



**Special Town Council of Merrillville
7820 Broadway Ave - Merrillville, IN 46410
Town Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
August 18, 2026, 5:30 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: President Rick Bella called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

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

Councilor Shauna Haynes-Edwards
Councilor Leona Chandler-Felton

Town Attorney Joseph Svetanoff was present to provide legal advice.

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Accounts Payable Register Voucher Approval for August 11, 2026.
- Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of July 28, 2026.
- Approval of Halos Corp Body Cam Proposal
- Approval of The Arsh Group Zoning Map Proposal
- Approval of The Pampalone Agency Proposal for renewal with Property & Casualty (multi-Peril) Insurance and the IEP Workers' Comp Plan

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.

BZA & LARGE GATHERING ACTIONS:

- 1) **Applicant:** Adam Espinosa
Owner: Adam Espinosa

Request: Approval for Large Gathering Permit
Purpose: Mexican Independence Cultural Day
Location: 260 East 84th Dr.
Date: August 29, 2026
Times: Sat 12 pm-12 am and Sun

Planning and Building Director Sheila Shine explained the Large Gathering Permit.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve the Large Gathering Permit.

Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Neal, Uzelac, Pettit, Hardaway, and Bella voted in the affirmative. There were no negatives. The Large Gathering Permit was approved.

- 2) **Applicant:** Sam Eaton
Owner: Sam Eaton
Request: Approval for Large Gathering Permit
Purpose: Wirt High School Class of 1985 Fundraiser
Location: 6880 Hendricks
Date: August 29, 2026
Times: 3:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Planning and Building Director Sheila Shine explained the Large Gathering Permit.

It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve the Large Gathering Permit.

Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Neal, Uzelac, Pettit, Hardaway, and Bella voted in the affirmative. There were no negatives. The Large Gathering Permit was approved.

- 3) **Applicant:** Prasanna Bandarau
Owner: Prasanna Bandarau
Request: Approval for Large Gathering Permit
Purpose: Cultural Festival/Taste of India
Location: 8605 Merrillville Road
Date: September 30, 2026
Times: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm

Planning and Building Director Sheila Shine explained the Large Gathering Permit.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Uzelac to approve the Large Gathering Permit.

Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Neal, Uzelac, Pettit, Hardaway, and Bella voted in the affirmative. There were no negatives. The Large Gathering Permit was approved.

- 4) **Applicant:** Michael Pavlidakis
Owner: Michael Pavlidakis
Request: Approval for Large Gathering Permit
Purpose: Annual Greek Fest Food Festival
Location: 8000 Madison Street
Date: August 21st – 3:00 pm – 10:00 pm, August 22nd 12:00 pm – 10:00 pm, & August 23rd 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Planning and Building Director Sheila Shine explained the Large Gathering Permit.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve the Large Gathering Permit.

Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Neal, Uzelac, Pettit, Hardaway, and Bella voted in the affirmative. There were no negatives. The Large Gathering Permit was approved.

GENERAL ORDERS

A. Ordinances: (Discussion and Roll Call Vote):

Zoning: (Motion to adopt or reject; confer IC 36-5-2-10(d): *NONE*)

First Reading: Ordinance (Discussion and Roll Call Vote):

Ordinance 26-22 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, Amending Stormwater Utility User Fees and Policies for the Town of Merrillville, Indiana.

Town Manager Griffin explained the ordinance.

It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Councilor Pettit to approve Ordinance 26-22 on the first reading.

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

Ordinance 26-23 (Discussion & Roll Call Vote)

An Ordinance Appropriating Additional Moneys in Excess of the Annual Budget for Several Departments of the Parks and Recreation Non-Reverting Operating Fund and the Wheel Tax Fund, all pursuant to I. C. 6-1.1-18, I.C. 36-5-3-5, et seq.

Town Manager Griffin explained the ordinance.

It was moved by Councilor Uzelac and seconded by Vice President Neal to approve Ordinance 26-23 on the first reading.

Upon a roll call vote, there were five affirmatives and no negatives. Councilors Neal, 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 the Wheel Tax Fund annual amount, Town Manager Griffin responded that the amount is very close to the revenues we receive. This is the first year that the increase that was implemented is taking effect.

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

Resolutions (Discussion and Voice Vote):

Resolution 26-43 (Discussion & Voice Vote)

A Resolution of the Town Council as the Works Board to Approve a Solicited Quote to Provide Additional Lease Use of a Horizontal Tub Grinder to Allow Grinding of Collecting Vegetation and Wood from Downed Trees or Those Trimmed because of their Precarious and Apparent Threat to the Public Safety and Related Matters.

Town Manager Griffin explained the resolution.

It was moved by Councilor Pettit and seconded by Councilor Hardaway to approve Resolution 26-43.

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

TOWN MANAGER GRIFFIN'S DISASTER RECOVERY UPDATE:

Town Manager Griffin updated the council regarding the following:

- Town of Merrillville Disasters of June 11, 2026, and August 11, 2026.

- Funding updates from FEMA and Lake County Department of Homeland Security
- Clean-Up Efforts
- Town of Merrillville's Budget

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Town Council President announced the following:

- Town Council Meeting August 25, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Having completed all items on the agenda, the Town Council President, Rick Bella, announced the meeting had adjourned at 6:07 p.m.



Rick Bella, Town Council President



Eric O. January, Clerk-Treasurer

Respectfully Submitted By Angela Lewis