

Common Council Meeting

Ordinance Council Meeting Organizational Planning

Meeting Information

- Date & Time: 2025-01-14
- Brought to order @ 6:12pm
- Location: Town Hall 205 E Walnut St.
- Attendees: Clerk Treasurer (CT) Rene'e Collier, Council Member (CM) Pam Brown, Town Marshal (TM) Jim Bolen, Council Member (CM) Lee Trippett, Council Member (CM) Amy LaOrange, Council Member (CM) Fred Schrader, Reserve Deputy Marshal (RDM) Kevin Ward, David Kurth, County Commissioner Dave Davis, Town Attorney (TA) Rebecca Trent, Town Engineer (TE) Ken Smith, Street & Utility Superintendent (S&U Superintendent) Doug Reed, Street & Utility Employee (S&U Employee) Bruce Hiner, Street & Utility Employee (S&U Employee) Frank Galvin, Pam Hiner, and Terry Allen. Not present was Council Member (CM) Joshua Rinehart.

Meeting Notes

1. Chalmers Council Meeting Agenda and Assignments

- **Pledge of Allegiance**
The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance, a customary practice to show respect and patriotism.
- **Agenda Check**
The agenda was reviewed, and (CM) Brown noticed that she had forgotten to include the salary ordinance as a discussion topic. The council previously postponed the discussion at the December 26, 2024 meeting. The salary ordinance was added to the current agenda.
- **Introduction of New County Commissioner**
David Davis, the new County Commissioner for district one, introduced himself and expressed his intent to stay informed about community activities.
- **Plaque for New Building- (TE) Ken Smith**
Discussion on the material and placement of a plaque for the new splash

pad pavilion, with considerations for cost and donor recognition. (TE) Ken Smith will take care of getting the sign ordered.

- **Inspection and IDEM Report- (TE) Ken Smith**

An inspection took place in December, and the IDEM report needs to be completed and submitted. The inspector says Well #3 is good to go. Just a few small things (like the fine screens at the water plant) are left to be corrected.
- **Paving Bids – (TE) Ken Smith**

Discussion on the timeline and process for receiving and reviewing paving bids, with potential for two rounds of paving in 2025. Possibly taking bids at the Jan. 28, 2025 meeting.
- **Introduction of New Council Member – Pam Brown**

Fred Schrader introduced himself as a new council member, sharing his background and enthusiasm for the role.
- **Election of Officers**

Elections were held for council officers, resulting in (CM) Brown as President and (CM) LaOrange as Vice President. (CM) LaOrange nominated (CM) Brown for Council President. There were no other nominations for president so (CM) LaOrange made a motion to vote (CM) Brown as the president for 2025 which was seconded by (CM) Schrader and passed by a vote of 3 Ayes to 1 Nay. Ayes coming from (CM) Brown, (CM) LaOrange and (CM) Schrader and the vote of 1 Nay coming from (CM) Trippett. For the position of Vice President of the board (CM) Brown nominated (CM) LaOrange. There were no other nominations for this position so (CM) Brown made a motion to vote (CM) LaOrange as the Vice President with the second coming from (CM) Schrader and passing by a vote 3 Ayes to 1 Nay. Ayes coming from (CM) Brown, (CM) LaOrange and (CM) Schrader and the vote of 1 Nay coming from (CM) Trippett.
- **Committee Assignments – (CP) Brown**

Appointments to various committees were discussed, including the Community Improvement Committee, Redevelopment Committee (TIF Board), Park Board, Utility Board, and Storm Water Board.

 - **Community Improvement Board:** Council Members Fred Schrader and Amy LaOrange, Residents Pam Hiner, Terry Allen and David Kurth.
 - **Redevelopment Committee (TIF Board):** Clerk Treasurer Rene'e Collier, Town Attorney Rebecca Trent, Council Members Amy LaOrange and Lee Trippett, Residents Pam Hiner, Terry Allen and David Kurth. (CP) Brown will get with School Board to try to get a representative. Motion to approve these residents for the Committee made by Council President (CP) Brown, second came from Council Vice President (CVP) LaOrange and passed by a vote of 4 Ayes to 0 Nays.

- **Park Board:** (Four appointed volunteers) Residents Terry Allen, Linda Allen David Kurth and Pam Hiner.
- **Utility Board:** (CT) Collier, (CP) Brown and (CM) Trippett.
- **Storm Water Board:** WWTP Operator Scott Robinson, (S&U Superintendent) Reed and (CP) Brown.

2. Organizational Planning and Scheduling

- **IMPA Commissioner Appointment – (CP) Brown**
(CP) Brown the current commissioner plans to appoint Doug as her replacement, allowing Doug time to understand IMPA and build relationships. The transition will occur in the coming months.
- **Representative for the Advisory Committee on Small Town Affairs**
(CP) Brown the current representative appointed herself to remain as the representative for the town.
- **Council Meetings Schedule – (CP) Brown**
Discussion on whether to maintain two council meetings per month or reduce to one. The council and the clerk discussed how it is easier to understand what is going on and what needs to be taken care of if we maintain the every two week schedule and it was best to keep them on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month.
- **Holiday Schedule – (CP) Brown**
Review of the holiday schedule presented for town employees, including the following holidays New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Day after Thanksgiving (Observance of Lincoln's Birthday), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day resulted in the Council deciding to remove a few holidays. The council decided that the paid holidays for 2025 will be New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day (4th of July), Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving (observe Lincoln's birthday), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Motion to approve these as the official holidays pending the updated holiday revisions was made by (CVP) LaOrange, seconded by (CM) Trippett and passed by a vote of 4 Ayes to 0 Nays.

3. Salary Ordinance, and Policy Updates

- **Salary Ordinance 2025 -1 –(CP) Brown**
The council reviewed the salary ordinance for 2025, establishing that the compensation rates for town positions will not be raised but the payout distributions have been updated. The ordinance includes an addendum covering temporary policies until the new employee handbook is approved. **Ordinance 2025-1 Ordinance Establishing Rates of Compensation for Chalmers Town Council, Clerk Treasurer, Utility Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Street & Utility Operations Superintendent, Town Employees, Town Marshal and Deputy Marshals for the 2025**

year with attached Addendum was approved by a vote of 4 Ayes to 0 Nays pending the revisions taking the Town Attorney salary off, changing the commencing date from January 1, 2025 to January 14, 2025, Street & Utility Operations Superintendents salary to say based on a forty hour week and adding the Addendum. Motion to approve was made by (CVP) LaOrange and seconded by (CM) Schrader

- **Employee Handbook and Policies –(CP) Brown**

The council discussed the need to update the employee handbook and policies to align with recent county revisions. An addendum will temporarily cover policies until the new handbook is approved.

- **Trash Ordinance – (CP) Brown**

The council discussed updates to the trash ordinance to reflect new rates and avoid frequent revisions. **Ordinance 2025-2 Ordinance establishing new monthly charge for the trash service provided by the town of Chalmers, Indiana.** The charges are set at \$13.25 for 2025 and \$13.65 for 2026, effectively starting with the January 2025 billing period. Motion to approve was made by (CM) Schrader, seconded by (CM) LaOrange and passed by a vote of 4 Ayes to 0 Nays.

4. Organization, and Education

- **The Organizational Binders for Board Members – (CP) Brown**

A project is underway to create binders for board members containing ordinances, contracts, and other important documents to improve organization and accessibility. These binders are expected to be completed by (CP) Brown for the January 28, 2025 council meeting.

- **Agenda and Meeting Material Distribution – (CP) Brown**

Discussion on the need to distribute meeting agendas and materials to board members and the clerk-treasurer via email to ensure preparedness for meetings.

- **Educational Materials for Board Members – (CP) Brown**

The need for educational materials for board members was discussed, including purchasing books from AIM and funding for officials to attend newly elected officials training. The training provides free books, but additional copies require payment. An e-copy was offered to be sent by (CT) Collier to save costs.

5. Ordinance Codification, Property Management, and Infrastructure Issues

- **Ordinance Codification (TA) Trent**

The council discussed the codification of ordinances for the Town of Chalmers, Indiana. The need to update and compile ordinances into a single book was emphasized, with plans to address outdated or incorrect ordinances. Council decided that they would go ahead and adopt **Ordinance 2025-3 Ordinance Enacting A Code Of Ordinances For The Town Of Chalmers, Indiana, Revising, Amending, Restating, Codifying and Compiling Certain Existing General Ordinances Of The**

Political Subdivision Dealing With Subjects Embraced In Such Code Of Ordinances, And Declaring An Emergency and then work on updating Ordinances that contain incorrect information for current times. The motion to approve was made by (CVP) LaOrange and seconded by (CM) Trippett. Motion carried by a vote of 4 Ayes to 0 Nays.

- **Legion Property and Keys – (TA) Trent**
Discussion on the status of the Legion property, including the need to change locks due to multiple keys being distributed. The property has been winterized, and arrangements for key collection and property assessment are ongoing.
- **Water and Wastewater Issues – (S&U Superintendent) Reed**
Issues at the wastewater treatment plant and water leaks were discussed. The need for repairs and inspections was highlighted, with some issues expected to be resolved by spring.

6. Organizational Improvements and Financial Management

- **Grant Funding and Backup Systems**
The team discussed the need to explore grant funding opportunities and evaluate backup systems for data protection. Concerns were raised about the current backup process and the need for periodic backups to prevent data loss.
- **Cybersecurity and IT Support**
The discussion focused on the need for improved cybersecurity measures and IT support. The team considered partnering with the Indiana Office of Technology for enhanced email security and discussed the importance of having a dedicated IT company available 24/7.
- **Meeting Minutes and Claims – (CT) Collier**
There was confusion regarding the closure and adjournment of the December 26, 2024 Meeting. (CP) Brown decided to table the approval of minutes to the next meeting as she is sure the meeting was adjourned not closed. Claims for Bank 1 dated January 14, 2025 were reviewed and approved. Motion to approve claims was made by (CVP) LaOrange, seconded by (CM) Trippett and carried by a vote of 5 Ayes to 0 Nays.
- **Budget and Audits**
The team discussed the financial impact of federal audits and the need to take these costs into account when applying for Federal Grants in the future.

