

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026
6:00 P.M.**

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson – Present
Attorney Marcia McNagny – Absent

Council Members

Ryan Adamson – Present
Brent Bockelman – Present
Jennifer Romano – Absent
Tad Varga – Present
Daniel Weigold – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members except Jennifer Romano present. Mayor Daniel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All stood to say The Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES Mayor Daniel noted a spelling correction of Kylah’s name under the Youth Council discussion and requested clarification from Ryan Adamson under the chicken discussion that he did not work for Jasper. Ryan advised he did not.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve the February 10, 2026 meeting minutes with the noted changes. Brent Bockelman seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2026-6 – VACATION OF PUBLIC WAY – TRIER – 2ND

READING Brent Bockelman made a motion to read Ordinance 2026-6 by title only. Ryan Adamson seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Ordinance 2026-6, Vacation of Public Way.

Ryan Adamson made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-6. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2026-7 – RULES FOR ATTENDEES AT MEETINGS - 2ND

READING Ryan Adamson made a motion to read Ordinance 2026-7 by title only. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Ordinance 2026-7, an Ordinance Adopting Formal Rules of Behavior for Attendees at Meetings.

Ryan Adamson made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-7. Brent Bockelman seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2026-8 AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 100 – 1ST READING

Ryan Adamson made a motion to read Ordinance 2026-8 by title only. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Ordinance 2026-8, an Ordinance Restating and Amending Chapter 100 of Title IX of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Leslee Robinson reminded council that she talked about this at retreat; to be able to charge a fee for street closures. She advised there was some open discussion at the Board of Works meeting regarding the establishment of the fee and determined they would mull it around for a couple weeks before coming to a final determination of what that fee would be. She noted that we were trying to move away from having the fees listed within the ordinance and instead have it listed separately.

Mayor Daniel explained that the Board was leaning towards a per block fee, so if the request were to close one block of downtown, it would be \$25, two blocks would be \$50; something that has some kind of a standardized fee. He advised though, that if

an event wants to close North and South Chauncey plus the 100 block of West Van Buren, they automatically have to do the 200 block of West Van Buren, just because there is no outlet for cars to turn around.

Ryan Adamson questioned if there was a time frame, such as would the fee be different for someone having a 4-hour event compared to a 3-day event. Mayor Daniel advised in their conversations they set aside Old Settlers because it is its own beast, and they compensate us for multiple things already. He added that First Fridays has already worked out an agreement with Leslee on janitorial services and such for their events. He mentioned, to Ryan's point, they did not differentiate between a half day event, a full day event or things like that. He suggested, and did not want to speak out of turn for the other members, that if it was a multi-day event, then the per block fee would be charged per day, but did not get into that depth.

Ryan Adamson recalled speaking about it at retreat in regard to the police and fire departments. He questioned if, other than the officers just walking through out of the goodness of their heart, were there any events that request police and fire presence and if so, how do we go about charging for that.

Mayor Daniel explained if there was additional police or fire coverage in that matter, he felt that definitely could be something they work into the fee schedule, but that was not necessarily contemplated.

Gary Parrett explained with the Old Settlers parade they have to close down every intersection and pretty much have an officer at every intersection down Main Street. He shared that with the Veterans Marathon they have multiple police officers who come in off duty, which is overtime. He advised that the guys enjoy going downtown, but if they get a call or something, then they are not able to, so if an event wants police presence down there, he felt there should be an additional charge.

Ryan Adamson advised he certainly was not opposed to giving those services, but not on the backs of the taxpayers, if it is a private organization, he felt that was something we should look at being reimbursed for. Chief Parrett and Mayor Daniel agreed that if an event requests officers be present to watch over the event, then they should compensate the city for it. Chief Parrett advised that there have been a few events where they have requested officer presence and have paid what everyone else pays. Leslee Robinson questioned if they paid the officer directly. Chief Parrett advised they did. Mayor Daniel confirmed that is the same way they do it if they go to the banks or with all the extra patrol they can sign up for and they then get compensated directly from the individual. Chief Parrett advised that was correct. He mentioned that with the Veterans Marathon and Old Settlers they have never been paid anything.

Ryan Adamson questioned if that was something that should be put in the ordinance. Mayor Daniel felt if the officer was being paid directly by the individual, then he did not think that would be a fee schedule we would create, unless we want to take that in-house, but was not sure that was something we want to do. Ryan Adamson felt the guys would prefer to be paid directly. Chief Parrett agreed that it was more direct, plus it keeps the city out of it.

Ryan Adamson questioned, only because it came up while he was working for Terre Haute, if we have an officer who is off duty but gets hurt while working for and being paid by, for example STAR Bank, who would cover the insurance. He advised a lawsuit was filed against the City of Terre Haute who then had to pay the medical bills. He hoped that would never happen here but is something that should be mulled over and have standard procedure in place for. Chief Parrett assumed it would probably be the same since the officer is still kind of working on behalf of the city with wearing our uniforms, badge and using our vehicles.

