



Town Council of Merrillville
7820 Broadway Ave - Merrillville, IN 46410
Town Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
May 12, 2026, 6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: President Rick Bella called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag was led by President Rick Bella.

INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE: A brief invocation was given, along with a moment of silence, by Pastor Robert Szoke of Impact Christian Church.

ROLL CALL of COUNCIL: – Present at the meeting were Councilors Rhonda Neal, Shauna Haynes-Edwards, Leona Chandler-Flowers, Margaret Uzelac, Shawn Pettit, and Rick Bella. Clerk-Treasurer Eric January was present to memorialize the proceedings. A quorum was attained.

Councilor Hardaway was absent from the roll call.

Town Attorney Svetanoff was present to provide legal advice.

Councilor Keesha Hardaway came into the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND REMONSTRATIONS: *NONE*

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

President Bella announced the following two events regarding Data Centers:

- Data Center Advisory Committee Meeting, Tuesday May 19th at 5:30 p.m. at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center

- Data Center Educational Seminar by Northwest Indiana Forum Community on Thursday, June 11th. The doors open at 5:00 p.m. at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center.

Several public comments were made regarding Data Centers. We have uploaded a copy of the video from the Town Council Meeting held on May 12, 2026, to the Town's website at: https://www.merrillville.in.gov/government/town_council/town_council_meetings.php.

MOTIONS ON THE TABLE: *NONE*

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Accounts Payable Register Voucher Approval for May 12, 2026.
- Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of April 28, 2026.
- Approval of Council Workshop Meeting Minutes of April 28, 2026
- IAW agreement for Reimbursement of Facility Relocation

It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Councilor Pettit to approve the Consent Agenda.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The Consent Agenda was approved.

SPECIAL ORDERS: *NONE*

BZA & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS: *NONE*

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BUDGET & FINANCE—NEAL— Vice President Neal reported that the next committee meeting will be on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. The meeting date changed from the standing date to accommodate the schedules of the members and attendees.

STREET DEPARTMENT & PARK MAINTENANCE - UZELAC— Councilor Uzelac reported that the Street Department is still cleaning up after the storm damage. The department is still cleaning uprooted trees and branches strewn in the streets and on sidewalks. The Street Department is also preparing for Spring planting on Broadway.

President Bella added that there are pending projects in the Street Department that are on hold until all storm-damage debris is picked up throughout the Town of Merrillville.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS—PETTIT— Councilor Pettit reported that Attorney Svetanoff, Town Manager Griffin, Director Matthew Lake, and Director Steve King are working on a Right-Away fee ordinance for the committee to review, along with several other ordinances.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE- HARDAWAY- Councilor Hardaway reported that a Labor 1 position in the Street Department is currently posted on the Town's website at www.merrillville.in.gov/departments/humanresources.php and mymerrillville app under the

Human Resources tab. This post will be available until Tuesday, May 19, 2026. If anyone is interested and has the qualifications, please do not hesitate to apply.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- UZELAC – Councilor Uzelac reported that she believes that Director Matthew Lake of Stormwater Management has started cleaning Hendrick Street Ditch on Taney Place.

PUBLIC SAFETY—HARDAWAY—Councilor Hardway had nothing to report.

ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & TOWN BEAUTIFICATION - NEAL- Vice President Neal reported that a meeting is scheduled next week with Robertson Engineering to review the Parks’ and Gateway signs. We have to change some of the sizes of the Parks’ signs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that the Redevelopment Commission (RDC) will be held on May 26, 2026, at 6:00 pm. Mr. Switz and Director Angie Chilcott of Economic Development are working on the final step for Liberty West Estate, which will go through the RDC approval process.

UTILITY LIAISON –CHANDLER-FELTON – Councilor Chandler-Felton had nothing to report.

PARKS AND DEAN & BARBARA WHITE COMMUNITY CENTER - PETTIT – Councilor Pettit reported that the committee has the following three memorandums for the council’s approval:

- **Dean and Barbara White Community Center (Volleyball Court on the Gymnasium Floor)** - The vendor will be Sport Imports out of Columbus, Ohio, for a cost of \$26,505.00

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the memorandum for the Volleyball Court on the gymnasium floor at the D&BWCC using vendor Sports Imports for a cost of \$26,505.00.