7. Town Planning and Resource Allocation

- **Additional Appropriation – (CT) Collier**
Discussion on the need for additional appropriation similar to CCI, the challenges faced due to deadlines, and the importance of planning with Baker-Tilley's assistance.
- **Electric Issue**
Discussion on the issue with Harmon McClintic and the replacement of

poles, including the disagreement over depreciation and the need for indemnification.

- **Nepotism Forms**
Discussion on the requirement to sign nepotism forms by December 31st each year and the plan to have the forms signed and filed.
- **Softball Board Funding Request**
Amanda Szabella, president of the softball board, inquired about requesting funds from the town, with a comparison to Brookston's support for their baseball league.
- **Batting Cage and Basketball Court Location**
Discussion on relocating the batting cage and basketball court, considering equipment access and potential liability issues.

8. Community Management and Coordination

- **Insurance Meeting Rescheduling- transition to a new agent**
The insurance meeting needs to be rescheduled due to illness. Verification of the new schedule is pending.
- **Internal Controls and Training**
Updating internal controls and scheduling a video training session for all members, with a suggestion to do it before the meeting on January 28th.
- **Address Updates**
Ensuring all members provide their current addresses for records.
- **Ordinance Violations and Fines**
Discussion on fines for ordinance violations, particularly regarding sidewalk maintenance, with suggestions for fine amounts.
- **Trash and Snow Cleanup**
Addressing issues with trash and snow cleanup, including the use of volunteers and potential fines for non-compliance.
- **Trash Can Management**
Issues with trash can distribution and billing, including missing cans and billing for unoccupied properties.
- **Park Board Meeting**
Announcement of the park board meeting scheduled for Thursday at 5:30 p.m. to set new goals.
- **Lock Changes**
Changing locks for the clerk treasurer's office, deputy clerk treasurer's office and police department to improve security.

Next Arrangements

- [] Review paving bids by the next meeting.
- [] Finalize plaque material and placement for the new building.
- [] The new employee handbook will be reviewed and approved by January 28,

2025.

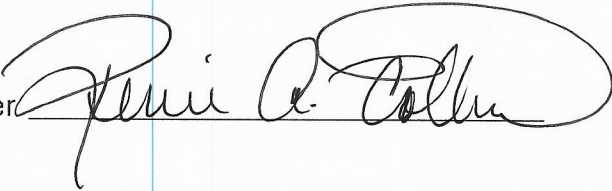
- Binders to be presented at the January 28th meeting.
- Purchase additional books for board members.
- Attend newly elected officials training.
- Change locks on Legion property.
- Assess Legion property contents.
- Hire an IT company for infrastructure and cybersecurity.
- Table the approval of meeting minutes to the next meeting.
- Explore grant funding opportunities and improve backup systems.
- Partner with the Indiana Office of Technology for cybersecurity.
- The Park Department will work with Amanda Zabella to present specifics about the batting cage and basketball court relocation at a council meeting.
- Training scheduled for January 28th at 5 p.m. with pizza provided.
- Park board meeting scheduled for Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

AI Suggestion


AI has identified the following issues that were not concluded in the meeting or lack clear action items; please pay attention:

1. The current IT infrastructure poses a risk to data security and operational efficiency; immediate action is required to address these vulnerabilities. Determine the exact steps and responsible parties for partnering with the Indiana Office of Technology for cybersecurity improvements.
2. The appointment of (S&U Superintendent) Reed as the new IMPA commissioner requires further discussion and a clear timeline for the transition. This needs to be resolved to ensure a smooth leadership change.
3. Delays in updating the employee handbook could lead to confusion regarding employee policies and procedures. Finalize and distribute the updated handbook by January 28, 2025, ensuring all council members review and approve it.

Common Council Meeting Minutes for January 14, 2025

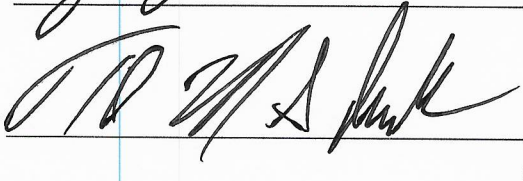
Clerk Treasurer 

Council President Panel S Brown Yay or Nay Abstain

Council Vice President  Yay or Nay Abstain

Council Member  Yay or Nay Abstain

Council Member  Yay or Nay Abstain

Council Member  Yay or Nay Abstain

Signed this 28th day of January, 2025