Marquette Mall parking lot a nuisance and blight to the community is and should be removed.

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich and President York stated that since it is on private property it's not a Board of Works matter and will be referred to Code Enforcement.

### **Payroll Claims Docket**

<b>Payroll Docket</b>	<b>August 22, 2025</b>	<b>\$830,038.24</b>
<b>Payroll Pension Docket</b>	<b>September 1, 2025</b>	<b>\$193,996.60</b>

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve both payroll claims dockets as presented, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Claims Docket**

**September 2, 2025**

<b>Municipal</b>	<b>\$1,138,390.010</b>
<b>CDBG</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Health &amp; Life</b>	<b>\$661,562.89</b>
<b>Special Events</b>	<b>\$5,401.25</b>
<b>Zoo Casino Agreement</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Workers Comp</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>ARP Local Fiscal Recovery</b>	<b>\$218.00</b>
<b>TOTAL CLAIMS:</b>	<b>\$1,805,572.24</b>

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the claims docket as presented, seconded by Mrs. Antisdel and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Request for Sign Repair – Unfinished Business**

Councilman Don Przybylinski is requesting the following items:

- Reconstruction of the stop sign guard rail triangle at the corner of Chicago St., 10<sup>th</sup> St. and Kentucky St.

This was tabled from July 7, 2025.

Nobody was present to give an update on the request.

President York made a motion to table the request until the next Board meeting on September 15, 2025 for an update, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**



**Request for Signage or Striping – Unfinished Business**

Nancy Cross, 501 Pearl St., is requesting striping or signage to stop people from parking either partially or fully on the sidewalk that is on the Northside of Elston from Lafayette St. to Spring St. This was tabled from July 21, 2025.

Nobody was present to give an update on the request.

President York made a motion to table the request until the next Board meeting on September 15, 2025 for an update, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

**CSX Repairs – Unfinished Business**

Updates on the repairs of the Buffalo St. crossings. This was tabled from January 21, 2025.

Nobody was present to give an update on the request.

President York made a motion to table the request until the next Board meeting on September 15, 2025 for an update, seconded by Mrs. Antisdel and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Awarding of Bid – Unfinished Business**

Awarding of bid for the demolition of 901 Manhattan St. This was tabled from July 7, 2025.

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich stated that she has not received the order of abandonment from the bankruptcy court and asked the Board to table the matter until the next Board meeting.

Mr. Simons made a motion to table the awarding of bid until the next Board meeting on September 15, 2025, seconded by Mrs. Antisdel and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdel, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Determination on Order to Demolish – Unfinished Business**

Determination regarding Order to Demolish Unsafe Building at 1605 Franklin St. in Michigan City. This was tabled from August 18, 2025.

Corporate Counsel Lapaich advised that following the hearing on Monday, August 18, 2025, she sent dialogue to the Board Members that it would be inappropriate for the Board to consider evidence from either party outside of the administrative hearing

because the hearing had concluded; further stating that both parties tried to submit evidence after the hearing concluded so it would have been improper for the Board to accept evidence without giving the other party the opportunity for cross-exam. She explained that the Board could reopen the hearing to allow both parties to present their additional evidence or the Board can render a decision today.

Marie Sinovak, 117 Boyd Circle, made a comment.

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Werner Graf, 1605 Franklin St., made a comment.

Mrs. Moore made a comment explaining that the Board is committed to public safety with this matter.

President York made a comment concurring with Mrs. Moore and explaining that that demolition orders are not taken lightly with the Board but sometimes they have to be done from a public safety standpoint.

Mrs. Antisdell made a comment concurring with Mrs. Moore and President York stating that there are many steps that need to be followed in order to get to a demolition order and that nobody is jumping to demolish 1605 Franklin St., and don't want another case with a building collapsing before being demolished.

Mrs. Smith made a comment stating that this conversation is long overdue and asked what 100 days looks like.

Mr. Simmons made a comment stating that it's unfortunate that we have gotten to this point, but we need to focus on this property today because there has not been much progress in the three (3) years that Mr. Graf owned the building; stating that he would feel better if the building were fenced in.

Discussion ensued between the Board, Wendy Vachet, Public Works Director, and Mr. Graf on the 100-day deadline.

Mrs. Antisdell made a motion:

*to affirm the demolition order, however, "stay" the demolition order subject to the following timeframes: 1.) Within 15 days, the Respondent shall deliver the following documents to the satisfaction of the to the Planning Department: written detailed scope of work including securement and stabilization of the façade, interior reconstruction, and related milestones for next 100 days; proof of financing/financial ability to carry out Plan; executed contracts with qualified contractors, engineers, and a schedule of work to be performed; proof that permits have been applied for the Plan. If these conditions are not met within 15 days, the stay on the order to demolish shall be lifted. If these*

*conditions are met within 15 days, then Respondent shall submit written progress reports regarding the Plan to Planning Department every 30 days. Failure to maintain documented and implemented progress to the property pursuant to the Plan shall cause the "stay" of the demolition order to be lifted. All parties are ordered to appear for further hearing on this matter on January 5, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. at which time the Board will consider additional evidence and progress made toward the Property and whether additional "stay(s)" on the order to demolish shall be granted.*

Seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (4) Antisdell, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (1) Smith**

Corporate Counsel Lapaich stated that she will write up the final order for the Board to formally vote on at the next Board meeting to make it the final order. She also advised that the Planning Department, as the enforcement authority, has the right to set aside the Order to Demolish at all times.

### **Public Comment**

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment regarding the building at 1605 Franklin St., stating that he does not understand the urgency of the matter and believes that the City requires too many rules or ordinances with the Building and Planning Department.

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment asking for no more carnivals in the City.

Nancy Cross, 501 Pearl St., made a comment in regards to her request stating that the situation has gotten worse in front of her home and cars are parking on both sides of street causing students to not walk on sidewalk, asking if tickets have been written.

Mrs. Cross also commented on the 1605 Franklin St., stating she does not support the demolition of the building.

### **Board Comment**

Mrs. Moore made a comment addressing Mr. Meland and Mrs. Cross on their public comments.

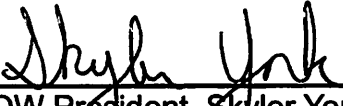
Mrs. Antisdell made a comment stating that the Board did their due diligence in making sure there was fairness for both parties involved.

Mrs. Antisdell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (5) Antisdell, Smith, Simmons, Moore, York**

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.**

  
BOW President, Skyler York

  
BOW Clerk, Izabelle Galvin Ellis