



MICHIGAN CITY

INDIANA

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE MICHIGAN CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MAY 11, 2026

The Michigan City Redevelopment Commission held their regular monthly meeting in the Common Council Chambers, City Hall, 100 East Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, Indiana, on Monday, May 11, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. local time; the date, hour, and place duly established for the holding of said meeting. The meeting was available via Zoom and streaming live on the Access LaPorte County Facebook page.

CALL TO ORDER

President Sheila Brillson Matias called the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Clarence Hulse (in person), Sheila Brillson Matias (in person), Tracie Tillman (in person), Sheree Wilson (via Zoom audio/video)

Commissioners absent: Philip Latchford and Thomas Dombkowski

Staff in attendance: Executive Director Skyler York, Redevelopment Business Manager Debbie Wilson, Attorney Tramel Raggs (via Zoom for part of the meeting)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving the 5/11/2026 agenda as submitted. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of the executive session and regular hybrid meetings of April 13, 2026.

Motion by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving the minutes of the executive session and regular hybrid meetings of April 13, 2026

as submitted. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

CLAIMS

The chair entertained a motion to approve the claims list for May 11, 2026.

Motion by Commissioner Hulse and seconded by Commissioner Tillman approving the claims list for May 11, 2026 revised 1 as submitted. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. York summarized the financial report for the month ending 03/31/2026. Account balances are as follows: (Operating) \$274,996.21; (South Side TIF) \$8,282,380.75; (South Side TIF Debt Reserve) \$336,308.50; (South Side TIF Capital) \$16,199.79; (North End TIF) \$2,163,753.69; (East Side TIF) \$957,695.93; (Northeast TIF) \$1,576,902.19; (Transit Development District) \$243,498.06, for total cash in the amount of \$13,851,735.12. Loans Receivable include the Forgivable Loan in the amount of \$450,000 and the County Business Loan Fund in the amount of \$94,829.59, for total assets in the amount of \$14,396,564.71.

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the financial report ended March 31, 2026.

Motion by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving the financial report ended March 31, 2026. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott Meland (in person), 200 Kenwood Place, Michigan City, Indiana, referred to item 14 on the agenda and provided Commissioners with a handout of information that he researched on the Flock Safety System. He talked about the privacy issue with these surveillance systems and suggested the Commission table the matter until they have had a chance to review the information he gave to them.

MCAS TECHNOLOGY GRANT PRESENTATION

Kevin McGuire (in person) Director of Technology with MCAS, provided a PowerPoint presentation. He noted that there is not really an update over the past year because there was a bit of a hiatus from the previous grant and this past year. Although, he said they

have been moving forward. Going back to the presentation from last year and the grant proposal they put together focusing on school security, both the physical and cybersecurity sense, Mr. McGuire gave an update on what they have done over the past year in that manner and the goals they had set forth and laid out at the same time. Their goals are to strengthen physical security and fortify cyber security, making sure their systems are safe and secure. He talked about cybersecurity and ransomware in particular which has gone down as far as the money paid out due to ransom participants asking for less money because they tend to get paid out more.

On the physical security side, Mr. McGuire mentioned that there are going to be some major renovations across the district moving forward which may not be addressed within this time period of these grants. Some of the things they can do immediately is door monitoring to make sure all doors are locked and entries are secured throughout the entire district, as well as extending video surveillance across all buildings to cover all areas of the buildings. Mr. McGuire talked about the first responder proof of concept that is up and running at Barker Middle School which they hope to expand with grant dollars from the Redevelopment Commission. This includes cameras, door monitoring systems, and key fobs at all entryways of the building. They are looking to add key fobs at all interior doors. They would like to implement this proof of concept across all buildings within the district, especially as they start building renovation projects moving forward. He referred to the map of the Barker School building where the circles indicate the 27 doors are monitored. It is a switch within the door that lets the front office know the door is open. He said this was a system designed and developed by their own district and his team as well as a partner they have. It came from Uvalde as a result of the mass shooting that took place there. The front office gets an alarm within 15 seconds indicating that the door is propped open. This is only where there is fob access. It is a wireless system so it can be installed less expensive than a wired system.

Mr. McGuire talked about cybersecurity solutions, some that they have already implemented within their department. He said some of them are very costly, but they are an absolute must. The top one is the Datto backup solution. This is one of the biggest things to do to make sure data is backed up, making ransom less of an issue or concern. Mr. McGuire went through the list of cyber security tools, some of which they have implemented and some of them they would like to implement and will implement with some of the grant dollars moving forward.

Mr. McGuire mentioned that Redevelopment dollars have always afforded them to do more with their teacher PD. He recalled that about two-thirds of dollars received have gone to staff development and will continue to do so. They will receive training on the security front as well as how to use the technology. He said they are also looking at the possibility of doing a security operations center and utilizing off-site security. This will afford them to make sure the network is secured and available after hours.

Mr. McGuire spoke about another big piece of the grant. He said they are working with a student group out of Washington University in St. Louis to do some of the programming at Barker School and other places. He said they would like to create an internship program here. He referred to the IoT map at Barker School which launched what is called Michigan City Digital Commons that is being developed. It was developed in St. Louis as well. Mr. McGuire mentioned that they are working with the Elston Opportunity Hub. They have some sensors, potential cameras for inside businesses, and tracking systems.

Mr. McGuire talked about the tracking system they developed a tracking system for Michigan City Area Schools where they are tracking Chromebooks, with the possibility of putting the label tracker inside the Chromebook. If the computer is off, it can still be tracked. This is not for every device. It is only for devices that are supposed to be returned on a daily basis. He said they would like to have a student project that will offer students the ability to create, design, and develop for the Michigan City Digital Commons moving forward.

Mr. McGuire mentioned the iNeighborhoods, their partner in St. Louis, and the individuals working with Washington University on the flash flood program running there which was started in Michigan City. The sensors and everything used in Michigan City and Washington University is the sole solution that University City is using for their flash flood monitoring system. Those solutions and everything were first developed by Michigan City and are now being used down there. There are several other communities that are looking at that solution as well, putting Michigan City on the map.

As a former teacher and person who believes the youth are our future, Commissioner Matias commented that the best thing Mr. McGuire talked about was the workforce development piece because technology is not going anywhere; it is only getting more robust. She said if they can train young people in technology, future jobs are guaranteed. She asked Mr. McGuire to focus a lot of attention on that.

Commissioner Tillman commented that it is definitely needed, and she hopes the Redevelopment Commission is able to support it. She referred to the tracking devices on the computers and questioned if it goes into the computers that students take home or if it is for the ones they use in the classrooms every day.

Mr. McGuire replied that the only devices that would have tracking in them are the devices that are supposed to stay in the school because they do not always get collected back. If they leave the building, they get alerted that they have left the building. The devices that go home with the students would not have tracking in them.

Commissioner Tillman recalled in a previous presentation by Mr. McGuire where he talked about implementing fobs for hall passes if they need to go to the restroom. Those devices would be heat sensory to know the location of the students but not actually see them in the restroom, or if there were an altercation the body heat would pick that up.

Mr. McGuire stated that there is no heat sensor yet, but they are looking at the potential with security cameras to get occupancy sensors to know that somebody and how many are in that location, not necessarily who is in that location. This is not with the system now but would be with the new systems in the new facilities moving forward.

Regarding the cameras, Commissioner Tillman asked if they would pick up sound.

Mr. McGuire responded that the vape sensors being tested at Barker School have the ability to do so if there are multiple people in a restroom, which sometimes is an issue by itself. They sense vape but also will sense if there is ruckus going on in that restroom. The audible level can be set to notify staff there is something going on at that location.

Commissioner Tillman asked if it picks up voice communication.

Mr. McGuire replied that it does not; it senses a level of ruckus going on at that location.

Commissioner Hulse indicated that he likes the fact the school is deploying resources to improve its security, but he said in the future he would like to see a lot more focus on workforce development. There are some programs like the air compressor programs and CTE programs that need some help. Michigan City is competing globally with other companies trying to move here.

Mr. McGuire agreed, commenting that he did not highlight the computer science program that has been picked up from previous grants that will continue to support those programs moving forward.

There was an inquiry about the request of the Redevelopment Commission.

After confirming, Mr. York noted that \$600,000 was approved in the 2026 spending plan, as well as being approved in the claims list for today.

