

# MARION COMMON COUNCIL AGENDA

PRESIDENT – NICK MCKINLEY VICE PRESIDENT – GARY FORDYCE

Regular Meeting – Marion City Hall Council Chambers

Date: December 16, 2025

Time: 7:00 P.M.



## CALL TO ORDER

PRAYER: Mayor Ronald Morrell Jr.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Councilman Eric Marshall

## ROLL CALL

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: Nani's Playroom, Jessica Brodt

CITY EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

## CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING NOVEMBER 18, 2025 and DECEMBER 2, 2025
- B. CONSIDERATION OF PRE-APPROVED CLAIMS
- C. CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### General Ordinance 30-2025- Amending monthly water user rates 3<sup>rd</sup> reading

An ordinance amending the monthly water user rates and charges for the city of Marion, Indiana. Speaking: Robin Shrader, Director of Marion Utilities

**Executive summary:** Introducing an ordinance to adopt water rates and charges sufficient to support the Utility's ongoing revenue requirements and obligations under Indiana Code 8-1.5-3-8.

### General Ordinance 31-2025- Ordinance amending Order of Business 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and public hearing

An Ordinance of the Marion Common Council amending Order of Business on the Marion City Council agenda. Speaking Council President Nick McKinley

**Executive summary:** The purpose of this ordinance is to consolidate the Community Spotlight and the City Employee Spotlight on the Council Agenda down to just "Recognition-Spotlight."

## NEW BUSINESS

### General Ordinance 32-2025-Economic Development Commission ordinance 1<sup>st</sup> reading

An ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Marion amending the City of Marion Code of Ordinances. Speaking: Mayor Morrell, Jr. and Barnes & Thornburg, LLP

**Executive summary:** The City of Marion previously created the Marion Economic Development Commission. The Commission assists the city in financing economic development facilities through the issuance of economic development revenue bonds. While the Commission has been a longstanding body of the City, their enabling authorities have never been codified into the City's Municipal Code of Ordinances. Additionally, the city would like to increase the number of Commissioners from 3 to 5, as is permitted by Indiana law, to meet the growing demands of the Commission.

**Resolution 16-2025-** A resolution of the Common Council of the City of Marion for end of the year line-item transfers. Speaking: City Controller Dana Gault.

**Executive summary:** Certain conditions have developed since the adoption of the existing annual 2025 budget. Therefore, it is necessary to transfer appropriations to help departments meet their current needs.

**Encumbrances:** A review of the encumbrances for 2025 budget carrying over into 2026.

**Executive summary:** The Controller's office would like to encumber a portion of this year's budget to be paid for in 2026. All encumbrances have purchase orders, bids or inter local agreements where the work has begun and will be completed in 2026. Speaking: City Controller Dana Gault

**Election of City Council Attorney for 2026-** Speaking Council President Nick McKinley.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

REGULAR MEETING – MARION COMMON COUNCIL – DECEMBER 16, 2025 – 7:00 P.M. – CITY HALL

The Common Council of the City of Marion, Indiana met in a regular session on TUESDAY, the 16th day of December 2025, at the hour of 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

On the call of the roll the members were shown to be absent or present as follows:

Present: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill, and McKinley

Absent: Marshall and Whitton

Prayer: Mayor Ronald Morrell Jr.

Pledge of Allegiance: Councilman David Cain

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT – Nani’s Playroom

- Nick McKinley introduces the community spotlight featuring Nani's Playroom, owned by Jessica Brodt.
- Jessica Brodt describes Nani's Playroom as a space for families with children aged eight and under, offering imaginative play and a safe environment.
- The playroom includes a party room available for private bookings and offers various add-ons and decoration options.
- Jessica highlights the importance of hands-on play for children's development and the cost of \$12 per child, which includes two free adults.
- Jessica mentions the playroom's hours of operation and the recent award she won in a cookie contest.

CITY EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT-1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Clerk Aisha Richard

- Nick McKinley introduces Aisha Richard, the deputy city clerk, for a city employee spotlight.
- Aisha's colleagues, Debbie Goodman and Crystal, praise her for her trustworthiness, dependability, and hard work.
- Nick McKinley and other council members expressed their appreciation for Aisha's dedication and support during Debbie Goodman's health issues.
- Aisha humbly accepts the recognition and thanks her colleagues for their kind words.

CONSENT AGENDA FOR DECEMBER 16th preapproved claims and claims for DECEMBER 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

President Nick McKinley moves for a motion to approve the consent agenda, which includes the approval of minutes for November 18<sup>th</sup> and December 2, 2025, pre-approved claims, and claims.

- Gary Fordyce raises questions about encumbrances for CF Building Solutions, specifically for sidewalks downtown.
- Mike Graft clarifies that the \$30,000 for the 911 building is not yet encumbered and will be held until the work is completed.
- The council agrees to void the check and reissue it for \$30,000 less, ensuring the work is paid for when completed.

Motion to approve consent agenda- Cain, second Cline. Aye: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill, McKinley. Nay: none. Motion passes.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Erika Devine reports on the Board of Works approval of purchasing agreement and new vehicles for the street department.
- The Utility Board approved the budget and rate increase updates, with a focus on capital improvement projects.
- Erika mentions ongoing efforts to finalize the alley ordinance and plans for a future committee meeting.