In regard to a question from President Bella regarding funding the project, Town Manager Griffin responded that the Capital Fund will be used to pay for the project.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The memorandum for repairs to the volleyball court on the gymnasium floor, using vendor Sport Imports for a cost of \$26,505.00, was approved.

- **Park Equipment** - Memorandum for the purchase of two Skaggs Cheetah Commercial Lawnmowers for \$14,399.95 each for a total cost of \$28,799.90.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the memorandum for two Scag Cheetah Commercial Lawnmowers from vendor Terpstra Sales and Service at the total cost of \$28,799.90.

In regard to a question from President Bella regarding funding the project, Town Manager Griffin responded that the Capital Fund will be used to pay for the equipment.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The memorandum for the two Scag Cheetah Lawnmowers from vendor Terpstra Sales and Service at the cost of \$28,799.90 was approved.

- **D&BWCC Landscaping Project** - Memorandum for the Landscaping Project at the D&BWCC for a cost of \$21,143.20, which includes labor and materials.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Chandler-Felton to approve the memorandum for the Landscaping Project at the D&BWCC for the cost of \$21,143.20.

Councilor Pettit explained the Landscaping Project.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The memorandum for the Landscaping Project at the D&BWCC for \$21,143.20 was approved.

- **Parks Board** – The deadline for applications is Friday, May 15th at 5:30 p.m. We have already received eight candidates.

Councilor Pettit explained the comments from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources regarding the Parks Master Plan being accepted.

- **D&BWCC Community Meeting** – The meeting will be held on Thursday, May 28th at 6:00 p.m. and is open to the community. This meeting is regarding, at the request of the White Foundation, the sale of the D&BWCC for \$23,000,000.00.

Councilor Pettit explained the process of selling the D&BWCC, which has not been finalized, but is in discussions with the White Foundation and Crossroads YWCA.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

ABANDONED-BLIGHTED PROPERTIES - HAYNES-EDWARDS & CHANDLER-FELTON– Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that residents need to be aware that they should clean up any junk, abandoned cars, and trash on their property. Code Enforcement will be going out through the Town and will be issuing tickets, citations, and warnings. One abandoned building is currently being investigated by the committee.

She also stated that if any residents want to report any abandoned properties that need attention, please email her at shedwards@merrillville.in.gov.

SPECIAL TOWN PROJECTS – HAYNES-EDWARDS – Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that the Town is looking for residents and business owners to participate in the 250th anniversary July 4th celebration. It will kick off with Juneteenth and end with the July 4th 250th Anniversary celebration.

SEMI-QUINCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE - HAYNES-EDWARDS – Councilor Haynes-Edwards reported that the next meeting will be in May at 5:00 p.m. If any residents are interested, you can still join the committee. Residents can contact her at shedwards@merrillville.in.gov.

We are looking for residents to lead this celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th. The anticipated activities for this event so far are a dance team kick-off, mural, carnival, Taste of Northwest Indiana, time capsule, and fireworks. Information regarding this event can be found on the Town's website and the mymerrillville app.

DEPARTMENT & COMMISSION REPORTS:

NORTHERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway had nothing to report.

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT – NEAL - Vice President Neal reported that the next meeting is on Thursday, May 21st. The next Lake County Solid Waste Management Hazardous Waste Collection is on May 21st at the Lake County Fairgrounds Gate 4, located on 889 Court, Crown Point, Indiana, from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Paper shredding will be available for up to four grocery brown paper bags at every hazardous collection site this year.

This information is available on the Town's website and the mymerrillville app.

THE SHARED ETHICS ENTITY-HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway had nothing to report.

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD - NEAL & HARDAWAY – Councilor Hardaway and Vice President Neal had nothing to report

CLERK-TREASURER OFFICE - JANUARY – Clerk-Treasurer Eric January reporting on the following for April 2026

- **Cash Balances - \$72,943,718.43** (Obligated and Unobligated Funds) Town Court, Fire Department, General Fund, Police Department, RDA, Stormwater, etc. In March of 2026, the Town's balance was \$75,481,887.56.
- **Food and Beverage Tax - \$2,225,855.74**

Clerk-Treasurer Eric January stated that a check for \$226,209.63 was received on May 8th

- **Payees – 233 were paid in April** (this includes employees, elected officials, vendors, and others)

Clerk-Treasurer Eric January explained the breakdown of payments.

Clerk-Treasurer Eric January explained what it means to receive a premium from a bond.

SSCVA – DEANN PATENA - No Report

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/ TOWN MANAGER:

Superintendent Jerry McCartney – Parks and Recreation

Superintendent Jerry McCartney announced a new program calendar for spring and summer. He had copies available for the public, Clerk-Treasurer Eric January, and council members.

Superintendent McCartney reported on the hiring of a new Parks Maintenance Crew Member.

All parks and recreation activities can be found at: <https://merrillvilleparks.recdesk.com>, the Facebook Page, and the mymerrillville app.

Director Matthew Lake – Stormwater Management

Director Matthew Lake was absent.

Police Chief Nuses– Police Department

Chief Nuses reported that the Town of Merrillville has a disaster plan that was revamped in 2024 by Chief Yerga and Assistant Chief Lilley, and may be on the Town's website.

Chief Nuses also reported that Code Enforcement has been out in full force since mid-April regarding the mowing of lawns. We have three Code Enforcement Officers and ask for your patience. The Town of Merrillville will have a Cop On A Rooftop event at Dunkin Donuts located at 2050 81st Avenue, Merrillville, Indiana, from 5:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. The proceeds from this event go to Special Olympics. This year, the National Night Out event will be held on Tuesday, August 4th. We are seeking community partners and support for this event. For more information on how you can participate, please contact Assistant Chief Vassel at (219) 769-3722.

Councilor Pettit requested a patrol of 67th Avenue because a child was almost hit by a car after getting off the school bus.

President Bella asked that Chief Nuses coordinate with Chas Reilly, Media Officer, Fire Chief Yerga, and Assistant Chief Lilley regarding getting the Disaster Plan posted on the website.

Director Shine – Building and Planning

Director Sheila Shine was absent.

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APPENDIX A TO ORDINANCE 25-17

The following sections relate to the employees of the Merrillville Police Department.

Section A-1. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

Section A-2. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

Section A-3. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

Section A-4. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

Section A-5. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

Section A-6. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

Section A-7. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

Section A-8. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

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unpaid compensatory time off to a rate of compensation not less than

1. The average regular rate received by each employee having received three (3) years of the employee's employment; or
2. The final regular rate received by each employee at the time of his or her termination.

3. An employee under this SECTION who has accrued compensatory time off who has requested the use of such compensatory time shall be compensated by the Town in the month in which a reasonable period after making the request of the use of the compensatory time does not unduly disrupt the operation of the Town.

4. An employee under this SECTION who is to be considered as a special detail by a separate or independent employer, such as the individual who is compensated by such separate and independent employer, shall be excluded by the Town in the calculation of compensation of the Town.

5. Requires that the employee be hired by a separate and independent employer to perform the special detail.
6. If available, the compensation of such employee as a separate and independent employer is
7. Others as affects the calculation of compensation of such employees in a separate and independent employer.

8. If an employee under this SECTION is so compensated or paid, such compensation shall be at the rate of the regular compensation for the Town which is in a different capacity from any capacity in which the employee is regularly compensated with the Town. The compensation of such employee is performance of the special detail shall be included by the Town in the calculation of the amount for which the employee is entitled to receive compensation.

Section A-9. The Town of Merrillville Police Department is authorized to hire and employ personnel for the Merrillville Police Department and to pay a salary and overtime pay to such personnel. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council. The salary and overtime pay shall be determined by the Town Council.

End of APPENDIX A TO ORDINANCE 25-17

APPENDIX B TO ORDINANCE 25-17

The following sections relate to the employees of the Merrillville Fire Protection Territory.

Section B-1. Additional Compensation. The Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief are authorized to fill in any open duty positions that are available. These positions need to be filled due to call-offs, vacations, compensatory days or lack of part-time firefighters (MT) to fill in. This is necessary to have adequate staffing to provide service. When the Fire Chief or Deputy Fire Chief fills in the Fire Chief or the Deputy Fire Chief will be compensated at the part-time firefighter (MT) rate for hours worked beyond the daily respective schedule which is additional compensation to the respective salary listed herein.

End of APPENDIX B TO ORDINANCE 25-17

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Haynes-Edwards to approve Ordinance 26-10 on first reading.

Clerk-Treasurer Eric January commented that the Town is paying out a considerable amount of overtime to the Fire and Police Department employees. He encourages the council to review hours and when overtime is to be calculated for these two departments.

Upon a roll call vote, there were seven affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Neal, Haynes-Edwards, Chandler-Felton, Uzelac, Pettit, Hardaway, and Bella voted in the affirmative. There were no negatives. The motion passed. The ordinance was approved on the first reading.

In response to a question from President Bella regarding suspending the rules for a second reading, Town Manager Griffin responded that there is no urgency and the ordinance can be taken up at the next meeting.

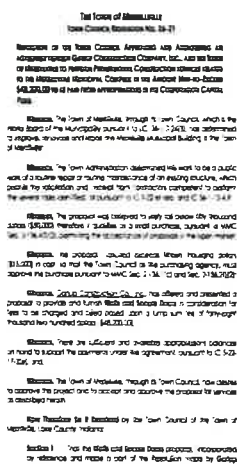
Second Reading: (Discussion, Public Comments Only If Required & Roll Call Vote): **NONE**

Resolutions (Discussion and Voice Vote):

Resolution 26-18 (Discussion & Voice Vote)

It was moved by Vice President Neal and seconded by Councilor Haynes-Edwards to approve Resolution 26-19.

Town Council Meeting Minutes 05/12/26



Continuum Co., Inc., 2165 Canyon Blvd., Suite 400, Boulder, CO 80501, is a leading manufacturer, distributor and retailer of high quality, low cost, and energy efficient

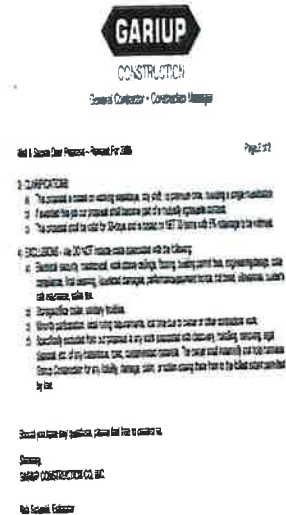
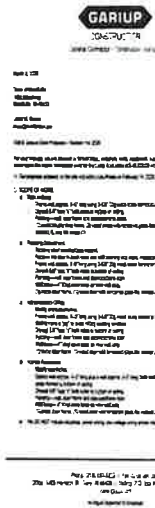
Section 1. The first and second paragraphs shall be amended to read as follows:

Section 1. For the issue of *Workable through it* based of *More* release the *Group Corporation Company* responsible to demonstrated professional competence and qualifications to perform the services called for by the present and proposed contract.

Section 4. For the purpose of the Group Contribution method, the molecule is divided into fragments and each fragment is assigned a value.

Section 4. The two witnesses are authorized to execute the documents necessary to support the request and may act in support of the resolution with no signature is obtained from the Clerk of Court.

ONLY, HASSEN, ADOPTED AND RECORDED by the Town Council of the Town of
Wardville, Lake County, Oregon, during its Regular Session, July 10th, 1914
at 7:15.

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It was moved by Councilor Haynes-Edwards and seconded by Councilor Vice-President Neal to approve Resolution 26-21.

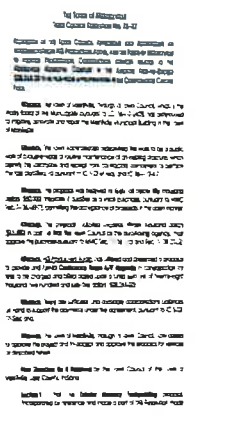
Clerk-Treasurer Eric January stated his concern regarding putting up a wall where there was an exit door in case of emergency.

Town Manager Griffin stated he would investigate this matter because he was unaware that an emergency exit door was being removed.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The Resolution was approved.

Resolution 26-22 (Discussion & Voice Vote)

Resolution Of The Town Council Approving And Authorizing An Agreement Between HQ Production Audio, And The Town of Merrillville To Perform Professional Construction Services Related To The Merrillville Municipal Complex In The Amount Not-To-Exceed \$28,265.00 To Be Paid From Appropriations In The Corporation Capital Fund.