ELSTON OPPORTUNITY HUB UPDATE

Kila Ward (in person) Education Workforce Director for the City, began the discussion stating that the Opportunity HUB is a project designed to meet workforce and training needs in our community by sharing resources and being under one roof. It will position our residents to be upskilled with job training opportunities, job placement assistance, and career counseling. The City partially funded the startup phases of this project. Ms. Ward introduced Lisa Dougherty, Board of Directors President of Northwest Indiana Works; Shelley Moore with Insight Strategic Concepts; and Mike Higby with OBE Advisors, all making up a team for the Opportunity HUB.

Ms. Dougherty gave an update on the project, recalling they were awarded READI funds for the project but there was a delay in that funding because as a region 70% of READI 1 dollars had to be spent before READI 2 would flow. Although, the Commission's investment allowed them to continue moving forward. She said Ms. Moore will give an update on the software for the project and Mr. Higby will give an update on construction. Ms. Dougherty mentioned that NWI Works is a 501c3 and is the entity that is driving the HUB network through Northwest Indiana moving forward fast in Michigan City because of the phenomenal partnership with MCAS and the City itself. NWI Works is a collaboration between CWI and operates the WorkOne currently located within the hubs. Good Will, United Way, and Ivy Tech are also thought leaders around that organization. She said the goal is for them to improve the system that exists by taking collaboration to an entirely new level which requires change in how they do that work together.

Shelley Moore introduced herself with Insight Strategic Concepts out of Elkhart, Indiana. She said they have the programming side of what is happening inside the hub in addition to the construction in the space itself. She said they are trying to create a unified process in workforce development where residents come in and are taken through a singular process that is representative of multiple partners. When residents come in, they will have one person they talk to who is helping them navigate through the process and which organizations to go to. They are ready to launch that process this summer as the hub opens. WorkOne is the first tenant, and Community Action will be the second tenant. Goodwill will be housing their offices there this summer as well. There are the assessment and career interest inventories to match people to career pathways, primarily manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, construction trades, hospitality, culinary, and IT. Employers want to see training to get ready for a job to include basic work ethic skills, teamwork, and reliability so they can work effectively within a workplace. The 4-week Fast Track to Top Jobs will be launched in Michigan City at the beginning of June. The adult literacy and education programming is also being incorporated into the overall pathways. There is credential technical training, which is a part of major curriculum development. Finally, it is the employer connections with employers being a part of the 16-week program as well giving mock interviews and seeing candidates that would be available to them.

Ms. Moore reviewed the renderings, stating that they are completing the design phase for the initial construction that will start next month. That represents about \$3.7 million that will be invested into the property by the end of the year. She said there are three buildings; building A (the old middle school), the AK Smith building, and building C (currently the main entrance) where WorkOne is that goes into the main lobby and cafeteria area. WorkOne will remain there along with Community Action. She stated that building A will be the main place for community services. The Boys and Girls Club will remain on the main floor, and the third level will be flex spaces with classrooms, conference rooms, and access points for non-profits. This will be the main entrance that they will be activating. For the first part of the funds, they will be focusing on the AK Smith building. The main floor will have five CTE labs that will be activated. The second floor

will be maintained for all MCAS programming for students, so it will be secured and separated from the rest of the building. The lower level will be a culinary center that will have the MCAS program, but also partnering with different wellness and nutrition, and food access programs that will be operating both in the production kitchen but also teaching residents how to create meals. One kitchen will be focused on the residential side of how to prepare meals and the other a commercial kitchen for higher production for things such as someone wanting to start a food truck.

Mike Higby of OBE Advisors introduced himself, based out of Indianapolis. He recalled the delay that Ms. Dougherty mentioned. He said if it were not for the Redevelopment Commission money, they would have had to stop the project. But the Commission's money was used for the hardware, which is the pre-development and construction periods. They are currently ramping up pre-development. If the Commission had not provided the money, they would be somewhere midway through pre-development and would not have the renderings, would not have the design, and would not be starting construction in June. They will start on the Community Action space in building A, but they are getting ready to retrofit the main level of the AK Smith building. He said they are currently doing the construction drawings and will be bidding that work out, with a large portion of the work to start in June. The lower level of the AK Smith building is where most of the money will be spent in 2026, with most of that work being completed by the end of 2026. They will be actively filling that space with about 50,000 square feet of potential tenants going in between now and first quarter of 2027. This is a five-year initiative, and they hope to repurpose the entire campus and fill it up within that five-year period. Within the first 3-4 years they want this to be self-sustaining. The operations will run about \$2 million a year, with the anticipation that the tenants put in and the activities supported will generate the revenue to pay that \$2 million of operation.

