

BOARD OF WORKS
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2026
5:00 P.M.

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson – Present
Attorney Marcia McNagny – Present via phone
Daniel Weigold – Present
Lisa Smith – Present

The Columbia City Board of Works met in regular session with all members present. Mayor Daniel called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES Dan Weigold made a motion to approve the July 28, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Lisa Smith seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT Craig Wagner noted that the Indiana flag was hanging backwards and that the field needed to either point to the north or the east.

Having no further discussion, Mayor Daniel closed the public comment.

351 N. LINE STREET UPDATE Vanessa Lauritsen of 6750 E. 700 S. Columbia City was present representing Ilay Ben Simon, who was going to be purchasing the Line Street property. She reported that they will be closing the week of August 17 and have plans to rehabilitate the property. She shared that they have a 26 – 28 rehabilitation schedule; week's 1 – 4 they will do structural stabilization, weatherproofing the garage and exterior, week's 4 – 6 they will be doing electrical and plumbing, week's 6 – 8 they will be doing HVAC and hot water, week's 8 – 9 they will be doing inspection coordination, week's 9 – 11 they will be doing the interior, week's 11 – 20 they will be doing finish work and then will continue on with completion in February or March. She advised they would maintain everything on the exterior through the entire process and plan to keep up with local officials throughout the process.

Dan Weigold noted since the Board already requested to move forward with demolition was there something they needed to do but also questioned if they should request a performance bond. Mayor Daniel thought they would have the ability to reverse the decision. Craig Wagner advised the Board could do that.

Mayor Daniel mentioned, to Dan Weigold's point, that the Board does want to make sure something is going to actually happen and questioned if there was a way they could be given assurance of that. Ms. Lauritsen advised she brought a copy of their rehabilitation schedule that the Board could have.

Lisa Smith questioned if the buyer was local. Mr. Lauritsen advised all of the contractors were local, but the buyer was not. She reported that the buyers have a lot already planned and are ready to get started.

Mayor Daniel questioned if the end goal was to remodel and sell or remodel and rent. Ms. Lauritsen advised the goal was to remodel and sell. Mayor Daniel noted that there was a definite interest by the buyer to get it rehabbed in an acceptable amount of time in order to flip the property. Ms. Lauritsen advised that was correct and it would be a quality flip; they want it to fit with the neighborhood.

Mayor Daniel questioned Dan Weigold if he would like to have a performance bond or something to that effect. Dan Weigold commented not necessarily but wanted to bring it up because they have been dealing with this property for a long time. Mayor Daniel questioned if it would be possible to get some kind of update each month to show what the progress is. He felt if remodeling activities were happening then we would somewhat be out of it because our issues would be getting addressed. Dan Weigold shared that he just wanted it done and the performance bond would give some type of guarantee it was actually going to happen.

Lisa Smith questioned if we would do the check-ins, but they miss some deadlines what recourse would we have. Mayor Daniel thought if the Board would rescind the demo piece, then the process would have to restart. He questioned Attorney McNagny if the Board would be able to do a performance bond or something to that effect. Attorney McNagny advised she has never been faced with something like this in all her years and would have to look it up but liked the idea of having deadlines and certain schedules. She felt like something needed to be put in writing as to what the terms are so that the demolition aspect is not completely taken off the table. She advised if something was not done then the process would not have to be completely restarted again. Mayor Daniel confirmed with Attorney McNagny the idea would be that they put the demolition on pause but continue to monitor the progress and keep in touch with Craig at the Building Department, while still having the demo order out there. Attorney McNagny agreed and suggested it be based upon a written agreement of what the terms are to pause the demolition; however, fully understanding that things can happen that a deadline might be missed but, on those occasions, an immediate explanation of the delay be presented to the Board. She stated that it has to progress to an occupancy permit, not just to the extent that it looks pretty from the outside. She did not feel that we would be asking anything of them that they were not wanting to do anyway.

Leslee Robinson questioned if the contractors have been given the timeline that was shared with the Board. Ms. Lauritsen reported that the buyer has already had the contractors in twice to look at the house. She advised they have had them run quotes and felt like they were ready to hit the ground running. Mayor Daniel felt like March 1st was a very reasonable certificate of occupancy timeline.

Lisa Smith mentioned that it was determined this was a newer company and questioned whether they have any kind of track record for these kinds of projects. Ms. Lauritsen advised that they have done quite a few projects in Fort Wayne, Kokomo, Marion, and some in Texas and Florida, so this definitely was not their first project.

Mayor Daniel suggested if the Board were to pause the demolition order until the next Board of Works meeting, it would allow time for Attorney McNagny to look into the performance bond, as well as we could draft what our expectations are for the buyer. He was not sure though whether

or not it would be enough for the buyer to still feel confident in purchasing the property. Ms. Lauritsen was not sure and could not speak for them.

Craig Wagner felt putting a pause on the demolition order was a really good idea because if it were rescinded then they would have to start the process over again, and it was a 90-day timeline. He advised they were still in the fact-finding piece so to pause would not be a problem.

Mayor Daniel asked the Board if they would be comfortable with putting a pause on the demolition order for two weeks, which would allow Attorney McNagny the ability to write up some type of an agreement that could be presented to the buyer.

Lisa Smith shared that she was trying to put herself in the place of the buyer. She stated that the end goal is that we want this home to be nice, but if she were the buyer, would she still buy the home knowing the demolition order was still out there. She advised she was a little questionable on the performance bond and felt if it was put in writing that the city was pausing the order but want to see certain things happen.

Attorney McNagny shared, in her initial assessment, she was not sure the performance bond would work in this situation. She felt by putting the order on pause and having the parties come to the table to talk about what reasonably can be done by a certain date is a better way to go about it. Lisa Smith advised she was very comfortable with that suggestion and to send a message to the buyers that the city wants the same end goal but just protective. Mayor Daniel agreed and added that the city was a little hesitant because of the false starts.

Mayor Daniel suggested that the Board pause for two weeks, write up an agreement stating that they will continue to keep the demolition order on pause until or unless certain provisions are not met such as stops in monthly communication of progress reports and an end goal of March 1. He felt if they cannot meet that date then it would a good time for the buyer to come and have a conversation with the Board. The Board was in agreement with that.

Ms. Lauritsen shared that the buyer was panicked about having someone present. Mayor Daniel appreciated her being in attendance and requested that she pass on the Board's thoughts to the buyer. He stressed that the city wants to be a partner in getting to the end goal.

Mayor Daniel requested Attorney McNagny draft up an agreement. Attorney McNagny advised she could and would also need information from Craig Wagner.

Mayor Daniel made a motion to pause the demolition order for two weeks and in the meantime, have an agreement drafted up between the buyer and the city as to the remediation of the property. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Craig Wagner advised he has been in contact with the buyer as well and the reason they pushed the closing back was because the order was still out there and of course the bank would not loan money if the house was going to disappear. He shared that he gave some assurance that the city just wants the house done.

BILLS Lisa Smith made a motion to pay all accounts payable in the amount of \$680,074.22 from the allowance of accounts payable vouchers dated August 11, 2026 for checks. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Lisa Smith made a motion to pay all accounts payable in the amount of \$474,584.03 from the allowance of accounts payable vouchers dated August 11, 2026 for EFT payments. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

PAYROLL Lisa Smith made a motion to pay all accounts payable except overtime in the amount of \$326,287.94 plus overtime in the amount of \$8,111.34 for a total of \$334,399.28 for the payfile ending July 24, 2026. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Toby Fralick** – update on Truck 107 repairs, training on new 800 radios, Truck 101 back in service, completed pre-incident business plans, new engine at J & K for radio installation, working on Battle of the Badges Blood Drive scheduled for September 11. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – reported on limbs down from the storms, working on ADA ramps, 50/50 sidewalk applicants, tree trimming, televising truck has been repaired. **Matt Heiden** – working on football field irrigation, pool now only open on the weekends, cut trees in Eagle Park by the old substation, color coding on the greenway for safety purposes, really good turnout for Animal Grams on Saturday. **Mike Shoda** – continue locating lead lines, replaced four service lines and repaired a leak. **Gary Parrett** – Wheels of Whitley County Car Show and First Friday went well, department-wide weapons qualifications, received new 40-millimeter equipment, school starting, AT & T installing new equipment for T1 line in dispatch, update on donation boxes at TSC. **Mike Cook** – requests for quotes on asphalt sealing, sludge mixer in for repairs, headworks pump should be back this week or next.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported that he held conversations with the Speaker of the House, AIM Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and others about where they are wanting to go from a property tax perspective. He shared there was a lot of chatter out there but many of the things being said are probably not going to happen because they are just not realistic. He stated that the thing he consistently heard from the Speaker of the House was that they want to incentivize growth in communities and felt like we were in a good position because we are a growing community. He reported that they were working with multiple individuals on a couple different TIF Districts for housing purposes, budget meetings are coming up, and they have some interest in the former jail. He shared that they were about a month away from getting the guaranteed maximum price for the amphitheater.

DONATION BOXES Dan Weigold discussed the donation boxes that were not being maintained. He questioned if there was something as a city that needs or could be done. Mayor Daniel shared that our Code Enforcement Coordinator looked into the ownership and made contact with them. He noted that the boxes at TSC would be removed soon, and the company was unaware they were even there.

CAT ISSUES Dan Weigold reported that he received a call from a resident complaining about neighborhood cats relieving themselves in their yard. He questioned whether that would be more

of a civil issue or was it something the city needed to create an ordinance on. Gary Parrett reported that we do have some problem areas with cats and probably need to focus on creating an ordinance addressing cats.

Mayor Daniel thought that according to ordinance if someone was feeding and taking care of the cats, then it was their cats. He noted that if the cats were going on someone else's property, the city does have traps that they could be trapped and taken to the shelter.

Dan Weigold felt that a lot of times things are put back on the city or governing body to take care of but really should be dealt with between the two neighbors. Gary Parrett advised the police department has traps that could be loaned out.

Kelly Cearbaugh shared that he was approached at the cemetery about people who let their dogs run through the cemetery and then not clean up after them. He advised he was going to talk to Gary about having officers keep an eye on that.

Having no further business to come before the Board, Mayor Daniel called the meeting adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson