

Regular Board of Works Meeting In Person and Hybrid/Zoom on December 15, 2025

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session on Monday, December 15, 2025 at 4:00 p.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, Gene Simmons, Tamiko Smith, Peggy Moore and Skyler York (5)

Absent: None (0)

Also noted in attendance:

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich; Izabelle Galvin Ellis, BOW Clerk; Tim Werner, City Engineer; Phil Graf, Forester; Eric Williams; Assistant Director for Special Events; Chief Barrett Taylor, Michigan City Fire Department; Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department; Ryan Beal, Deputy City Attorney; David Albers, Building Superintendent; Shong Smith, Street Director; Shante Ivy; Assistant HR Director; D'Marcus Briscoe, Code Enforcement Manager; Wendy Vachet, Public Works Director; Councilman Don Przybylinski; Drew White, ALCO.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the December 1, 2025 minutes as presented, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

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

NAYS: (0) None

Awarding of RFP - Unfinished Business

Awarding of Proposal for Tree Watering for Spring 2026. This was tabled from November 17, 2025.

Corporate Counsel Amber Lapaich stated that we received two (2) bids for Tree Watering for Spring of 2026 and listed the names of companies and amounts:

- Tycol Excavating and Property Services on the amount of \$129,107.50
- B & M Builders, LLC in the amount of \$386,430.00

Corporate Counsel Lapaich recommended that Tycol Excavating and Property Services be awarded the bid in the amount of \$129,107.50; further stating that this is part of our Federal Tree Grand Project.

Mrs. Antisdal made a motion to approve the awarding of the Tree Watering for Spring 2026 to Tycol Excavating and Property Services, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (5) Antisdal, Moore, Simmons, Smith, York

NAYS: (0) None

Personnel

The Human Resources Department requested the extension of FMLA leave for an employee.

Shante Ivy, Assistant HR Director, addressed the Board stating that the employee's extension would be until January 19, 2026.

Mrs. Smith asked when the employee's extension originally expired and Mrs. Ivy stated that it expired on December 10, 2025.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the extension of FMLA leave for an employee, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

AYES: (5) Antisdal, Moore, Simmons, Smith, York

NAYS: (0) None

Contract

The approval of the ninth extension of agreement for Government Access Channel Programming (Channel 97) Public Access Channel Programming (Channel 99) and Public Access Studio (ALCO) for one (1) year in the amount not to exceed \$150,000.00.

Drew White, ALCO, addressed the Board stating that this is the ninth (9th) year that ALCO is servicing the City of Michigan City and that there are no changes to the contract; further stating that the contract has been the same amount for the last five (5) or six (6) years.

Mrs. Antisdal asked Mr. White to explain the services that they provide the City.

Mr. White stated that they cover over 350 meetings strictly for our City, including City Council meetings, workshops, regularly scheduled board and commission meetings and special meetings, and listed the other cities they service.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Dakota Euler, 718 Emma St., made a comment.

Eric Williams, Assistant Special Events Director, made a comment,

Mr. Simmons and Mrs. Moore both made comments commending Mr. White and all his hard work.

Mr. White stated that there will be infrastructure improvements within their company to allow residents to watch on Apple TV, Amazon Fire and other streaming services besides being able to watch just on Comcast cable.

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

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

NAYS: (0) None

Contract

The Special Events Department requested the approval of agreement of a Premier Level Sponsorship from Arnett Construction for the 2026 event season, in the amount of \$20,000.00.

Eric Williams, Assistant Events Director, addressed the Board stating that Arnett Construction is requesting to be the premier sponsor again for the 2026 event season and that they were a great partner in 2025. Further explaining that the goal for 2026 is to surpass \$100,000 because the 2025 goal was \$100,000 and they only raised \$86,500.00.

Mrs. Smith asked what a Premier Sponsorship entails, and Mr. Williams stated that they get naming rights for the Singing Sands Sand Sculpting Festival and Oktoberfest, they get two (2) community challenge teams for the Sand Festival, naming rights for the main music stage at Oktoberfest and advertising at all events.

Mrs. Smith asked if they can have more than one premier sponsor, and Mr. Williams stated yes, last year LaPorte County Convention and Visitors Bureau also did a premier sponsorship but they gave the naming rights of the Oktoberfest stage to Arnett Construction.

Mrs. Smith asked if the sponsorship prices are the same, and Mr. Williams stated yes.

Mr. Simmons made a comment commending the Special Events team and the great job they do for the City.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve Premier Level Sponsorship from Arnett Construction for the 2026 event season, seconded by Mr. Simmons and was approved with the following vote:

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

NAYS: (0) None

Special Purchase Request

The Vector Control Department requested the special purchase of a Salt Hopper Spreader with ARPA funding, for a total amount of \$6,299.00.

Shong Smith, Street Director, addressed the Board stating that the City Council had approved \$78,000.00 in ARPA funds for the Vector Control to purchase a truck in 2025, but now they are wanting to purchase a salt spreader to go on the truck with the remaining ARPA funds.

Mrs. Smith confirmed that this is the remaining balance of ARPA funds for their department and confirmed that the money is available.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the special purchase of the Salt Hopper Spreader, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was approved with the following vote:

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

NAYS: (0) None

Insurance Contract Renewal

Highstreet Insurance requested the approval of the 2026 renewal of insurance policies for the Singing Sands Trail.

Charlie Keene, Highstreet Insurance, addressed the Board explaining the reasoning for additional liability coverage for the Singing Sands Trail and summarized what is covered with the insurance:

- Primary liability \$1 million, \$2 Million occurrence.
- The first layer, excess coverage is \$5 million, each occurrence and aggregate.
- The second excess layer is \$4 million, excess of \$5 million.
 - o The combination of the three policies listed above is a total of \$10 million, which is required by contract.
- Annual premium is \$53,085.96, and that is just up under 3% over the prior year.

Mr. Simmons stated that he feels the insurance is necessary.

Mrs. Smith asked what the terrorism premium is, and Mr. Keene stated that it's included in the total premium but is \$1,812.21 and includes coverage for any kind of certified act of terrorism and recommends it.

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the 2026 renewal of insurance policies for the Singing Sands Trail, seconded by Mrs. Antisdel and was approved with the following vote:

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

NAYS: (0) None

Road Closure for Construction

Marquiss electric requested to close the Franklin St. bridge to perform annual maintenance on the bridge from January 5, 2026 through March 15, 2026.

Scott Cooley, Marquiss Electric, addressed the Board stating that they would like to close the Franklin St. bridge from January 5, 2026, after the Festival of Lights in Washington Park, through March 15, 2026 for their annual routine maintenance.

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

Tim Werner, City Engineer, reviewed the request and approved of the closure.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the road closure on the Franklin St. bridge, seconded by Mrs. Antisdell and was approved with the following vote:

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

NAYS: (0) None

Road Closure for Construction

Bendix Builders LLC requested the closure of Lake Ave. from Arndt St. to Felton St. from December 22, 2025 to December 29, 2025 for a sewer main connection.

Nobody was present to address the request.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, addressed the Board stating that he approves of the closure and the closure was previously approved by the Board but was delayed due to weather; further stating that the Sanitary District is aware of the project and also approves of the closure.

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

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

NAYS: (0) None

Request for Flashing Stop Sign

Anne Heric, 503 E Homer St., requested flashing stop signs at the corner of Homer St. and Oak St. due to people not stopping fully at the intersection.

Nobody was present to address the request.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, addressed the Board stating that the intersection is already a 4-way stop with stop signs and does not believe that flashing stop signs will help with the issue.

Captain Greg Jesse, Michigan City Police Department, addressed the Board stating that there have been no calls for service indicating any type of traffic stops for violations or accidents reported at the intersection since January 1, 2020; further stating he had spoken to the resident about the complaint and that she is the only complaint they have received, and that they will have the intersection in mind for patrols.

Mr. Simmons stated that the district unit should patrol the area if a complaint comes in.

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

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment.

Mr. Simmons made a motion to deny the flashing stop signs, seconded by Mrs. Smith and was denied with the following vote:

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

NAYS: (0) None

Correspondence

Correspondence received from the Michigan City Police Department regarding the retirement of Officer Shane E. Washluske who served 21 years on the Michigan City Police Department. Their last day will be on January 5, 2026.

Update - Update on year-to-date statistics for the Building Department.

Dave Albers, Building Superintendent, addressed the Board giving an update on permits in the Building Department:

CLOUDPERMIT STATS – Year-to-Date as of 12/15/2025

-	TURN AROUND TIME (Avg Working days) Year-to-Date:	10
-	TURN AROUND TIME (Avg Working days) Recent:	5
-	Number of permit applications received:	2834
-	Submitted (New applications):	19
-	In Review:	20
-	Changes Requested (waiting on applicant):	115
-	Waiting for Payment (waiting on applicant):	67
-	Rejected permits:	157
-	Withdrawn permits:	5
-	Permit Issued:	2330
-	Contractors Registered:	834
	<u>Qty</u>	<u>Turnaround days</u>
-	RSWD	900
-	Commercial	58
-	Residential	278
-	Plumbing	252
-	Electrical	290
-	HVAC	224

President York asked what things cause a building permit application to slow down and what helps makes the applications go through faster, and Mr. Albers stated that the more information and details given the better. Mr. Albers explained that sometimes proper drawings or not enough information is submitted so it causes for more review time and more back and forth with the contractors; further stating that they encourage people to come into the office if they have any questions or concerns.

