

# Regular Board of Works Meeting In Person and Hybrid/Zoom on January 5, 2026

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session on Monday, January 5, 2026 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 Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich.

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

**Noted present in person:** Candice Antisdell, Gene Simmons, Tamiko Smith, Peggy Moore and Patrick Voltz (5)

**Absent:** None (0)

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

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich; Izabelle Galvin Ellis, BOW Clerk; Tim Werner, City Engineer; Eric Williams, Assistant Director for Special Events; Terry Greetham, Director of Special Events; Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department; Ryan Beal, Deputy City Attorney; D'Marcus Briscoe, Code Enforcement Manager; Wendy Vachet, Public Works Director; Mayor Angie Nelson Deutch; Shannon Eason, Parks Department Director; Jeff Bruder, Fire Marshall; Councilman Don Przybylinski; Drew White, ALCO.

### **Board Elections**

Mr. Simmons nominated Mrs. Antisdell as President, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

Mrs. Smith nominated Mrs. Moore as Vice President, seconded by President Antisdell and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the December 15, 2025 minutes as presented, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Purchase of Property**

The Michigan City Parks Department requested the purchase of Parcel 13 from Lakeside Cottages for the Singing Sands Trail.

Shannon Eason, Parks Department Director, addressed the Board stating that they need to purchase 37 parcels to complete phase three (3) of our portion of the Singing Sands Trail, and once Parcel 13 is purchased, will have 23 more parcels to purchase to complete phase three (3). Further stating that the parcel is located along Victory Street and is less than four tenths of an acre, at the price of \$2,500.00.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to approve the purchase of Parcel 13, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Contract**

Approval of contract between the City of Michigan City and Midwestern Electric, LLC to serve as the Transportation and Traffic Management Contractor for the City.

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich stated that this contract is for Midwestern Electric to do traffic signal inventory, maintenance and inspection of traffic signals throughout the year; further stating that the total cost for the routine and preventative maintenance would be \$88,770 a year and if there is extra special work then the contractor would provide that at an hourly rate.

Corporate Counsel Lapaich stated that she had reviewed the contract and approves of it.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, addressed the Board stating one thing that has been changed in the contract from previous years is that we removed two signals from our inventory due to roadway swaps with the County, including Kiefer Rd. and the intersection of Ohio St. and Cleveland Ave.

Mr. Simmons stated that there is a typo on the traffic signal inventory, number six (6), needs to be changed from Baker to Barker.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mr. Werner stated that we have control over the timing of all of our signals.

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

Mr. Werner stated that the traffic signal at the intersection of HWY 12 and Michigan Blvd. is in the process of being fixed.

Mrs. Smith stated that there is a typo on the traffic signal inventory under "County Maintenance Responsibility", Keiffer Rd. and Ohio St.

Mr. Simmons asked for them to check all the cycles on all the lights, and Mr. Werner stated that it's a monthly requirement in the contract.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the Midwestern Electric, LLC contract, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Contract**

Approval of Addendum of the existing 2026 agreement between the City of Michigan City and Global Engineering for the reduction of the Street Contract Development.

Original contracted amount for services was \$225,000.00 and the addended contract amount for services is \$160,000.00 (\$65,000.00 deduction).

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich stated that the City was not awarded the CCMG funds for 2026, so this addendum to the Global Engineering Contract reflects the deduction of funds we are not receiving for CCMG; further stating that we will continue to apply for CCMG funds moving forward.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the addendum to the 2026 Global Engineering Contract, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Sponsorship Contracts**

The Michigan City Special Events Department is requesting the approval of the following event sponsorship contracts for the 2026 event season:

- Premier Sponsorship from LaPorte County Convention and Visitors Bureau in the amount of \$20,000.00.
- Gold Sponsorship from NIPSCO in the amount of \$10,000.00.

Eric Williams, Special Events Assistant Director, addressed the Board stating that both companies are return sponsorships from previous years; further stating that these two (2) sponsorships will bring the Department's sponsorship amount up to \$50,000 for their \$100,000 goal.

Mrs. Smith asked how many events there are this year, and Mr. Williams stated that we have 11 events and that there are currently no new events planned for this year.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to approve both sponsorship contracts, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

### **Insurance Renewal**

Highstreet Insurance is requesting the approval of the Buffer Layer Access Insurance from January 15, 2026 through January 15, 2027, and Third-Party Administration components of the Self-Funded Worker's Compensation Program from January 15, 2026 through January 15, 2030.

Charlie Keene, Highstreet Insurance, addressed the Board explaining the renewal and the changes that were made for the City and the Sanitary District, and that we are just renewing the Buffer Layer Excess Insurance and the Third-Party Administrator contract. Stating that there are four (4) components: the Buffer Layer Excess Coverage, the City's loss fund and the Third-Party Administrator that acts as the claims Adjuster.

Mr. Keene stated that TPA fees expiring is \$34,500 and renewal is \$36,000, and their fees will go up \$1,000 per year for the next four (4) years; further stating that the total amount is \$303,098.85, which is a .5% total increase.

Mr. Keene stated that he broke down the cost differences between the City and the Sanitary District, with roughly 79% to the City and 21% to the Sanitary District, recommending the lost fund of \$400,000 to the City and \$200,000 to the Sanitary District; further stating that this is what the City and Sanitary District would pay for workers compensation claims.

Mrs. Smith asked what the Buffer Layer Excess is, and Mr. Keene stated that it's similar to an excess policy and would bring the claim we pay down to \$300,000 from \$600,000 of the Primary Excess Policy.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mr. Simmons made a comment stating that the City has been self-insured for a long time.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the insurance renewal, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

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

Race the Region requested a road closure on 10<sup>th</sup> St. between Wabash St. and Manhattan St. directly in front of Marquette Highschool on March 21, 2026 at 9 a.m. for one (1) for their annual Lucky Charms 5k start and finish area.

Ali Brown, Race the Region, addressed the Board explaining the closure for the 5K in front of Marquette Highschool for one (1) hour.

Madam Clerk Izabelle Galvin Ellis stated that she has not received the COI yet but is working with Mrs. Brown on it.

Mrs. Antisdell asked if this is their first year hosting the event, and Mrs. Brown stated that last year was their first year hosting the event and they're making it an annual event.

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, stated that he approves of the closure and after reviewing it and talking with Mrs. Brown.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mrs. Brown stated that they use their own barricades to close the road and do not use any City services.

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

Werner Graf, 117 Boyd Circle, made a comment.

Mrs. Moore asked what the ordinance is for fees, and Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich stated that if there is a fee instated then it would have to go before the City Council as an ordinance, stating that the Board of Works doesn't have jurisdiction over fees.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the road closure for special event, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Request to Purchase City-Owned Property**

Dennis Harmon, 609 N Calumet Ave., requested to purchase property at N. Calumet Ave. across from his property. Parcel Number: 460127303016000022.

Dennis Harmon, 609 N Calumet Ave., addressed the Board stating that he has been taking care of and maintaining the property for close to 15 years and wants to own since nobody else takes care of it.

Wendy Vachet, Public Works Director, addressed the Board stating that she will work with Mr. Harmon on his goals for the property and report back to the Board with a proper recommendation.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

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

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich explained the procedure for selling city-owned property.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to refer the request to the Planning Department and Legal for follow up, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Claims Docket**

**January 5, 2026**

<b>Municipal</b>	<b>\$2,593,529.36</b>
<b>CDBG</b>	<b>\$273.78</b>
<b>Health &amp; Life</b>	<b>\$432,457.49</b>
<b>Special Events</b>	<b>\$7,893.33</b>
<b>Zoo Casino Agreement</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Workers Comp</b>	<b>\$37,559.12</b>
<b>ARP Local Fiscal Recovery</b>	<b>\$16,305.00</b>
<b>TOTAL CLAIMS:</b>	<b>\$3,088,018.08</b>

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the claims docket as presented, seconded by Mr. Voltz and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Payroll Claims Docket**

<b>Payroll Docket</b>	<b>December 26, 2025</b>	<b>\$806,329.87</b>
<b>Payroll Pension Docket</b>	<b>December 31, 2025</b>	<b>\$202,500.94</b>

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the payroll claims dockets as presented, seconded by Mrs. Moore and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Request for Railroad Repair – Unfinished Business**

Councilman Don Przybylinski requested to have an update on the cleanup of CSX railroad ties along Arther St. and the repairs of CSX railroad crossing at Buffalo St. This was tabled from November 3, 2025.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, addressed the Board stating that he had not received a response from CSX to this date after sending letters.

