PROCEEDINGS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF
THE CORPORATION OF LIBERTY, INDIANA
August 3, 2026

The Town Council of the Town of Liberty, Indiana held a regular meeting on August 3, 2026 at the Town Administration building located at 101 Brownsville Avenue.

Mr. Jerry Kahl called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL
Present were: Ross Keasling, Dereck Tipton, Derrek Jenkins and Jeff Lang.

Also in attendance was Melissa Shepler, Clerk-Treasurer; Alison Webb, Liberty CAN; Olivia Chewning, Union County Foundation, Todd Dickenson, Karl Moffett, Jim Franklin and Matt Reuss.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Mr. Keasling made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 20, 2026. Mr. Jenkins supported the motion. Upon a vote viva voce, motion passed.

ORDINANCES
Mr. Keasling made a motion to suspend the rules and vote on Ordinance 2026-8 on first reading. Mr. Tipton supported the motion. Upon a vote viva voce, motion passed.

Mr. Keasling made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-8. Mr. Jenkins supported the motion. Upon a vote viva voce, motion passed.

RESOLUTIONS
Mr. Tipton made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-11. Mr. Lang supported the motion. Upon a vote viva voce, motion passed.

Mr. Tipton made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-12. Mr. Lang supported the motion. Upon a vote viva voce, motion passed.

DEPARTMENT HEADS
Fire Chief Jim Frankin passed out the monthly fire run reports. Chief Franklin informed the Council that Wayne County has assumed all dispatching operations for the County. Chief Franklin discussed logistics and radio communications with the Council. The Chief informed the Council that 15-20 radios will have to be re-programmed to a different frequency. Ms. Shepler informed Chief Franklin and the Council that Barry Ritter with Ritter Strategic Services, the consultant hired by the County to negotiate with Wayne County to assume dispatching services, will be at the next Town Council meeting to further discuss the situation. Mr. Lang did ask Chief Franklin what happens to the money that the fire department makes at the Firemen's Festival with College Corner? Chief Franklin stated that the funds will be used to assist with a new fire house when the time comes.

Police Chief Todd Dickenson gave the members of the council, the first and second quarter numbers for the police department as well as a quote for radios that are needed for the vehicles. Ms. Shepler also passed out a quote received from CentralSquare for CAD services. CentralSquare is the CAD service provider for Wayne County. Mr. Tipton, who uses the same CAD service for his position at Reid Health, gave a synopsis of what the CAD system can do that will be helpful to organize and maintain communications, reports, etc. with Wayne County. Mr. Tipton informed the department as well as the Council that he would be willing to train an officer of the department on how to use the system and then the officer can train the other department members. That would save approximately $ 3,500.00. Mr. Tipton made a motion to approve the purchase of the radio system from Tech Electronics and the CAD system from CentralSquare contingent on the approval of the Wayne County/Union County dispatching agreement. Mr. Lang supported the motion. Upon a vote viva, voce motion passed.

Utilities Superintendent Matt Reuss informed the Council that Comcast will be starting this week to install fiber optic cables. A pre-construction meeting was held with Ms. Shepler, John Teeguarden and Matt Reuss attending for the Town and members of Comcast and the boring company were attendance. Comcast will have door hangers for the areas that will be affected by the installation. Area Plan Director Jeff Mathews had talked to Mr. Reuss regarding a situation at 211 Brownsville Avenue. 211 Brownsville Avenue was purchased and the owner is tearing down the house located there. Unfortunately, 211 Brownsville Avenue and 211 ½ Brownsville Avenue's sewer lines are tied together. Mr. Reuss asked the Council for clarity on what should happen. 211 ½ Brownsville Avenue is occupied. Would the resident of 211 ½ Brownsville Avenue have to pay to install a new tap and if something is constructed at 211 Brownsville Avenue would they have to pay a new tap as well? 210 West Union Street is possibly the same situation. After a brief discussion, Mr. Tipton made a motion to leave the situations as they are and if something arises where they have to separate, it will be dealt with then. Mr. Jenkins supported the motion. Upon a vote viva voce, motion passed. Ms. Shepler stated that she had made a mistake regarding the dump truck that Mr. Reuss has been requesting. She had put money for a dump truck in the 2027 budget, however, Mr. Reuss stated that the truck will more than likely not make it through the winter. She asked the Council to consider doing an additional appropriation of $ 60,000.00 out of the MVH fund for the dump truck as she will be doing one for the radios and the CAD system. The Council gave her permission to do so.

MISC. BUSINESS

Alison Webb of Liberty CAN appeared before the Council to request a support letter from the Council for the entity to proceed with becoming an Indiana Main Street Downtown Affiliate Network (ODAN) community. Ms. Shepler had already composed a letter stating the Council supported Liberty CAN's efforts. All members of the Council supported the process and Mr. Kahl signed the letter on behalf of the Council.

Olivia Chewning, Director of the Union County Foundation informed the Council of the Foundation receiving a $ 1M READI grant for the downtown plan. Discussion occurred regarding the plan. The Council asked Ms. Chewning who designated the downtown area for the sake of planning. Ms. Chewning explained that the OCRA representative assisting with the downtown plan designated the area as to what will allow the Town to be more acceptable to grant providers.

The street closure request by the Union County Cancer Society for August 29, 2026 was tabled until the next meeting as a representative did not attend the meeting to discuss the closure.

Mr. Tipton made a motion to allow Ms. Imani Murphy with HR Focus to finalize the Town's new employee handbook. Mr. Lang supported the motion. Upon a vote viva voce, motion passed.

Ms. Shepler had included updated 2027 budget numbers to the Council after she had met with Mr. Tipton and Mr. Lang. Ms. Shepler informed the Council that she has requested financial statements from the Union County Development Corporation and the Historical Society to make sure the Town's yearly donation is used to help the units maintain financial solvency. She also added requests from the Rainy Day and Riverboat funds to construct a new handicap ramp, overhang and install a new steel door at the council meeting entrance. Originally, the budget was figured with employees each receiving a 4.25% increase in salary. Mr. Tipton and Mr. Lang asked Ms. Shepler to see if she could raise the percentage and still maintain a solid budget number. Ms. Shepler refigured salaries at 8% per employee as she believed it still left some room in case revenues did not come in as projected. Upon discussion with Mr. Tipton and Mr. Lang, they asked her to raise Officer Karl Moffett to $ 65,000.00 for 2027 as Officer Moffett has been instrumental in taking over the training of the department as well as trying to become more involved with community outreach. Mr. Tipton and Mr. Lang also asked to have Ms. Shepler pay increased to $ 65,000.00 for 2027 as well. They believe that since all department heads who make more than her, go to her for just about everything, she needed to compensated as well. Ms. Shepler informed the Council that salaries did not need to be decided until the final council meeting of the year but she would like to put the larger numbers in the budget just in case. She also told the Council that there are only three more meeting after this one to discuss the budget before she has to advertise it. Once it is advertised, the budget can only be reduced not increased.

A discussion occurred regarding the lack of a crossing guard for the intersection near the catholic church. Ms. Shepler has someone who is interested for the afternoon, however, this person lives and works in Wayne County and is trying to re-locate to Liberty. Ms. Shepler did not think it was worth his time and money to drive to Liberty for an approximate 30-minute shift and then drive back to Richmond for $ 12.50. After discussion amongst the council members, it was decided to raise the crossing guards pay from $ 25.00 per day to $ 40.00 per day and then re-advertise the position. Ms. Shepler said she would bring an amended Salary Ordinance to the next Council meeting. Mr. Tipton asked if the Town is legally required to provide the crossing guards for US 27? Ms. Shepler stated that she would ask the Town's attorney.

Mr. Jenkins made a motion to approve June bank reconciliations. Mr. Lang supported the motion. Upon a vote viva voce, motion passed.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on a motion made by Mr. Keasling and supported by Mr. Jenkins the meeting was adjourned.

Jerry Kahl
Jerry Kahl, President

ATTEST: *Melissa Shepler*
Melissa Shepler, Clerk-Treasurer

These minutes are a summary of actions taken at the Town of Liberty Council meeting. The full video archive of the meeting is available for viewing at https://www.youtube.com/@LibertyIndiana or visit the Town of Liberty website, libertyin.gov for the meeting as well. The meetings will appear on the website for as long as the website can support the video.