Mrs. Moore asked if it specifically states that drawings are required when submitting a permit request, and Mr. Albers stated yes, you cannot submit a permit request without drawings and they are working on putting more guidelines on the website for submitting a permit application.

President York asked what happens if you don't hear from the contractor for a long period of time, and Mr. Albers stated that they reach out to the applicant and warn them that they have a specific date to reply by and if they don't then their permit is rejected.

Mrs. Smith asked if we ask for more information for a permit than other cities, and Mr. Albers stated that it is possible, but our process allows the inspection process not to be held up later on in the project.

Mrs. Moore asked about red tags and what they are, and Mr. Albers stated that projects are red tagged when there is not a permit for the project.

Mrs. Moore asked how many people they have reviewing the permits, and Mr. Albers stated that there are three (3) people but depending on the permit, the Zoning Department, Building Department and sometimes the Historic Review Board needs to review too if it's a historic building.

President York stated that for commercial and industrial, the Redevelopment Department will do a pre-development meeting with all the departments before going before the Redevelopment Commission, which is done in other cities like Valparaiso.

Update - Update from the Forester on City Tree Projects.

Phil Graf, City Forester, addressed the Board giving an update and background on the Federal Tree Grant project:

- The City was awarded \$1 million dollars in late 2023 from the U.S. Forest Service specifically for urban forestry.
- 2024 was the year of planning and a tree inventory was done of the entire City and how the money from the grant can be best used.
- A lift truck was also purchased in 2024.
- In the beginning of 2025, we assessed the tree inventory to determine what trees needed to be removed and replaced and where new trees need to be planted.
- Now in the last half of 2025, most of the work for removing trees and tree planting has been done and 55% of the million dollars has been utilized.
- As of today, there were 75 trees left to do and the deadline for them to be removed is December 31, 2025 but they will all most likely be removed by that Friday but the stump removal deadline may be extended.
- 500 trees were planted this fall.
- The U.S. Forestry Service requires the newly planted trees to be watered for two (2) years after being planted, so we are having the watering done contractually.
- Mr. Graf will be meeting with the Controller's Office and Drew Hart, our contact with the U.S. Forest Service, to find out exactly where we are with our funding and strategize how we will be using the remaining balance of the grant next year.

President York stated that there will be a mortality rate when there is a large-scale tree planting, and asked if the ones that die will be replaced by the company we got the trees from, and Mr. Graf stated yes.

Payroll Claims Docket

Payroll Pension Docket	December 1, 2025	\$202,390.87
Payroll Docket	December 12, 2025	\$1,357,909.56

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

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

NAYS: (0) None

Claims Docket

December 15, 2025

Municipal	\$963,681.93
CDBG	\$30,731.95
Health & Life	\$130,649.32
Special Events	\$0.00
Zoo Casino Agreement	\$0.00
Workers Comp	\$0.00
ARP Local Fiscal Recovery	\$78,725.96
TOTAL CLAIMS:	\$1,203,789.16

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, Moore, Simmons, Smith, York

NAYS: (0) None

Request for Railroad Repair – Unfinished Business

Councilman Don Przybylinski is requesting the following:

- To put the CSX Railroad Ties along Arther St. back on the Pending Item List & to give an update.
- To put the repairs of the CSX railroad crossing at Buffalo St. back on the Pending Item List & to give an update.

Councilman Don Przybylinski addressed the Board asking where if there has been a response from the letter sent to the railroad and where the City stands with this project.

Tim Werner, City Engineer, addressed the Board stating that the letter had been sent to CSX three (3) weeks ago and he has not got a response back; further stating that the letter was sent to the Board members.

Public Comment

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio St., made an announcement of the Battle of Mayors competition for the Salvation Army on Friday, December 19th from 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at Al's Supermarket on Karwick or at the City of Michigan City, City Hall.

Don Przybylinski, City Councilman, made a comment thanking the City Forester for his hard work and recommends that we have trees planted from Coolspring Ave. to 11th St. on Franklin St.

Scott Meland, 200 Kenwood Place, made a comment regarding funding and the cost of watering trees, asking if we have the funds to water the trees for the second year and asked if all the trees planted are native to our area.

Mr. Meland also made a comment regarding permits and the large number of permit requests we've received and given out, stating that he believes we require too much of people who are requesting a permit for simple things like replacing siding or putting up fencing.

Mr. Graf clarified that the \$900,000 spent on the grant includes tree watering for the next two (2) years and that all trees planted are native to our environment.

Board Comment

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

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

NAYS: (0) None

Meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Candice Antisdel

BOW President, Candice Antisdel

Izabelle Galvin Ellis

BOW Clerk, Izabelle Galvin Ellis