© 2000 Protection Audio, 100 Julie Dr. Westfield, MA 01091 or the Town of Westfield. A heavily researched, collected and edited 8 hour audio quality sampler.

Section 2. The 20 miles one charge will be approved for in the not-to-exceed lump sum on contract of heavy-weight haulage for hauling and dumping stone (350,000) is found to be excessive and for

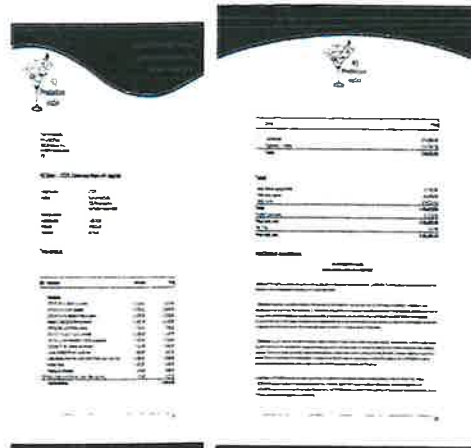
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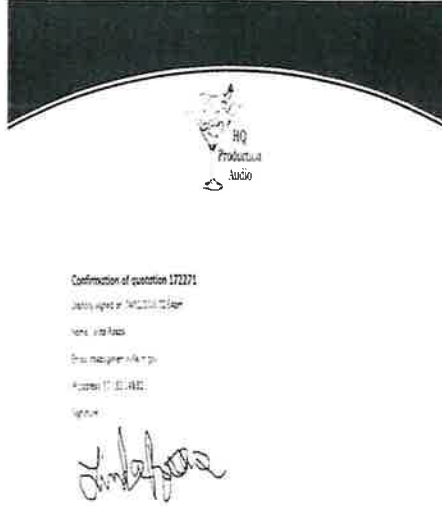
Section 4 The proposed scenario for HQ Production Area is shown on the map and is made a part of the statement.

Section 5. Let the said Mortgage be authorized to execute the document necessary to perfect the project and carry out the purposes of the resolution with the agreement or related terms on the part of the bank.

REPLY, PLEASE, ADDRESS AND ENVELOPE to the Town Council of the Town of
Middletown, c/o County Records, c/o the State Capitol, P.O. Box 100,
New York, N.Y.

**TOWN CLERK, of the TOWN of
GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT**



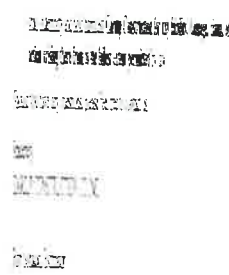
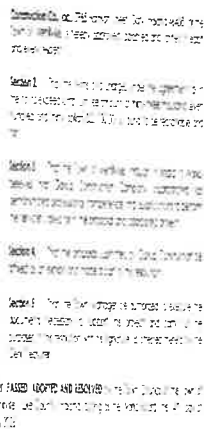


It was moved by Councilor Haynes-Edwards and seconded by Councilor Hardaway to approve Resolution 26-22.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The Resolution was approved.

Resolution 26-23 (Discussion & Voice Vote)

Resolution Of The Town Council Approving And Authorizing An Agreement Between Gariup Construction Company, Inc., And The Town Of Merrillville To Perform Professional Construction Services Related To The Merrillville Municipal Complex In The Amount Not To Exceed \$33,730.00 To Be Paid From Appropriations In The Corporation Capital Fund. (Exterior Painting).



It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve Resolution 26-23.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed. The Resolution was approved.

OLD BUSINESS: *NONE*

NEW BUSINESS: *NONE*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Town Council President announced the following:

- Citizen Advisory Committee May 19, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
- Town Council Workshop May 20, 2026
- Town Council Meeting May 26, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
- RDC Meeting May 26, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.
- Data Center Educational Workshop June 11th at 5:00 p.m. at D&BWCC

ADJOURNMENT:

Having completed all items on the agenda, the Town Council President, Rick Bella, announced the meeting had adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Eric O. January, Clerk-Treasurer



Rick Bella, Town Council President

Respectfully Submitted By Angela Lewis