

Regular Board of Works Meeting In Person and Hybrid/Zoom on October 6, 2025

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session on Monday, October 6, 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: Tamiko Smith, Peggy Moore and Skyler York (3)

Absent: Gene Simmons and Candice Antisdel (2)

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; Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department; Melisha Henderson, Human Resources Director; Chief Barrett Taylor, Michigan City Fire Department; Chris Johnson, Director Water Department; Terry Greetham, Special Events Director; Eric Williams, Assistant Special Events Director; Assistant Chief Kyle Shiparski, Michigan City Police Department; Shante Ivy, Assistant HR Director; Tim Werner, City Engineer; Drew White, ALCO.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the September 15, 2025 minutes as presented, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Memorandum of Understanding

Approval of Amended Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Michigan City and Indiana Plan to increase the number of students/residents anticipated to participate in the program.

President York stated that our Workforce Director had asked to have this MOU removed from the agenda.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to remove the MOU from the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Request for Special Purchase

The Michigan City Police Department is requesting a lease special purchase agreement of a 2026 Chrysler Pacifica and a 2025 Jeep Grand Cherokee for a total amount of \$90,624.06.

Chief Kyle Shiparski, Assistant Chief Michigan City Police Department, addressed the Board explaining the purchase of the two (2) vehicles, stating that they are paid for through the La Porte County Drug Task Force and HIDA and the vehicles will only be operated by the detectives that are represented in the task force itself and be technically owned and insured through the City to make them part of our fleet.

Mrs. Smith asked about insurance coverage for the vehicles, and Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich stated that the vehicles will be part of our fleet and owned by the City so we will be the ones insuring them.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the special purchase, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Contract

The Human Resources Department is requesting the approval of the American Fidelity contract for 2026.

Melisha Henderson, HR Director, addressed the Board stating that open enrollment for insurance will now be available online and will allow employees to see how much the cost is before signing up with the insurance; further explaining that this is a voluntary portal so it would not cost the City any money.

Mrs. Smith asked what the current enrollment is, and Mrs. Henderson stated that the City had been doing passive enrollment all on paper in the past but the goal for 2026 is to have active open enrollment in November and give the staff the opportunity to enroll in insurance online.

Mrs. Smith asked if the portal will only be offering American Fidelity products, and Mrs. Henderson stated no, it will be offering all our benefit products, including medical, dental, vision and life insurance.

Mrs. Smith asked if we can decline the American Fidelity Products, and Mrs. Henderson stated yes, American Fidelity is voluntary.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Road Closure for Special Event

The Michigan City Fire Department is requesting a road closure on October 11, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for their Open House at Station One on W 10th St. from Ohio St. to Elston St. and on Elston St. South of W 10th St.

Nobody was present to address the request.

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, stated that he has no issues with the event and road closure.

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment stating that this event is a Fire Prevention Open House.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to approve the road closure, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Request for Traffic Signage

Steve Novak, 120 Woodside Drive, is request a "Caution Hidden Drive" sign to be placed West bound and East bound on Barker Rd. to warn drivers that cars are entering and exiting Woodside Drive.

Steve Novak, 120 Woodside Drive, addressed the Board stating that since the subdivision on Woodside Drive has been built, there has been an increase in both vehicle and pedestrian traffic on Barker Road and Cleveland Ave. due to new businesses, Barker School and bus stops; asking the Board to consider a "Hidden Drive" sign to be placed both East Bound and West Bound on Barker Road.

Mrs. Moore agrees with Mr. Novak on the issues with the intersection.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, addressed the Board stating that there are sight line issues due to overgrown vegetation and it is a maintenance issue; further stating that it makes it hard for people coming up on Woodside Drive from Barker Road to see Woodside Drive.

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, addressed the Board stating that according to their records, there has only been one (1) accident and according to their traffic software 95% of drivers are going 30 to 35 miles per hour in that area; further stating that he agrees that the vegetation plays a role with the issues at the intersection.

Mrs. Moore asked how the traffic software determines speed, and Captain Jesse stated that it's based off of in-car GPS signals, Sirius XM, and other kinds of software.

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

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

President York made a motion to refer the request to the City Engineer, Street Department and Vector Control or the Sanitation Department, and to put on the pending item list for the October 20, 2025 Board meeting, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Road Closure for Construction

Woodruff & Sons, Inc. is requesting to close two (2) Northbound lanes of Wabash St. between 6th St. and 7th St. and one (1) Southbound lane in the same block starting as soon as possible for four (4) days for the installation of the underground sanitary sewer service for the Barker Depot Train Museum being built.

Bruce Woodruff, Woodruff & Sons, Inc., addressed the Board explaining that they're putting in a new sewer service line for the new train depot museum and it needs to be done across Wabash St.

Mrs. Moore asked what is being built, and President York explained that it will be part of the Barker Mansion campus and be a train museum.

Mrs. Smith asked if the closure will be the entirety of the four (4) days or just during certain times, and Mr. Woodruff stated it will be closed the entire time.

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

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the road closure for construction, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Sidewalk & Parking Space Closure for Construction

Fernando Petino, Undeclared Construction, is requesting a sidewalk closure and the closure of two (2) parking spots in front of 1605 and 1607 Franklin St. for the debris removal and preservation work of 1605 Franklin St. until December 31, 2025.

Nobody was present to address the request.

Wendy Vachet, Director of Public Works, addressed the Board stating that Fernando Petino is the demolition contractor and has been working with the Clerk on his certificate of insurance, although it is not complete, the insurance agencies are working together; further stating that the sidewalk and parking spot closure is necessary in order to repair the façade of the building.

Mrs. Vachet stated that she will provide the Board with Mr. Werner Graf's completed plan and they are currently focused on the cleanout of the building.

Mrs. Smith asked if what we are waiting on is the insurance liability, and Mrs. Vachet stated yes.

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich asked if the sidewalk closure and parking space closure is just for the façade repair, and Mrs. Vachet stated yes, the cleanout dumpster will only be in the back.

Discussion ensued between Mrs. Vachet and Mrs. Moore on the Façade repair and project.

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

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to table the request until the next Board meeting pending the COI, seconded by President York and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Alley Closure for Construction

The City of Michigan City is requesting to close the alleyway between Franklin St. and Washington St. and between Ann St. and Homer St. for construction activities at 1605 Franklin St.

Wendy Vachet, Public Works Director, addressed the Board stating that this would be for the safety of residents for the clean out of 1605 Franklin St.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the alley closure, seconded by President York and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Payroll Claims Docket

Payroll Docket	September 19, 2025	\$774,331.01
Payroll Pension Docket	October 1, 2025	203,880.70
Payroll Docket	October 3, 2025	775,075.73

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

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Claims Docket

October 6, 2025

Municipal	\$772,859.64
CDBG	\$0.00
Health & Life	\$714,274.88
Special Events	\$0.00
Zoo Casino Agreement	\$0.00
Workers Comp	\$0.00
ARP Local Fiscal Recovery	\$0.00
TOTAL CLAIMS:	\$1,487,134.52

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

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Updates – Special Events

Terry Greetham, Special Events Director, addressed the Board stating that they had a very successful 2025 event season with their next event being the Festival of Lights Parade on December 6, 2025 with the Chili cook-off event following the parade.

Mr. Greetham stated that they are currently working on getting the road closure requests together for next year's events and have a goal of \$100,000 for sponsorships next year.

Mrs. Smith asked what the target was for 2025 fundraising, and Mr. Greetham stated it was \$100,000 but they only received \$86,500 in sponsorships; further stating that they brought in \$124,000 in revenue in 2025 between sponsorships, admission fees and from vendors.

Updates – Parks Department

Nobody was present to give an update.

Updates - Michigan City Water Works Department to give an update on the US 20 Annexation Area Water Main Extension Project.

Chris Johnson, Water Works Department Superintendent, addressed the Board stating that there was a change order that decreased the price of the project due to the soils being better than planned and allowing the cost of installing the main was substantially lower than planned; further stating that the net change order amount was a reduction of \$33,169.58 bringing the total contract price for the construction portion reduced to \$622,296.58, which is approximately 16.5% below engineering estimates, and 4.1% below the bid.

Mr. Johnson stated that overall, the original budget for the project materials and construction, based on the engineer's estimate, was \$1.3 million and the final cost of materials and construction totaled \$966,923.86, which is 4.4% below the bid total of \$1,010,977.16, and 25.6% below the engineer's estimate.

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.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, stated that he has met with the Street Director but has not checked on the project since and needs to follow up, asking the Board to table the request until the next BOW meeting.

President York made a motion to table the request until the next Board meeting, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Request for Traffic Control – Unfinished Business

Denise Blau, 211 Superior St., is requesting parking on one side of the street on Superior St. This was tabled from September 15, 2025.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, addressed the Board stating that he does not see an issue with parking on both sides of the street in this area and believes it should not be done due to having to do to other roads throughout the City.

President York asked about the yellow markings, 40 feet from Franklin St., for no parking on Superior St. for people to turn onto Superior St. from Franklin St. safely, and Mr. Werner stated that the North side of Superior St. is not painted but the South side is, which can be done.

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, addressed the Board stating that a parking ticket has been written since the last meeting due to somebody parking in the no parking zone.

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

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made comment.

President York made a motion to remove the loading zone signage, add additional paint to the Northside of the road to match the Southside and deny the request for one-sided street parking, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Request for Sidewalk Repair – Unfinished Business

Steven Lockridge, 302 Crestwood Dr., is requesting to have the sidewalk repaired in front of his driveway in order to repair his own driveway. This was tabled from Jul 21, 2025.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, stated that the sidewalk and apron of Mr. Lockridge's driveway will be repaired during the 2026 sidewalk improvement list.

Steven Lockridge, 302 Crestwood Dr., addressed the Board stating that his part of the driveway has been repaired, further stating that the entire block has uneven sidewalk.

Mr. Werner stated that he has identified almost \$625,000.00 worth of damaged sidewalks in Michigan City that need replaced, but the budget isn't that high for 2026 so he is only addressing the most hazardous sidewalks for Spring 2026.

President York made a motion to remove the request from the pending item list, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

CSX Repairs – Unfinished Business

Updates on the repairs and removal of railroad ties at the Buffalo St. crossings. This was tabled from January 21, 2025.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, addressed the Board stating that he has put in a request to have the Buffalo St. crossing repaired any54d to have the railroad ties removed from the Buffalo St. crossing and has received no updates in the last four (4) weeks.

Wendy Vachet, Public Works Director, addressed the Board stating that the issue with the railroad ties is much bigger and expands larger than Michigan City, further stating that she will also make calls to the railroad and get in contact with our U.S. Senator's Office.

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

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

President York made a motion to remove the request from the pending item list, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Public Comment

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment about bringing back "Reese Across America" at the American Legion Post 451 by Commander Jason Lamber Novak on November 13, 2025.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment recommending to expand the order of repainting the curbs on Superior St. to also doing it on Harrison St., Gardena St. and Wilshire St.

Mr. Meland also made a comment about the pallet company just North of HWY 20, stating that the amount of wood they have piled up is illegal and a fire hazard.

Grievance Hearing

Grievance Hearing with Firefighters Union IAFF Local 475 that was filed on or about August 26, 2025.

On or about August 25, 2025 the Michigan City Firefighters Local 475 (hereinafter referred to as "Union") filed a grievance before the Michigan City Board of Public Works and Safety (hereinafter referred to as "Board") alleging that the City of Michigan City, Indiana (hereinafter referred to as "City") violated the 2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement (hereinafter referred to as "Union Contract") when the City eliminated and/or restricted access to "light duty" assignments.

Local 475 appeared by its President, Christopher Zubutis. The City appeared by Human Resources Director Melesha Henderson, and by counsel, Deputy City Attorney Ryan A. Beall. Witnesses were sworn.

Testimony was heard and evidence was submitted by Mrs. Henderson, stating that on or about August 11, 2025, the City discovered that certain City Departments had adopted their own versions of "light duty" policies, which were creating unnecessary overtime expenses for the City and that sick leave, vacation leave, and/or FMLA time was not being properly utilized by employees within those Departments as a result. To that effect, the Mayor notified all City Departments that any Departmental self-created "light duty" policies were terminated and abated, and that employee requests for job accommodations would need to be made accordingly through the Human Resource Department.

Testimony was heard and evidence was submitted by Mr. Zubutis specifically alleging that the City violated Article XIII, paragraph I (Sick Leave) and Article VI (Management Rights and Responsibilities) of the Union Contract by eliminating the "light duty" policy in

the Michigan City Fire Department and requested reinstatement of "light duty" and restoration of any member's sick leave, vacation leave, or FMLA time utilized. It was also argued that the Union also argued that "light duty" had historically been provided to the Union in the past and referenced an expired union contract from 2004, which contained "light duty" language in the definition section and also referenced a 2007 Fire Chief Memo that referenced "light duty."

The Board finds that the City did not breach the Union Contract when it eliminated the "light duty" policies that had been self-created within certain City Departments, including the one that was previously self-created by prior management of the Fire Department.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to deny the grievance filed by Local 475 on August 25, 2025, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was denied with the following vote:

AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

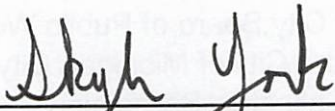
NAYS: (0) None

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

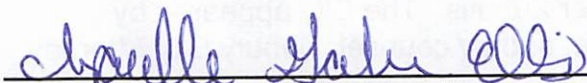
AYES: (3) Smith, Moore, York

NAYS: (0) None

Meeting adjourned at 10:16 a.m.



BOW President, Skyler York



BOW Clerk, Izabelle Galvin Ellis