Wendy Vachet, Public Works Director, addressed the Board stating that they reached out to the Northwest Indiana Regional Plan Commission, who is the local metropolitan planning organization that handles transportation planning throughout the region, and asked if they had an update on the railroad ties all along the CSX line and they did not have an update; further stating that we received a new point of contact for CSX Public Affairs from NIRPC and reached out to them, but have not heard anything back yet.

Councilman Don Przybylinski addressed the Board asking them to contact Senator Todd Young's office to have the issue resolved and asked for a copy of the letter sent to their office.

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich stated that she is going to work with the Mayor's Office on contacting the U.S. Senator's Office.

Mrs. Antisdell made a motion to table the request until the first meeting in February, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved unanimously.

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

**NAYS: (0) None**

#### **Update – Parks Department**

Nobody was present to give an update.

#### **Update – Special Events**

Eric Williams, Assistant Special Events Director, addressed the Board listing off the 11 confirmed events for 2026:

- St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 14<sup>th</sup>
- Easter Egg Hunt on April 4<sup>th</sup>
- Michigan City Food & Music Festival on May 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>
- Juneteenth Celebration on June 19<sup>th</sup>
- Patriotic Parade on June 27<sup>th</sup>
- Hoping to have the Braden Fisk Family Fun Day come back this year
- Fireworks Spectacular on July 4<sup>th</sup>
- Singing Sands Sculpting Festival on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>
- XInsurance Great Lakes Grand Prix on August 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Michigan City Oktoberfest on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>
- Festival of Lights Parade on December 5<sup>th</sup>
- Looking on a new date for the Kiddie Parade

Mrs. Moore stated that the Special Events Department does an amazing event.

## **Public Comment**

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made a comment congratulating everybody on a successful two (2) years in this administration, and wishing everybody a happy New Year.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment congratulating the Building Department team for working so hard, and gave kudos to the Street and Vector Control Department for snow removal and leaf peak-up.

Mr. Meland also made a comment about the railroad ties, stating that we shouldn't be bothering our U.S. Senator's regarding this issue.

Councilman Don Przybylinski made a comment stating that the people living in the area of the Buffalo CSX tracks and who live next to the railroad ties came to him with the issue.

## **Public Hearing – Demolition of 1605 Franklin St.**

This matter appeared before the Michigan City Board of Public Works & Safety (hereinafter referred to as "Board") on January 5, 2026 for an Administrative Hearing for the Board to consider additional evidence and any progress made toward the demolition/rehabilitation of a structure located at 1605 Franklin Street, Indiana, pursuant to Sec. 22-1 of the Michigan City Municipal Code and the Indiana Unsafe Building Law (I.C. 36-7-9, et seq.) and whether an additional stay of proceedings should be granted.

The Planning Department appeared by the Director of Public Works, Wendy Vachet.

The property owner of 1605 Franklin Street, Michigan City, Indiana is The Graf Dairy, LLC. The Property Owner appeared by its managing member Werner Graf II. Also appearing on behalf of the Property Owner was Chad Wolary (Green City Demolition) and Dan Thomas (Green City Demolition).

Witnesses were sworn and evidence was heard.

Corporate Counsel Lapaich set the record:

- On July 9, 2025, the Michigan City Planning & Inspection Department issued an Order for Demolition of 1605 Franklin Street, Michigan City, Indiana (hereinafter referred to as "Property.")
- An administrative hearing was held on the Order for Demolition on August 18, 2025 at which time the Property Owner testified that he planned to save the building façade and the interior skeleton of the Property, and his plan required him to do interior and exterior demolition to the Property.

- On August 18, 2025, this Board affirmed the aforementioned Order to Demolish, and issued its Findings of Fact and Orders on September 16, 2025 (hereinafter referred to as “the Order.”).

Ms. Vachet testified that to date, the only permit issued for the Property is for the interior demolition, and no progress has been made by the Property Owner toward bracing the outside exterior of the building as previously set forth by Property Owner’s structural engineer, Jeff Wright, at the initial hearing on August 18, 2025 and per the structural engineer’s report entered into evidence at said hearing.

Ms. Vachet testified that she did not support a 100-day stay of the execution of the Order to Demolish because the structure continues to suffer and she is concerned about public safety, however, in good faith, would support a 45-day extension of the stay of said Order.

Mrs. Smith made a comment.

President Antisdell asked about the temporary bracing that was never done and why it’s needed, and Mrs. Vachet stated that it’s critical for the safety of the structure as identified in the assessment report.

Werner Graf II testified, stating that he provided updates as requested and was delayed on the project due to two (2) snow storms, asking for another 100-day extension not a 45-day extension and believes the building’s skeleton and building’s façade can still be salvaged on the Property.

Mr. Graf testified that he acknowledged that his prior demolition contractor, Fernando Patino, is no longer doing the interior demolition on the building, and that he retained a new contractor for demolition, namely Green City.

Mr. Graf testified that Green City applied for the permit for the interior demolition of the Property with the Michigan City Planning & Inspection Department on December 29, 2025 and is awaiting a response for said permit.

Mr. Graf testified that Green City recently conducted asbestos testing on the Property and determined that asbestos will have to be abated, and the Property Owner has employed the services of Heartland Environmental Services for asbestos abatement in the amount of \$15,000.00. He stated that in addition to the asbestos abatement, Green City will need One Hundred (100) days to remove the roof and floor structures in an effort to save the building’s façade and skeleton; further stating that while Green City did not mention temporary bracing in their written proposal, they can provide temporary bracing of the façade if necessary.

Mrs. Moore asked Mr. Graf about his rehabilitation of buildings in the past and if he has done commercial buildings, and Mr. Graf stated no he has only done residential.

Mrs. Moore asked Mr. Graf why he is complaining about money for the project, when he should’ve expected the expenses.

Mrs. Moore asked Mr. Graf if the photos in the October, November and December report reflect the current condition of the property to date, and Mr. Graf stated yes.

Mrs. Moore asked Mr. Graf if there was a garage door in the front of the building, and Mr. Graf stated yes.

Chad Wolary testified that Green City intends to first remove the roof and floor structures, and, once they start the process of removing the roof and floor structures, with the assistance of a structural engineer, they will determine if the Property's façade requires temporary bracing.

Mrs. Smith asked Mr. Wolary if approval was given for the 100-day extension, could he provide a timeline and describe who would be assessing the façade as issues are identified, and Mr. Wolary stated that Mr. Graf would have to provide the structural engineer information but could provide a timeline depending on weather and the structure of the building.

Dan Thomas further testified that no structural bearing walls are being removed, rather Green City intends to remove the roof and floor structures and believes this can be done safely and within One Hundred (100) days. Mr. Thomas indicated that Green City can do the temporary bracing if necessary, however Jeff Wright (structural engineer) and John Vode (Precision Maintenance Solutions) would be responsible for permanent bracing.

Mrs. Smith asked Mr. Thomas if he had provided a written report on what the inspection findings were of the structure, and Mr. Thomas stated that he only provided a proposal of what will be done to the structure and the cost.

Mr. Simmons asked Mr. Thomas when the proposal was submitted to Mr. Graf, and Mr. Thomas wasn't able to provide an answer.

Discussion ensued between Mrs. Vachet and Mr. Graf on the extension and permits.

Mrs. Smith asked Mrs. Vachet if she has changed her recommendation after today's testimony, and Mrs. Vachet stated no.

Mr. Simmons made a motion to grant the 45-day extension and to appear for further hearing on this matter set for March 2, 2026 at 8:30 a.m., seconded by Mrs. Antisdell and was approved with the following vote:

**AYES: (3) Antisdell, Simmons, Voltz**

**NAYS: (2) Moore, Smith**

Mrs. Antisdell closed the hearing.

### **Board Comment**

Mrs. Smith made a comment stating that we should talk to the Senator's Office regarding the railroad issues.

Mrs. Smith also made a comment thanking the Planning Department, specifically Mrs. Vachet and D'marcus Briscoe for dealing with the structure at 1605 Franklin St.

Mrs. Moore made a comment that the processes that needed to be done for 1605 Franklin St. were not done during the 100-day period and it was at fault of Mr. Graf and not the City.

President Antisdal made a comment stating that the City has been very cooperative with Mr. Graf and she doesn't appreciate his victim mentality; further stating that she has been red tagged before and understands dealing with contracts and working with the Planning Department.

Mr. Simmons made a comment stating that he recommended the 45-day extension to support Mrs. Vachet and her team and Mr. Graf should've been prepared when he put the proposal before the City.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to adjourn, seconded by President Antisdal and was approved unanimously.

**AYES: (5) Antisdal, Moore, Simmons, Smith, Voltz**

**NAYS: (0) None**

**Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.**



**BOW President, Candice Antisdal**

  

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**BOW Clerk, Izabelle Galvin Ellis**