



GOSHEN COMMON COUNCIL

Minutes of the FEBRUARY 23, 2026 Regular Meeting

Convened in the Council Chambers, Police & Court Building, 111 East Jefferson Street, Goshen, Indiana

Assisted by Mayor Gina Leichty, Nazar Vintskovskyi called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Nazar is a student at Model Elementary School.

Mayor Leichty asked Clerk-Treasurer Richard R. Aguirre to conduct the roll call. The result:

Present: Linda Gerber (At-Large) Phil Lederach (District 5) Doug Nisley (District 2)
Megan Peel (District 4) Donald Riegsecker (District 1) Matt Schrock (District 3)
Council President Brett Weddell (At-Large)
Youth Adviser Abril Reyes (non-voting)

Absent: None

Approval of Minutes:

No minutes were available to review/approve.

Approval of Meeting Agenda:

Mayor Leichty presented the agenda as prepared by the Clerk-Treasurer. Councilor Nisley moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilor Peel seconded the motion. **Motion passed 7-0 on a voice vote.**

1) Honoring Police Division Chief Ryan Adams on his retirement

Mayor Leichty delivered a tribute to Police Division Chief Ryan Adams who retired on Feb. 19 after 28 years of dedicated service to the City of Goshen. The Mayor said:

"More than 2,000 years ago, on a painted porch in Athens, known as Stoa Pokile, a group of philosophers began shaping a worldview that would outlast empires, wars, and centuries of human change.

"Their school, called Stoicism, taught that true strength is not found in outward displays, but in inward character. That virtue, not circumstance, determines the quality of a life. And that the most reliable leaders are those who remain steady when the world around them is unsteady.

"The Stoics believed that a good person is known not by being emotionless or detached, but by having clarity, discipline, courage, and an unwavering commitment to what is right. They taught that composure is not the absence of feeling, but the mastery of it. And that one should speak with intention, act with integrity, and hold one's center, even in the face of hardship.

"This philosophy shaped soldiers, statesmen, and public servants for generations. It guided emperors like Marcus Aurelius, who ruled not by force of personality, but by force of principle. And throughout history, Stoicism has remained a touchstone for those who shoulder burdens others cannot see, and who make decisions others cannot bear. It values endure because they serve communities well. Steadiness when the moment is chaotic. Objectivity, when emotions run high, courage without theatrics, service without expectation, (and) duty carried out with humility and resolve.



"These are not simply philosophical ideas. They are lived practices; habits that shape the kind of leader who can be counted on when it matters most. **And here in Goshen, for 28 years, we have been fortunate to have a leader who embodies these Stoic virtues, not in theory, but in action – our division chief, Ryan Adams.**

"Every week, I have breakfast with any departmental leaders who wish to attend. And at our final breakfast with Ryan last week, the topic of leadership styles and qualities came up. And Ryan mentioned, rather casually with his wry laugh, that he has been most often described as a stoic. And suddenly, I felt like in that last week of our working together, I understood him in a way that I hadn't before.

"And while I've deeply appreciated our time working together, there were certainly moments when I felt like Chief Adams held his card so close, it was difficult to get a read on his thoughts. Quiet, steady, deeply principled, not always an easy read, but always easy to trust.

"Ryan's approach was also reflected in the words that he shared in his resignation letter. Policing for him was never about the badge itself. He wrote, 'The badge holds no power. Character, compassion, and integrity do.'

"Those are words that could have been come straight from the fathers of Stoicism themselves. Ryan lived out those values every day. He walked beside families in moments of grief. He stood with people through hardship. He saw resilience in moments when it mattered most, and in his letter, he reminded us of something profoundly stoic; that service, even when unseen, is never without purpose.

"He also wrote of the small gestures that he had received from this community – notes of encouragement, quiet thanks, a meal paid for anonymously, that carried him through the difficult days. That gratitude was the foundation of his career, and it is the spirit within which he retires.

"Now, in keeping with Ryan's approach to his vocation, he asked to leave quietly, without fanfare or recognition, no spotlight, no celebration – a departure as steady as the way he had served. And while we are willing to forego cake, there are certain rituals within the Goshen Police Department that are fundamental to our understanding of service, rituals that transcend personality and preference because they speak to the values we share.

"One of those rituals of honor is the presentation of an American flag that has flown over the Goshen Police Station to an officer who has served this department for more than 20 years. It's a symbol of service, sacrifice and the solemn trust placed in those who stand watch over this community."

At this point, **Mayor Liechty** invited **Division Chief Adams** to come forward. He was then presented with a U.S. flag by the Goshen Police Department honor guard.

Afterward, the Mayor gave Division Chief Adams a plaque with contained a Key to the City. The Mayor said it was being presented "with immense gratitude to Division Chief Ryan Adams for 28 years of service to the Goshen Police Department. With steadfast dedication, you have upheld the safety and well-being of our community. Thank you for serving with integrity, vigilance, and heart. With our highest respect."