Again, Mr. Higby pointed out that the Commission was the startup money and got them to where they are, and the hardware piece of it. He said by the end of the summer they hope to give the Commission an audit of the project and where the money has gone, what has been accomplished, and where the project will be by the end of the year so the Commission can see the tangible results of the project. He acknowledged the leadership of the City and the MCAS.

In closing, Ms. Dougherty stated that they had to secure the lease agreement and had to secure the funding. As they have started to socialize this project, local legislators have become extremely interested in this project. There will be a Midwest consortium of workforce boards coming in the first week of June to learn more about what we are doing. This is getting a lot of attention, and it is in alignment with the federal administrations talent strategies, and now they just need to execute the plan.

Commissioner Matias commented that this is what collaboration looks like.

Commissioner Tillman asked if it is possible for culinary to do a small type of cafeteria.

Ms. Moore responded that the culinary program will be doing some public and community engagement this summer. The commercial kitchen will be for small businesses who want to use it as a production kitchen. Then there are the training element and the education element with multiple partners. Ms. Moore said she is envisioning it (where building C is) that there would be some storefronts along there that would have a restaurant or two, and then inside the main entrance would have a coffee shop with baked goods manned by entrepreneurs or people that are learning; kind of start-up incubators for restaurants that would end up on Franklin Street.

Commissioner Tillman asked Mr. Higby about the bidding and if local laborers and contractors will be utilized for this project.

Mr. Higby replied that it is the goal. Tonn & Blank are construction managers, and they have been instructed to make sure they get local participation. He mentioned that building A and the AK Smith building together will represent about \$22 million in investment. Then there is still building C and the YMCA building as well as exterior improvements around the campus itself. Over a 5–8-year period, Mr. Higby said it will be somewhere between \$20-\$30 million, but it will take 5-8 years to do fund development, design, and construction.

Scott Meland (in person) 200 Kenwood Place, mentioned that this is a great example of public-private partnership and leveraging private investment for the good of the city. He noted his concern that this would possibly interfere with Central School which is being used similarly to this with various groups in it, leaving that building empty in the future.

THE CHICAGO CONSULTANTS STUIDO CONTRACT AMENDMENT

Mr. York explained this is an amendment to the first contract for the 5th/Pine Street development. The original contract took it through the RFQ process which has been completed. A developer has been selected (DAC Development). He said he adjusted the contract because he only needs them to be involved to get through the economic development agreement. This contract is for a not-to-exceed amount of \$30,000 on an as-needed basis.

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the contract amendment.

Motion made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving contract amendment 2 with The Chicago Consultants Studio in an amount not-to-exceed \$30,000 on an as-needed basis. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

PROPOSAL: SANITARY SEWER COLLECTION SYSTEM HYDRAULIC MODELING

Al Walus (in person) District Engineer MCSD provided Commissioners with three handouts. He said last year the management team at the Sanitary District put together a 2-year plan to identify for the Board of Commissioners key things they need to do. There are about 50 items, with five priorities falling in that 2-year period. One is priority 3: Data Analysis for Potential Partner Agency Agreements. He said the end goal of that priority is to be able to provide accurate and expedited responses to potential development inquiries. Two reasons for that are, 1) managing capacity within MCSD sanitary sewer system network and the wastewater treatment plant is a requirement of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit issued to MCSD by IDEM, and 2) MCSD cannot effectively support sustainable growth in Michigan City without having identified areas where there is capacity that potentially could support growth in the future.

