

**TREE BOARD – City of Columbia City**  
January 20, 2026, 6:00pm

**MINUTES**

- Roll Call (Present) Janice Daniel, Jeff Bleijerveld, Chip Hill, Dan Knuth, Jim Christl, Amanda Thompson, Bryan Smethers (Absent) Brent Bockelman
- President Janice Daniel called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the December minutes. Dan made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Jim. A vote was taken; results which were 5-0-1. The abstention was due to Amanda Thompson's not having been on the board at the time of our December meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- Financial Update
  - \$21,155 – Donation Account, \$35,000 - 2026 Budget
- Vacancy Filled
  - Amanda Thompson – (Appointed by the Mayor)
- Grant Updates
  - Jeff has not had opportunity to begin the application to Community Foundation. He did submit the annual application to Tree City USA and received notification that it's been received.
- Funeral Trees
  - We are still working on the materials needed for the funeral homes to make available to bereaved friends and family. Amanda will check with Brent on progress with developing materials.
  - Chip will look into the idea of setting up an electronic payment option for funeral tree purchases.
- Update on New Trees in Tree Keeper
  - Dan and Janice made the rounds and noted in Tree Keeper the new trees that have been planted, their locations and species.
  - Dan will be contacting Tree Keeper to inquire about some functionality details.
- Tree Ordinance
  - No progress to report at this time.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Recognizing Officers of Tree Board for 2026

- President – Janice Daniel
- Vice-President – Brent Bockelman
- Secretary – Jeff Bleijerveld
  - *Moved, seconded and carried to approve the current officers.*
  
- Tree Removal and Tree Trimming List
  - Janice asked that we finalize the list of trees so that we can send out a list to tender bids. Dan will review the list and forward it to Chip and Janice.
  - The city will be doing the most essential trimming and removal before that time.
  - It was agreed that stump removals would be handled when requested.
  - Amanda will inquire with Community Corrections about assisting with planting, watering, and etc.
  
- Tree City Forum (March 11, Terre Haute)
  - Due to the distance for this event, we may wait until it's offered closer to home.
  
- New Tree Requests
  - Deer Run Addition has asked for some trees to be planted along Depoy Drive. They have indicated a willingness to provide some of the funding. The contact person is Sheldon Bailey. Bryan will follow up.
  - Smiles on Main Dentistry is moving into the former Farmer's Merchant Bank building at Main and North Streets and would like to have the crabapple trees removed and sugar maples planted. Janice will follow up.
  
- Arbor Day – First Fridays
  - Dan will contact the school again.
  - Jeff will order tree related books for the school library and will be Huggy the Tree that day.
  - We will participate in the first and last First Friday events again this year.
  - We have trees ordered for our first "First Friday" of the year.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:07pm.**

Submitted by Jeff Bleijerveld, Secretary