Division Chief Adams was given a few moments to respond and he said:

"Well, Mayor Liechty, Council Members, and members of the community, I can leave with just a big thank you for the amazing words that were said today ... The City has been amazing. It's the place where I grew up and it's the place that we've brought our children to, to come to town, and a place we'll continue to come to.

"To the officers that I've worked with in the past and to the current, it's an amazing group. The City is in good hands. To the leaders that I've worked with, they're my friends. They were my friends, not just my co-workers. And I couldn't have done my job without them, and without those who allowed me to be a leader.

"That is a title, but it is something that your peers give it to you. So, thank you very much, everybody."



2) Resolution 2026-01, Interlocal Agreement with the County of Elkhart for Animal Control Services
Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Resolution 2026-01, *Interlocal Agreement with the County of Elkhart for Animal Control Services*. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Resolution 2026-01 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Schrock made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-01, Interlocal Agreement with the County of Elkhart for Animal Control Services.

BACKGROUND:

Resolution 2026-01 would approve the terms and conditions of the Interlocal Agreement with the County of Elkhart for Animal Control Services.

Elkhart County government has entered into a contract with The Humane Society of Elkhart County, Inc. to provide animal shelter management and animal control services for 2026 for certain areas of the county, including within the Goshen city limits. Under this Interlocal Agreement, the City would contribute \$93,940 to reimburse the County for the cost of providing animal shelter management and animal control services within the Goshen city limits. The City contributed this same amount in 2025.

The Goshen Board of Public Works and Safety approved this Interlocal Agreement at its meeting of Feb. 5, 2026.

SUMMARY OF FEB. 23, 2026 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2026-01:

Mayor Leichty invited questions or comments from Council members. There were none.

At 6:12 p.m., the Mayor invited questions or comments from the audience. There were none.

The Mayor asked if Councilors were ready to vote. They indicated they were.

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Resolution 2026-01, Interlocal Agreement with the County of Elkhart for Animal Control Services, by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting yes, at 6:12 p.m.

3) Ordinance 5232, Amend Ordinance 4624 to Update the Calculation of Individually Measured Impervious Area for the Goshen Department of Stormwater Management

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Ordinance 5232, *Amend Ordinance 4624 to Update the Calculation of Individually Measured Impervious Area for the Goshen Department of Stormwater Management*. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Ordinance 5232 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Riegsecker made a motion to approve Ordinance 5232 on First Reading.

BACKGROUND:

Ordinance 5232 would amend Ordinance 4624 to Update the Calculation of Individually Measured Impervious Area for the Goshen Department of Stormwater Management.

On Feb. 12, 2026, the Goshen Board of Public Works and Safety adopted a resolution approving the update to the language for the calculation of individually measured impervious areas within the City of Goshen. Ordinance 5252 would amend Ordinance 4624 to reflect this updated language.



On Feb. 12, City Stormwater Coordinator Jason Kauffman told the Board of Works that over the years there have been changes in how hard surface areas were measured. He said there is now an effort to switch to using machine learning that allows City staff to more quickly do what has previously been done by hand.

Kauffman said Elkhart County government has now entered into a contract to make that switch for surface types throughout the county, so the City wants to update the language of the City ordinance to allow the Stormwater Department to utilize different technologies available instead of just hand digitizing.

Attached to the memorandum for the Council was a redline version of the ordinance showing the proposed changes to Section 3, Fee Structure and Calculation, along with a clean copy of Ordinance 5252.

SUMMARY OF FEB. 23, 2026 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 5232:

Mayor Leichty invited comments on Ordinance 5232 from Director of Public Works & Utilities Dustin Sailor.

Sailor said, "This is for the stormwater assessment. And as technology changes, we are trying to stay current with that. For years, we have digitized hard surface boundaries, just visually, with staff.

"And with artificial intelligence, there's opportunities now to train a model to identify between hard surface and grass spaces, and it will stay current with the aerial photography as it changes and calculate those hard surface boundaries. So, this ordinance modification allows for the use of opportunities such as artificial intelligence and other features as they become available."

Mayor Leichty invited questions or comments from Council members. There were none.

At 6:14 p.m., the Mayor invited questions or comments from the audience. There were none.

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Ordinance 5232, Amend Ordinance 4624 to Update the Calculation of Individually Measured Impervious Area for the Goshen Department of Stormwater Management, on First Reading by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting "yes" at 6:14 p.m.

Councilors gave unanimous consent to proceed with Second Reading of Ordinance 5232.

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Ordinance 5232, *Amend Ordinance 4624 to Update the Calculation of Individually Measured Impervious Area for the Goshen Department of Stormwater Management*, on Second Reading. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Ordinance 5232 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Riegsecker and Peel made a motion to approve Ordinance 5232 on Second Reading.

Mayor Leichty invited questions or comments from Councilors or the audience. There were none.

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Ordinance 5232, Amend Ordinance 4624 to Update the Calculation of Individually Measured Impervious Area for the Goshen Department of Stormwater Management, on Second Reading by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting "yes," at 6:14 p.m.



Privilege of the Floor

At 6:14 p.m., Mayor Leichty invited public comments for issues not on the Council agenda.

John Stoltzfus of Goshen said he brought plastic whistles, purchased from John Hall Hardware, for distribution to Council members. He then said:

"We live somewhere between fire and ice and some cities seem harder hit. And I'm glad that the City of Goshen (passed) Resolution 2016-45 ("A Resolution of Goshen, Indiana City Council Affirming the Value of Community Unity, Safety & Trust," approved by the Council in December 2016).

"However, some part of me would like to know what is the local protocol when it comes to the work of ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) in this town as it impacts people who live in this town. On the one hand, we have Resolution 2016-45; and on the other hand, (people) are impacted more than a little, whether by fear or displacement.

"And somewhere there are the old flyers of about a year ago that had a Kentucky address, a P.O. Box and phone number for the Ku Klux Klan. Those flyers also had a number for ICE and they included an Uncle Sam figure in a top hat kicking people out of town, indicating track, monitor and deport. I sometimes wonder what I can do, as I expect many of us do."

At this point, Stoltzfus distributed the plastic whistles to Councilors and concluded, "I think there's plenty more to say and to discuss between international and national and local (issues). But I will stop for today and thank you."

There were no other speakers, so at 6:18 p.m., Mayor Leichty closed the public comment period.

Elected Official Reports:

Mayor Leichty asked if there were any reports from Councilors.

Councilor Peel said the City Economic Improvement District (EID) Board met last week and a big topic of discussion was the vault closure program. She said the program is in progress and there was discussion about its impact on business owners and buildings and the financial consequences. She said the Board decided to provide funds to help property owners pay for some of the work of replacing vaults with walls.

Council President Weddell pointed out that the funds for this work comes from taxes property owners impose on themselves. He said that years ago, the City Redevelopment Commission offered a 50% match to eliminate vaults and to replace them with supporting walls, but most property owners refused to take advantage of the offer.

In response to a question about whether the offer still stood, Council President Weddell asked Director of Public Works & Utilities Dustin Sailor to comment.

Sailor said, "It's been my understanding, they (property owners) have always had to pay for the wall, but then we paid for the (vault) backfill, and we shared the cost on the sidewalk. Now Redevelopment is paying for 100% of the fill and 100% of the sidewalk."

Councilor Peel said the wall can be expensive. Mayor Leichty agreed and explained why the City is paying more of the costs. She said, "Part of the rationale for that is that it is in the public right-of-way, so everything beyond the wall is public right-of-way, and so the City is contributing to those."



Council President Weddell said, "So it definitely is an expense, but it sounds like they're getting more of it paid for than they would have even in the past." **Councilor Peel** responded, "I don't think so, because I think it's quite expensive to have the wall replaced, depending on the contractor. I don't remember the exact figure, but it's not going to be cheap." **Council President Weddell** said, "As far as the sidewalks and filling in and stuff, none of it is cheap, but they (Property owners) are not being asked to pay for any of the fill or the concrete."

Council President Weddell continued, "I think that there's a list of property owners that have thumbed their nose at the request to do this for well over a decade, probably closer to two decades, and so, I would encourage the EID board members to reach out to the City Redevelopment Commission and the Engineering Department." He added that many property owners have ignored the problem and possible solution.

Mayor Leichty said, "They're listening now. We are incentivizing positive change, and we are incentivizing public safety."

Councilor Peel said, "There's 12 or 13 that are on the docket that are like 'red zone' that have to get done ... They are the highest priority." **Council President Weddell** said the City cannot fill in the vaults and replace sidewalks until the walls are reinforced. And even though the remaining vaults are a public safety concern, he added, "if the property owner refused to fix their wall, our hands were tied."

Councilor Peel said, "This is going to get done. Hopefully, with the help of these funds, it will incentivize them to get it done before the end of the year."

Councilor Peel also discussed the March 4 meeting at Goshen High School on about the widening of U.S. 33. The Mayor said she would talk about that later in the meeting.

Councilor Peel also thanked the Goshen Democratic Party for sponsoring an immigration forum at which about 600 people attended at the Goshen Theater. She said, "It was really well done and very informative, and I appreciate the work that they did."

Council President Weddell said he wanted to engage Council members on House Bill 1001, which he said "steals local control from whether it's the City of Goshen, the City of Nappanee, Elkhart County, as far as major housing developments, and so I think it's of great concern. And I've been speaking with some of our County Commissioners, which I will say all three of our County Commissioners have come out against this House bill."

Council President Weddell said the City of Noblesville has created a statement against House Bill 1001 and he wanted to know if Goshen Councilors were also concerned about the potential loss of local control and might want to oppose the legislation in some way.

Councilor Gerber asked if the Council President was you thinking about Councilors endorsing a joint letter of opposition. **Council President Weddell** said, "Yeah. That's what the City of Noblesville did. And if not, we could just have a letter, and any one of us who wants to sign their name to it (could do so). It doesn't have to really come through as a resolution."

Mayor Leichty said there was not much time to comment on the bill. She also noted that the bill was being amended. She recommended that Councilors contact the bill sponsor, Rep. Doug Miller of Elkhart to voice their opposition.

Council President Weddell said he would draft a letter and circulate it to Councilors for them to sign it if they also opposed HB 1001..



Councilor Riegsecker said, "It's been a couple months since the roundabout has been put in out there by the new (Elkhart County) Courthouse, and I think it is very well done and I really like it. It's a good addition to that side of town."

Mayor Leichty said she wanted to bring the following events to the attention of Council members:

- **The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4 in the Goshen High School cafeteria about improvements proposed for U.S. 33, including work from County Road 31 to the Elkhart River Bridge in Goshen to reduce traffic, improve safety and improve drainage. The Mayor said she and Engineering Department staff also would be having a private meeting with INDOT staff about the project on Monday, March 2 and she asked if one or two Councilors would like to attend. Councilors Lederach, Peel and Weddell said they could attend.**
- **The International Women's Day Luncheon, sponsored by the City of Goshen and the Community Relations Commission, will be held March 5 at Bread & Chocolate in the Old Bag Factory. The Mayor said, "That is not just for women but for anybody who's interested in coming and learning about some amazing women in our community who are doing cool things. She urged Councilors to register quickly if they were interested in attending. The featured speakers will be Kari Tarman, Tami Hicks, Giselle Hernandez and Megan Hessel.**
- **The City Council will hold a Council information session at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, March 13. It will feature an update on the Mobile Integrated Health program as well as other departments sharing their goals and budgets for this year.**
- **The Mayor will deliver the State of the City address for City of Goshen colleagues at 9 a.m. on March 19 in the Goshen Theater. She said, "Last year I started two State of the City addresses to ensure that all the Goshen colleagues would be able to attend." At the gathering, the Mayor said she also will be giving out Goshen colleague awards. She said Councilors were welcome to attend.**
- **Mayor Leichty said Councilors by now should have received invitations to the 2026 Founder's Day Luncheon on March 26 at the Maple City Chapel. The Mayor Will deliver the public State of the City address at the luncheon.**

Youth Adviser Abril Reyes said that the Youth Caucus sold flowers for Valentine's Day and the proceeds went to Remote Area Medical, which provides healthcare to people who can't afford it, including children, homeless people and immigrants.

Mayor Leichty noted that Youth Caucus members would be taking a trip in the morning.

City Director of Administrative Affairs Michael Wanbaugh said he would be accompanying the students to the 2026 Accelerate Indiana Municipalities Youth Legislative Day in Indianapolis. He said they would meet with legislators and learn how state action affects local communities.

Wanbaugh also announced that the Kid Council held its first meeting earlier today and it is an "energetic" group. The students are planning a community project. The Mayor invited Councilors to attend the Kid Council meetings.

Councilor Lederach said he wanted to call attention to a milestone in the community – the 50th anniversary of Carl and Chris Weaver taking Goshen High School teacher students to the Florida Keys.



Councilor Lederach said that except for a one-year break during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Weavers have taken students to Florida to study marine biology every year. "This is their 50th anniversary trip and they have changed lives for 50 years. It's an amazing accomplishment. There's no other high school in the United States that has had an impact or a program quite like this one. So, I think it's worth noting all the young minds that he has influenced and now they're old minds that he has influenced."

Councilor Riegsecker said his son went on that trip and had a good time. Councilor Lederach added, "I went for 12, 13 years when I was there at the high school with (Weaver), and it was a fabulous program."

Adjournment:

Councilor Nisley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Councilor Peel.

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously approved the motion to adjourn the meeting.

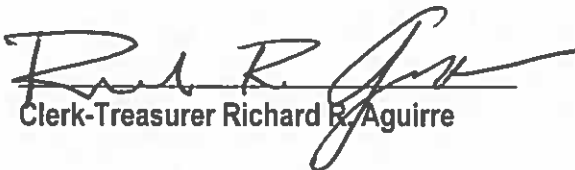
Mayor Leichty adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

APPROVED:



Gina Leichty, Mayor of Goshen

ATTEST:



Clerk-Treasurer Richard B. Aguirre