Mr. Walus referred to Exhibit 1-1 which shows the State of Indiana maintains a robust interactive system for identifying site selectors for different development properties within the state of Indiana; Exhibit 1-2 shows properties specific to Michigan City; Exhibit 1-3 shows the wide range of data provided for a specific property in Michigan City; and Exhibit 1-4 shows how site selectors may contact the State regarding specific properties, and the State will request information from the local economic development team requiring a rapid response that evaluates the utility needs of a potential developer.

Mr. Walus talked about how those questions are currently answered for Exhibit 1-4. He said MCSD relies upon a small number of previous analyses that have been performed for specific properties, but those are becoming outdated. For a property that does not have a previous analysis, MCSD must rely upon manual engineering calculations to determine flow capacities, augmented by flow monitoring of sewers or other flow data to complete an evaluation. This process can take weeks and does not meet the timelines required by the State. The most efficient option moving forward is the development of a digital hydraulic computer model of the main sewer trunk lines.

Referring to Exhibit 2-1, Mr. Walus said MCSD worked with their GIS Coordinator to show the main sewer trunk lines of any pipe greater than 12 inches. Fortunately, there are many main sewer trunk lines from the center of the city where the wastewater treatment plant is extending outward, so there are major interceptors there. There are four different watersheds (north, south, east, west) with the south being the largest at over 5,000 acres or 8.7 square miles. All four watersheds total over 12,000 acres or just under 20 square miles.

Mr. Walus said Exhibit 2-2 looks at the TIF areas in Michigan City which cover a large part of the city. Exhibit 2-3 overlays the sewer sheds onto the TIF map which shows all four of the major sewer sheds have sanitary flow that goes into and out of the TIF areas. He said that is where they see the connection between sewer capacity studies and

impacts on potential TIF because development will be happening in those TIF areas provided there is sewer capacity to handle it.

Mr. Walus gave an example of a computer modeling MCSD did in 2021-2022 to look specifically at an area of approximately 200 acres at the north end of the city. The cost for the model was over \$40,000 or about \$200 per acre. Mr. Walus said MCSD is proposing to create a sewer model for the entirety of the city. To initiate this process, MCSD sought out budgetary cost data to achieve the following: 1) provide a model of the major trunk line sewers in approximately 6-9 months; 2) utilize a reliable off the shelf computer modeling program (no proprietary software); 3) provide computer model output results in a format compatible with MCSD's Arc GIS system, with the model and output data to be owned by MCSD for future use to analyze development simulations or to add model granularity (sewer pipes 12" in diameter or less); and 4) owning the model and output data will allow MCSD to develop internal expertise to run simulations and provide an option to use consultants if needed until internal engineering and capabilities are achieved. The cost to meet these requirements is \$80,000.

Mr. Walus asked the Redevelopment Commission to consider an agreement with MCSD to fund sanitary sewer modeling in the amount of \$80,000 to create this framework to manage our sewer and plant capacity in support of sustainable growth in the TIF areas.

Commissioner Matias questioned if the model done in 2021-2022 for \$41,000 was a one-time data.

Mr. Walus replied affirmatively, adding that they do not have that model data anymore and would have to use their Arc GIS data in that neighborhood to import into a new model that they could own themselves and be able to use in the future.

Commissioner Matias asked if it is correct that this \$80,000 investment would be for modeling that can be used and reused for projects as developers ask about sanitary capacity, and MCSD could train their own people to use this system.

Mr. Walus replied affirmatively, adding that some off the shelf modeling programs cost around \$20,000 just to have a license to use the program. There is a high learning curve to be able to use the model and do those analyses, and MCSD currently does not have the staff to do it. They would need to use a consultant with that license already. He said this \$80,000 would be for all the modeling work and analysis to look at where there may be hydraulic restrictions that need to be fixed. They could potentially get staff to do the analysis themselves. There may be a short transition period before they get the model up and running and staff trained to do it themselves. Mr. Walus said the ultimate goal is to own the data, own the model, and have the capability to do these themselves.

Commissioner Hulse commented that it is not really site select anymore, it is site elimination because if you do not respond you are eliminated quickly. The speed of market is especially important. You must have the data within 72 hours.

Mr. Walus agreed that time sensitivity is of critical importance. He said they do not want to put Michigan City at a disadvantage because their response time is slower than other sites they are looking at.

The chair entertained a motion.

Motion by Commissioner Hulse and seconded by Commissioner Tillman to enter into an agreement with the Michigan City Sanitary District to fund sanitary sewer modeling in an amount not-to-exceed \$80,000.00 to create the analysis framework needed to manage sewer/plant capacity in support of sustainable growth in Michigan City's TIF areas. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

TOOLE DESIGN CONTRACT

Mr. York referred to the scope of work, noting that the contract is not finalized yet. He explained that 3-4 years ago the Transit Development District (TDD) was created downtown. In general, it goes from Second Street to Ames Field and Michigan Boulevard to Washington Street. The TDD had a new zoning code created for it as well, but it was never adopted. Mr. York said he would like to move forward with adopting the zoning code but also adjusting it to make sure it fits the needs for development in the future to make sure it is easier for our planners to understand what they are approving, and for people that are trying to seek approvals to understand what they are giving us. Mr. York said the other thing he asked Toole to look at is Michigan Boulevard since the TIF was expanded a few years ago. He would like them to make recommendations on how to adjust the zoning code and take us through the implementation of both the TDD and Michigan Boulevard to make sure these get adopted and implemented. Other things they will look at are a couple of other strategic corridors and some of our housing code.

Mr. York said he chose Toole Design because they were one of the urban planners working on the prison study and they are familiar with our zoning code. They are also familiar with redevelopment of historic cities and downtown areas. Their proposal is a cost of \$160,000 to get these two large projects implemented.

Commissioner Matias noted from the scope of work that the near-term task completion date is 9/7/26 for a fee of \$160,000. She asked if they would come back for the mid-term tasks of 1-3 years and if the Commission would need to approve an additional budget for those items.

Mr. York replied that right now the top priority is to get the near-term tasks done. He stated that they will need to come back for the mid-term tasks. The goal is to get the two items (TDD and Michigan Boulevard zoning) in place by Labor Day.

Commissioner Tillman noted that Task #3 says Michigan "Avenue", but it should be Michigan "Boulevard".

Mr. York noted that he has another correction where it says "TND" but should be "TDD."

The chair entertained a motion.

Motion by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving Toole Design Strategic Corridors: Urban Design and Zoning Scope of Work, for the Near-Term Tasks in an amount not-to-exceed \$160,000.00, pending review of the contract by legal counsel. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

DEF CONSULTING AGREEMENT

Mr. York acknowledged Dan Botich being on Zoom. Mr. York stated that the City and Commission has had a long-standing relationship with Mr. Botich, helping out with annexations, development projects, TIF Districts and incentives, etc. He is a planner and economic development professional by trade. Mr. York said this contract is a not-to-exceed amount of \$50,000.

Mr. Botich gave an overview, stating that Development Economic Finance (DEF) provides economic development and finance. They provide a quantitative value of land use decisions, but also provide expertise in TIF allocation areas, tax abatements or ERA deductions, annexation written fiscal plans, strategies, redevelopment, planning economic development planning. They also assist Mr. York with any land use planning issues that involve properties within an allocation area. Confirming what Commissioner Hulse indicated, Mr. Botich emphasized that response time to site selectors is very important, so Mr. York and the Commission rely on his economic development analyses to respond in a 24-36 hour period to those companies, which is a value to the City, as well as assisting in monitoring tax abatements and allocation areas. Mr. Botich said he looks forward to a continued relationship with the City.

The chair entertained a motion.

Motion by Commissioner Hulse and seconded by Commissioner Tillman approving an Agreement for Professional Services with Development Economic Finance Consulting, LLC (DEF) from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026 in an amount not-to-exceed \$50,000. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows:

(Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

FLOCK SAFETY SYSTEM ANNUAL SERVICE FEE

Mr. York recalled when the Commission previously voted on this Flock Safety system, it included the Raven (shot detection) and Falcon (cameras). This is an annual maintenance fee. Originally the Commission said it would be a one-time service for things of that nature. Although, state law has changed since then and as a Redevelopment Commission we can now participate in operational aspects of police and fire. The law changed because of the growing need to provide service.

Police Chief Forker (in person) added to the discussion, stating that this is essentially ongoing support for software upgrades, technology support, necessary repairs, and replacements. It supports four miles of Raven shot detection which sends alerts to their phones or mobile data terminals. It is also for license plate readers (LPRs); there are 30 cameras. Chief Forker said the Police Department has been partnering with the Redevelopment Commission on this for the last three years. The ARPA funds are being used up this year, so they are looking for continued support from the Redevelopment Commission for the four miles of Raven and/or the 30 Falcon LPR cameras.

Commissioner Matias commented that \$141,000 is a lot of money. She questioned if there is a performance roll-up for the Council or Mayor on what the citizens are actually getting for this system, if it is effective, and if it is helping solve crime.

Chief Forker replied that he will be presenting those stats to the Council at their first meeting in June. Those statistics are included in the annual or monthly reports provided to the Council. He apologized for not having an annual report for the Commission but indicated that he would get it to them, which will show how the money is being used and how effective the system is. Chief Forker said it is a critical tool for them in providing lead information. Regarding the shot detection, Chief Forker said it has drastically reduced their response times to crimes in progress by getting immediate alerts even before 911 calls are made.

Commissioner Matias asked Chief Forker's take on concerns for privacy.

Chief Forker replied that he has had several conversations and continues conversations with Scott Meland on that matter. He said the Supreme Court has ruled in favor that those things are in public view which allows these LPR cameras to take those snapshots and produce those for the Police Department. He said a single scan of a visible license plate in public is not a Fourth Amendment violation.

Commissioner Matias asked how long it keeps that information.

Chief Forker said there is a Flock transparency portal. The easiest way to get to it is to Google the Michigan City Police Department Flock transparency portal. It provides a synopsis of policies, what is detected, and what is not an acceptable use, prohibited uses, access, retention policies, etc. It indicates how many vehicles were detected in 30 days and shows whom they share that data with. He said they share that data with other agencies throughout the state.

For the monthly report to the Council, Commissioner Tillman requested that Chief Forker break it down per ward so they can see how many shots were fired per ward within that month.

Commissioner Tillman also commented on privacy concerns and the public questioning whether we are breaching that information. She repeated what Chief Forker said in that we are not breaking the Fourth Amendment. Although she said we are somewhat contradicting ourselves, keeping in mind that the Commission just had a presentation from MCAS regarding their safety and security measures. She said a life is a life at the end of the day, and people are okay to accept it at the schools but not out in public. She said if we did not have these tools, they would hear from the public because they keep coming to the Council asking what we are going to do. She stated that this is a tool; it is not to end all and solve all problems, but it helps narrow down the possible leads to build a case for it to be investigated, prosecuted, etc. She questioned if people do not want to have that safety at our schools either.

In response to comments, Chief Forker said they have had cases in Michigan City that have been solved because we have Flock and a similar case, they were not able to solve because they did not have the LPR at the time regarding things like hit and run accidents. He stated they were able to solve a recent case on Highway 212 last year but were unable to solve a previous case that happened before that. He said it does generate that lead information which is valuable and gets them in the right direction to gather the evidence needed.

Commissioner Matias said Commissioner Tillman has made a good point and commented that law enforcement needs tools, not just a gun and a badge. It is all the tools, and technology has tools which have been able to be helpful to law enforcement.

Chief Forker said he is confident that the officers within his department are using these tools the way they should be used and within the scope of the policy. He said he will continue to have these conversations with Mr. Meland about this, and as long as the Supreme Court feels so they will continue to use these tools to their advantage.

Commissioner Hulse asked Chief Forker if this is something they could plan for next year in their regular budget.

Chief Forker said he was not in this role when the Flock agreement was made, and he believes the Redevelopment Commission paid for the Raven aspect of it. In 2022-2023 the City covered 30 cameras, and one mile of Raven and Redevelopment covered three miles of Raven. In 2025 the City ultimately covered 100% of the cost. Now in 2026, he said the Police Department was able to cover the camera costs, and they are looking for the Commission to cover the Raven.

Commissioner Tillman said they should know the outcome of SB-1 by the end of June or July. She said LIT plays a factor in this because LIT will be gone. Those funds could have possibly been utilized to supplement this.

Chief Forker said they are planning for 2027, and this is obviously on the menu.

Scott Meland (in person) 200 Kenwood Place, stated he is struggling to convey the importance of these civil liberty issues. He said there is no argument that this is a powerful tool for the police but questioned at what cost. He said there is a fundamental difference between our schools and those in public. He said we are legally responsible for the safety of the children when they are in our custody. He said school is a confined thing where we are responsible for other people's children. Mr. Meland said the graphic of the light pole with 4 cameras on it during the MCAS presentation he found to be chilling because in the document he provided it says a society where people feel watched is less free, less innovative, less democratic, even if most have nothing to hide. He wanted it to be clear he has no issue with the Raven part of the system because they do not record someone walking or driving by, although he has an issue with the camera part of it. Mr. Meland continued to highlight narrative from his handout. Mr. Meland asked that the Commission table this until they, and the Council, have a chance to review the information he distributed.

Commissioner Hulse said he shares many of Mr. Meland's concerns but stated it is a tool that has to be used. He talked about driving to work in Tampa Bay 30 years ago and the use of radar guns by disguised people to check speed on the bridge. He said arguments could be made all day long that some of them are almost legal, so he hates to get in that back and forth. At the end of the day, he said we need these tools, and yes, any tool can be misused. He said you have to balance peoples rights with tools, so it is not easy.

The chair entertained a motion.

Motion by Commissioner Hulse and seconded by Commissioner Tillman to support funding needed by the Michigan City Police Department in the amount of \$141,000.00 to go toward the 2026 annual Flock Safety System service contract, which includes the Falcon and Raven. The chair called the roll with the vote as follows: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

11TH STREET STATION GARAGE AND RESIDENTIAL TOWER

Mr. York reported that it is moving forward and the project is still on track with move-in dates for August, 2026.

REPORT BY LEGAL COUNSEL

None.

REPORT BY DIRECTOR

Mr. York turned comments over to Commissioner Hulse.

Commissioner Hulse reported that one of the things they are seeing right now is a lot of empty spaces downtown, which is a good and bad problem to have because it gives an opportunity to reinvent and look at things differently. There are a lot of requests for possible new restaurants. He said Chicago has raised the minimum wage for restaurants which is causing a serious impact for a lot of restaurant owners there. A lot of experienced operators are looking at Indiana. He said he has had three tours in the last two weeks looking at six different buildings downtown, midtown, and across the city. Commissioner Hulse said it is a great opportunity for Michigan City to try and get some of the restaurants from Chicago, so they have been looking at different programs and how to recruit restaurants. One of the things they asked us to look at is things in a restaurant like grease traps, exhaust, etc. They are extremely hard to put in and once they are in you cannot take them out. He said his staff have been working on a partnership between the City, the owner, and the investor, with a restaurateur who could create some new experiences. Commissioner Hulse said they are trying to create some guidelines so there are no more than two of the same types of restaurants, make it experiential, and make it so they have to be open more than they are required now. Looking at the trend for Michigan City, he said at the end of the year they are looking at about 200 new people downtown. A new bank will be moving here by the end of the year and a medical facility downtown. There will be over 50 new employees downtown in the next 12 months, along with people living downtown. There will be a need for more restaurants downtown in the future.

Commissioner Hulse said if the Commission desires, he would like to continue to work on this draft to come up with some guidelines to recruit high-end restaurants, a bakery, a place for breakfast, etc. He would like to have some incentives to make it work.

All agreed and liked the idea of diverse menu options.

Commissioner Hulse said he would come back with something for review.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hulse commented that it is exciting that there are a lot of things people are looking at besides restaurants. There is a bank, a medical facility, a lot of white-collar type companies, engineers, and planners looking downtown, meaning there will be people working downtown who will be using our restaurants and facilities and attracting more people to live downtown. He also mentioned the new developments and housing around the city which attract a lot of new people in the city.


Commissioner Matias shared sympathy for the Michigan City families who suffered a tragic loss and the trauma to all of the students. She said our hearts are with them and asked that everyone keep them in their thoughts as they go forward. She said it is a real tragedy for our community, and everyone is affected in some way.

NEXT MEETING DATE

President Matias announced that the next regular meeting date is June 8, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

With all matters of business addressed, the chair declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:05 p.m.



Phil Latchford, Secretary