### General Ordinance 30-2025- Amending monthly water use rates 3<sup>rd</sup> reading

An ordinance amending the monthly water user rates and charges for the city of Marion, Indiana.

- Robin Shrader explains the need for a 44.2% rate increase to cover operating costs and capital improvement projects.
- The increase would result in an average residential customer paying an additional \$6 to \$8 per month.
- Council members express concerns about past financial decisions, and the impact of wage increases on the current situation.
- Robin Shrader defends the wage increases, citing industry comparisons and the need to attract and retain qualified employees.

### **Discussion on Pilot Contribution and Financial Oversight**

- Gary Fordyce questions the impact of the pilot contribution on property taxes and suggests removing it from the rate increase.
- Robin Shrader explains that the pilot contribution is based on the utility's assets and corporate tax rate.
- Council members discuss the role of the utility board in financial oversight and the need for better communication and involvement.
- The council considers the pros and cons of the pilot contribution and the overall financial situation of the utility.

### **Final Considerations and Council Decision**

- Council members debate the merits of the rate increase and the pilot contribution, with some expressing dissatisfaction with past financial decisions.
- Robin Shrader emphasizes the need for the rate increase to maintain service quality and address long-term infrastructure needs.
- The council discusses the potential impact of Senate Bill 1 on utility finances and the importance of the IURC's review.

### **Capital Improvement and Financial Challenges**

- Robin Shrader emphasizes the need for capital improvement projects and the impact of depleting depreciation funds over a 10-year period.
- Nick McKinley discusses the importance of board positions in making real-time decisions on spending and raises, highlighting the financial strain on the city.
- Nick McKinley questions the decision to approve significant wage increases despite significant financial losses in 2023 and 2024.
- Robin Shrader acknowledges past mistakes but emphasizes the need to focus on future improvements and commits to presenting numbers and facts to the council regularly.

### **Amending Water Rates and Public Hearing**

- Gary Fordyce suggests reducing the proposed rate increase by 5% to alleviate the burden on ratepayers.
- The council discusses the possibility of removing the pilot fee and the implications of doing so.

Motion to pass General Ordinance 30-2025- to pass General Ordinance 30-2025 amending the monthly water usage removing the \$264,642 of Pilot annually- Fordyce, second Cline. Aye: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill. Nay: McKinley Motion passes.

General Ordinance 31, 2025-Amending Council Order of Business 2<sup>nd</sup> reading public hearing  
An Ordinance of the Marion Common Council amending Order of Business on the Marion City Council agenda.

- Nick McKinley introduces an ordinance to consolidate the community spotlight and city employee spotlight into a single recognition spotlight.
- The council discusses the benefits of consolidating the spotlights and moves to a public hearing.

**Public hearing**

None.

Motion to suspend the rules for General Ordinance 31-2025 to -Cain, second Brunner. Aye: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill, McKinley. Nay: none. Motion passes.

Motion to pass General Ordinance 31-2025 to -Cain, second Brunner. Aye: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill, McKinley. Nay: none. Motion passes.

General Ordinance 32- 2025-Economic Development Commission Ordinance 1<sup>st</sup> reading  
An Ordinance of the Marion Common Council amending Order of Business on the Marion City Council agenda.

- Mayor Ronald Morrell introduces an ordinance to codify the Marion Economic Development Commission (EDC) and increase the number of commissioners from three to five.
- The council discusses the current structure and challenges of the EDC, including the need for more commissioners to meet growing demands.
- Gary Fordyce inquires about the appointment process for the additional commissioners, and Mayor Morrell explains the current process.
- The council discusses the importance of the EDC in overseeing economic development projects and the need for a quorum to meet these demands.

Motion to pass General Ordinance 32-2025 to second reading public hearing -Cain, second Cowgill. Aye: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill, McKinley. Nay: none. Motion passes.

Resolution 16-2025- Line-item Transfers

A resolution of the Common Council of the City of Marion for the end of the year line-item transfers.

- Dana Galt presents a resolution for end-of-year line-item transfers, explaining the need to move appropriations around to meet current needs.
- Gary Fordyce questions the transfer of funds from the mayor's salaries to contractual services, and Lynda Faw explains the rationale behind it.

Motion to pass Resolution 16-2025-Cain, second Cline. Aye: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill, McKinley. Nay: none.

Encumbrances

A review of the encumbrances for 2025 budget carrying over into 2026.

- Dana Galt informs the council about the encumbrances for the 2025 budget that will be paid in 2026, explaining the process and the need for these encumbrances.

No vote taken. Information only.

Election of City Council attorney

- Nick McKinley introduces the election of the city council attorney for 2026, noting that only one application was received from Marty Harker, the current city council attorney.

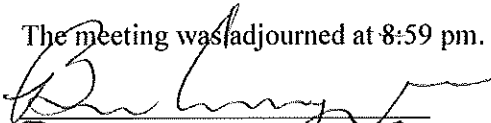
Motion to continue to retain attorney Martin Harker as city council attorney- Brunner, second Cain. Aye: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill, McKinley. Nay: none. Motion passes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

Motion to adjourn- Cowgill, second Fordyce. Aye: Cain, Fordyce, Brunner, Cline, Devine, Cowgill, McKinley. Nay: none. Motion passes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 pm.



Brian Cowgill - Council President