

Town of Winona Lake
Council Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2026

The Town Council of Winona Lake, Indiana met in a regular session on March 24, 2026, in the Town Hall at 6:00 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Ashley McGinnis, Austin Reynolds, Jason Zaugg, and Barry Andrew

ABSENT: Jim Lancaster

OTHERS: Clerk-Treasurer Heather James, Town Manager Pam Howard, Parks Director Holly Hummitch, Street Superintendent Shane Parrett, Police Department Joe Hawn, Fire Department Mike Cox, and Town Lawyer Adam Turner.

OPENING: At 6:00 p.m. Jason opened the meeting with prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

Ashley opened the floor for comments on agenda items. None were made.

Approval of Minutes

Heather presented the minutes from both February 17, 2026, and March 9, 2026, meetings. Jason motioned to approve. Barry seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion carried.

Approval of Claims

Heather presented the claims for approval. Barry questioned Joe Hawn on the decision to install remote start on the two new police vehicles. Joe provided his reasoning, which satisfied Barry and there were no further questions. Barry motioned to approve. Austin seconded. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion carried.

“Winona Happenings”

March 1st-31st - Village Madness

April 1st – Deadline to register for Egg My House

Utility Dispute for 1219 Bibler

Joe Hawn, property owner, submitted a dispute regarding the utility payments due on the property. His argument was he had submitted and received approval to have the utilities stopped in 2024 due to the house undergoing a full interior remodel and being uninhabitable. There were questions from Jason regarding the situation as a whole and the processes internally to the town for a request of this nature. Adam Turner provided additional legal guidance on the specific utilities able to be disconnected versus services still provided by the town regardless of the interior remodel. Barry motioned to table the discussion until the April council meeting, providing more time to research the entirety of the situation. Jason seconded the motion. With a vote of 4 ayes, and 0 nays, the motion carried.

Change to Police SOPs

Chief Hawn provided notification that the State had provided updates to police departments across the State regarding defensive tactics and use of force. Barry motioned to pass the SOPs as presented, Austin seconded. The motion was passed with 4 ayes, and 0 nays.

2024 Community Crossings Matching Grant Change Orders

Pam presented that Landon Grogg from A&Z Engineering was assisting with closing out the two Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) road improvement projects. One project was conducted by Phend & Brown and the other by Niblock. Both projects require change orders to close out. The Niblock project will require a change order regarding Canal Street not being eligible for repaving as it is currently not listed as being owned by the town in INDOT's records. Park Ave & Pierceton roads were over. This will result in a refund due to the State for \$50,023.70. Barry motioned to approve the change orders. Jason seconded the motion. The motion passed with 4 ayes, and 0 nays.

Close out of Community Crossing Matching Grant

With the previous motion regarding the change orders approved, there was a motion to close open CCMG grants 2024-1 and 2024-2 with INDOT. Austin motioned to approve, and Barry seconded. The motion passed with 4 ayes, and 0 nays.

Miller Sunset Pavillion Manager

Ashley presented hiring Brittany Denny for the Miller Sunset Pavillion (MSP) Manager position for part-time employment at \$25 per hour, not to exceed 1560 hours per year, with the wages paid from the MSP funds. Ashley explained that Brittany had already performed as the Farmer's Market Manager in 2025 and Ice Rink Manager for the 2025/2026 season, so she is already familiar with MSP operations. If approved, the hiring would be effective immediately. Jason motioned to approve at \$25 per hour, not to exceed 1560 hours per year. Barry seconded the motion. The motion passed with 4 ayes, and 0 nays.

Street Department Superintendent

Ashley presented that Pam and Austin had conducted interviews and recommend hiring Shane Parrett for Street Department Superintendent with full-time employment, at \$33.65 per hour, and with a take-home vehicle. If approved, Shane's start date would be April 16th. It was identified that the town would need to develop a policy for take-home vehicles, and it was noted that Adam Turner will have it ready for presentation to the council at the April meeting. Jason motioned to approve hiring Shane at \$33.65 per hour, starting April 16th, with a take-home vehicle pending a take-home vehicle policy being approved. Austin seconded the motion. With 4 ayes and 0 nays, the motion passed.

Maintenance & Grounds Technician

Ashely presented that Pam, Austin, and Shane had conducted interviews and recommended hiring Shawn Kantenwein for this position at a rate of \$28.36 per hour with a start date of April 13th. Barry motioned to approve hiring Shawn at a rate of \$28.36 per hour starting April 13th. Jason seconded and with a vote of 4 ayes and 0 nays, the motion passed.

Indiana Municipal Managers Association

Pam requested permission to attend the Indiana Municipal Managers Association conference in Steuben County at Pokagon State Park from Wednesday, April 29th to Friday, May 1st. It was stated that Pam will pay for her own registration, room, and board. She only requested permission to attend. Barry motioned to approve. Jason seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 4 ayes and 0 nays.

Donations

The following donation to the Town was presented for approval:

Unrestricted to the Park Department – \$100 from the Hand Family Foundation

Barry motioned to accept the donation. Jason seconded the motion. With a vote of 4 ayes and 0 nays the motion carried.

Supervisor Reports

Street Department: Shane shared they were working on cleaning up Bibler park. They striped the old mulch and redid the base. Additionally, they helped with taking apart the ice rink for the season and cleared several down limbs and trees due to the windstorms. Finally, Shane shared that they are appreciative of the new Bobcat and flail mower which they are planning to use to clean up the greenway path and Pierceton Road near Miller Field.

Park Department: Holly reported that the Senior Center has rebranded as the “Willow at Winona”. She hosted an open house with good attendance, and since then has 3 new members. Additionally, she thanked the other departments for assisting with the pancake breakfast. She mentioned that they had been preparing for the upcoming summer events, and that the old restrooms will be torn down with portable ones brought in until the new restrooms are built and completed. The estimated completion date for the new restrooms was September 2nd. Finally, the new roof was completed on the community center, with new gutters expected to be installed on Friday, March 27th.

Fire Department: Mike Cox reported that NIPSCO provides training every couple of years on gas and electrical equipment in the event the Fire Department must interact with the equipment during an emergency. NIPSCO recently conducted training with 13 active fire fighters trained. He also shared that March 28th will be a fire station cleanup day for both the exterior and interior of the building. Finally, the fire department conducted 12 runs for the month of February 2026, with one being a mutual assist run to Warsaw, which represented a total of 262 man-hours. Overall, the fire department had a total of 445 volunteer hours for the month.

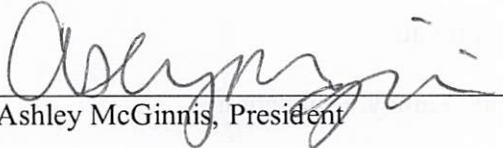
Police Department: Joe shared that they are still waiting on the rest of the equipment to complete the upfit for the new police vehicles.

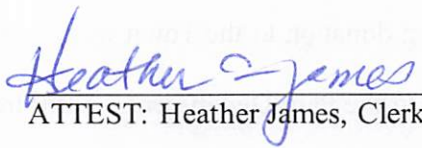
Town Lawyer: Adam shared that he attended the Accelerate Indiana Municipalities (AIM) legislative update session.

Floor Topics

Resident Ron Faulkner asked when the streets will be striped again. Pam replied that she and Shane had been working with the proper companies to get quotes, but there are only two companies in Indiana that conduct that work which has made the process slower.

Adjournment: At 6:45 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.


Ashley McGinnis, President


ATTEST: Heather James, Clerk-Treasurer

*This is a summary of the meeting.