Tom LaRue advised the fire department would be in the same scenario as the police. Ryan Adamson questioned if they were paying guys to come in off duty. Chief LaRue advised they do because they do not have enough on duty guys to allow out of the station. Ryan Adamson questioned if a private organization has a race and they want the streets shut down and the police need help, then the taxpayers are paying for our firefighters to go out and block intersections due to this private organization having a race. Chief LaRue advised that was correct. Leslee Robinson advised it would be the same for the police department. She added that for the Old Settlers Day parade, the city is paying for those officers to come in and work overtime, it is not the Old Settlers organization paying for it.

Mayor Daniel stated that the Old Settlers parade was probably the longest time frame from a parade perspective. He wondered how we would parse that out on a 15-minute Homecoming parade versus a 2-hour Old Settlers parade. Ryan Adamson advised his goal was not to make money off of everybody by any means but wanted to make sure we were not spending \$100,000 a year on the back of taxpayers to pay overtime for private events. Mayor Daniel agreed and felt they were on the same page in regards to that. He thought that is where they have differentiated if officers were being called in specifically for the event, meaning the actual event, not a parade. He suggested that if it is an event where they want to have protection, then that should be on their dime, but if it is blocking of streets for parades, he felt that was a public safety thing that we do.

Gary Parrett suggested to also keep in mind that if the DORA is established, they may want to think about having some officers downtown. Mayor Daniel mentioned that the DORA should be more structured to ensure that people are not being overserved necessarily, but understood what he was saying.

Tad Varga questioned if the fee is not yet determined, how does council pass the ordinance without that. Mayor Daniel explained that with the ordinance, council is effectively establishing that there is a fee and then the fee is effectively passed by the Board of Works.

Brent Bockelman questioned what the amendment was from the original ordinance. Leslee Robinson explained that there was no reference to the fee and have added the verbiage that there will now be a fee for the street closings and that the Board of Works will determine that fee.

Ryan Adamson made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-8. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS Kelly Cearbaugh - snow removal, road and sign maintenance, running the sweeper as much as they can weather permitting, investigated some sewer tap locations with the televising truck, sewer truck is still at Brown Equipment for repair and leaf mulch is ready for pickup at Morsches Park. **Tom LaRue** - testing out some Motorola 800 radios, Truck 101 is still waiting for repairs for its coolant and oil leaks, Live Burn Day was last Tuesday and went well, Fire Instructor II class was complete, update on their breathing air compressor, working with Raynor Door to replace 3 of 4 garage door openers. **Matt Heiden** - Park Board reviewed estimates on the dog park fencing but still have some questions he needs to inquire about, Baseball/Softball sign up will run until March 7th, received pool pump back and will get that in soon, have been working on the Dreamland Pavilion so they can start renting it out hopefully sometime in March, had a contractor come in to look at some damaged pool tiles and will be having those repaired. **Gary Parrett** – update on new officers, Dispatch had a few minor equipment issues, had the Lego event and was a huge success, working on day-to-day operations. **Mike Shoda** - the PLC at the booster station has been replaced and is up and running, ordered new pump for the booster station and will have current one

rebuilt, had an aeration fan on the aeration unit at the water plant that went down and having repaired, Board of Works approved to start hiring process to fill open position. **Mike Cook** - Digester patch has been completed, received last roof quote for the office building, made contact with our contract lab and also our engineer to continue to look at the ammonia issues they have been having. **Chip Hill** – Kat from the Utility Office is helping to get the Kitchen going, tree removal letters going out, had a meeting on the amphitheater and have a construction timeline in place, met with Attorney McNagny and EPA over the Wayne Waste site regarding additional testing, working with the GLO Team on an SRF grant, still working on liquidating the jail, Smith Brothers property and the parking lot.

CLERK TREASURER REPORT Leslee Robinson reported that she is working with Parker at BS & A regarding their cloud software. She advised they were looking at March 24 for them to come in and do a full day training overview with her staff as well as any department heads who could potentially utilize the software. She advised she would not be at the next meeting as she will be in Plainfield for training.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported that junk pickup has been scheduled for the week of April 27. He shared that in the past, we have done two separate weeks but after some conversation with the trash hauler they feel it can be done in one week. He advised the State of the City Address is scheduled for March 13th at the library. He reported from a legislative perspective, there was a really bad municipal election bill that died on the floor yesterday and there was a proposed amendment that would extend the maximum levy growth quotient for an additional year, but that amendment was never called because of pressure by municipalities to their legislators. He advised they are making some really good progress on the local income tax pieces and the housing bill that was just an absolute mess was amended heavily yesterday, where it is all opt-in provisions instead of opt-out. He shared that what has been a really rough, hard legislative session is finally coming around to being, at least neutral, or maybe even somewhat positive for us. He reported we were having some conversations regarding electric territory as well as having multiple conversations on lots of other topics.

REPORTING WATER ISSUES Dan Weigold requested of the public that if they are having water issues to please call into the Utility Office, rather than posting on social media, so that the issue can be documented and remedied.

Mayor Daniel shared that he had lunch with the staff at the water department and it was reported then that every time they have gone out to those calls, they have opened the meter pit to test the water and every time it has been clear, so the issue has been inside the home. He noted that it does not mean there have not been other issues, but generally speaking, when they have gone out, that has been the situation and the residents were then educated at that moment. He advised he too was sick of hearing about the issues on social media.

Additional discussion followed on the junk pickup.

Having no further business to discuss, Mayor Daniel called the meeting adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson