



GOSHEN COMMON COUNCIL

Minutes of the JANUARY 27, 2025 Regular Meeting

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

At 6:00 p.m., assisted by Mayor Gina Leichty, Jones Lehman (a 4th grader at Parkside Elementary School) called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Leichty asked Clerk-Treasurer Aguirre to conduct the roll call.

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 Tageeya Galeb (non-voting)

Absent: None

Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Leichty said there were no minutes to review/approve but that Clerk-Treasurer Aguirre had an announcement: Aguirre then made the following announcement before any Council action was taken:

"On Jan. 17, 2025, the Common Council met in an Executive Session at City Hall. The Executive Session was convened pursuant to the provisions of the Open Door Law and Indiana Code 5-14-1.5- 6.1(b), and as permitted by state statute: (10) When considering the appointment of a public official, to (B): Consider applications.

"More specifically, the Common Council reviewed and discussed the 2025 applicants for City Boards and Commissions. Appointments to City Boards and Commissions are scheduled to be made publicly at tonight's Council meeting. The Jan. 17 Executive Session was convened at 3:34 p.m. and adjourned at 5:23 p.m."

Approval of Meeting Agenda:

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

Privilege of the Floor:

At 6:04 p.m., Mayor Leichty invited public comments for matters not on the agenda.

Terry Martin of Goshen encouraged the City Council to move Council meetings to the third Monday of the month. He said the current schedule conflicts with Goshen Community Schools' board meetings.

Martin said, "As a parent of a student in Goshen Community Schools, I'm not able to attend both the City Council and the School Board meetings when they're at the same time on the same night. So, that is why I would simply encourage the City Council to consider moving the Council meetings to the third Monday every month."

River Norton of Goshen read the following poem he wrote titled "I Worry."

I Worry for the trees / I Worry the trees might one day stop breathing
I Worry about who stopped their breathing Who took their last breath from them?
Who?
Say who did it



Tell me, who is planting the olive trees, and who is / bulldozing them?

I Worry for the trees

I Worry the trees forget they're all connected through
vast networks of reciprocity without profit incentive

I Worry that most politicians and presidents would not be / able to pass the current citizenship test due to
participation and involvement in genocide FOR profit

I Worry for the trees

I Worry for the river

for the birds

for the flowers

I Worry for the families terrified of being ripped apart / without warning

I Worry for those uncomfortable with what I say

I Worry for the trees

I Worry nothing will change for them

I Worry for those who only see what they can gain from / the trees, instead of what they can learn

I Worry - who shows love to the trees?

Who shows love to our mother earth,

Just to show it?

After reading the poem, **Norton** questioned the presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in Goshen. He then said, "I know that you all have said that you will not let the Police Department do the work of ICE. Cool! Great! Why was ICE here? They should not be allowed to be here. I don't care if you're Republican or Democrat. These are families. These are humans with hearts beating and you want to take that away. For what? When will it be enough?"

Mayor Leichty asked Norton, "Are you asking for a response?"

Norton said, "No, I have another minute." He then said: "Families Belong Together. Families belong together. Families belong together. Families belong together. Families belong together All families belong together. All of them."

Afterward, **Mayor Leichty** said: "River. I don't think you'll get any disagreement from anybody sitting in the front of this room. But just to be clear, the Goshen City Council does not have jurisdiction over federal matters, so we cannot decide whether or not ICE comes to Goshen ... So, I just want to make sure that's clear and understood. Whether or not we want them here, we don't have a say."

Councilor Peel said, "There are many people on this Council that do not want ICE here, so please understand that if there was something legitimate, we could do, we would do it. And the families in Goshen do need to stay together, and it saddens me that some of them may not."

Gabrielle Ott of Goshen said she was a special education teacher, a foster parent for eight months last year, and is an aunt to "five bright, wonderful Mexican American kiddos." She acknowledged that many people don't have control over the presence of immigrants, but people can support families. Ott distributed to Councilors two information documents from the American Immigration Council: "New Americans in Elkhart, Marshall and St. Joseph County" and "U.S. Citizen Children Impacted by Immigration Enforcement."



Referring to the documents, Ott said, "According to the American Immigration Council, there are 4.4 million U.S. citizen children under 18, living with at least one undocumented parent, and that was 2018. In 2011, an estimated 5,000 children in foster care had a detained or deported relative parent. Locally, 36.8% of immigrants are naturalized citizens, but only 17.2 more percent of them are likely to be granted that so that is a lot of families locally facing the repercussions of this.

"And so, I just really want to bring it up in conversation. I feel like a lot of people are afraid to even ask, because, whether it's a loved one or a friend or a neighbor, they're afraid will then be targeted. As a woman who is not facing that threat. I just, I hope, to hear more conversation around it and more clarity. Where can people safely go to receive support?"

Ott said the foster care system is understaffed already and she worries the children of immigrants won't get the help they need. She continued, "I worry for my students. I worry for loved ones. I worry for people that I see at the grocery store, and it is affirming to hear that that is a worry that's shared because we should be. I'm shaking up here today because I'm angry, and I know a lot of people are. So, thank you for your time."

Mayor Leichty responded, "Gabrielle, thank you for coming and for sharing your thoughts. You're not alone. There are many people who share concerns about what's happening in the fabric of our community and in our nation. So, our jurisdiction is limited to what happens in the City of Goshen and, unfortunately, immigration is not something that the Goshen City Council has control over.

"But we do have control about how we treat our neighbors and I also want to commend you for being a foster parent. I know that's an extraordinarily challenging job, and Goshen needs more people like you. So, thank you for being an educator and for stepping up as a bonus parent for kids in our community. We appreciate you. Thank you."

Mayor Leichty closed the public comment period at 6:13 p.m.

1) Election of Council President & Minority Party Representative for 2025

Mayor Leichty announced that the Council would now elect a Council President and a Minority Party Representative for 2025. She turned the election over to Council President Weddell, who opened the nominations for the position of Council President.

Councilor Nisley nominated Councilor Weddell to be Council President. Councilor Riegsecker seconded the nomination.

Councilor Lederach nominated Councilor Peel to be Council President. Councilor Gerber seconded the nomination.

There were no further nominations, so Council President Weddell conducted a roll call vote.

Councilors voted as follows: Councilor Gerber voted for Councilor Peel; Councilor Lederach voted for Peel; Councilor Nisley voted for Councilor Weddell; Councilor Peel voted for Peel; Councilor Riegsecker voted for Weddell; Councilor Schrock voted for Weddell; Councilor Weddell voted for Weddell.

RESULTS: Four Council votes for Councilor Weddell and three votes for Councilor Peel, so Councilor Weddell was elected Council President for 2025.

Designation of Minority Party Representative:



Council President Weddell said that it was now time to designate the Minority Party Representative for 2025. Councilor Peel nominated Councilor Gerber. Councilor Lederach seconded the nomination.

There were no further nominations. Council President Weddell conduct a voice vote.

RESULTS: The three Democratic Council members, Gerber, Lederach and Peel, voted for Councilor Gerber, so Councilor Gerber was elected the Minority Party Representative for 2025.

2) Council appointments to City Boards and Commissions

Council President Weddell said the next agenda item were the Common Council appointments to City Boards and Commissions for 2025. He presided over the process.

Council President Weddell said the Council had to make two appointments to the City Redevelopment Commission to one-year terms. Applicants included the Council's 2024 appointees, Council President Brett Weddell and Colin Yoder, as well as Jason Oswald. He said Councilors would nominate and vote on each Redevelopment Commission appointee individually.

Councilors Nisley nominated Brett Weddell for re-appointment to the Redevelopment Commission.

Councilor Riegsecker seconded the nomination.

Councilor Gerber nominated Jason Oswald for appointment to the Redevelopment Commission. Councilor Lederach seconded the nomination.

There were no further nominations for the first position.

On a 5-2 voice vote, Councilors appointed Brett Weddell to a one-year term on the Redevelopment Commission with Councilors Nisley, Peel, Riegsecker, Schrock and Weddell voting for Weddell and Councilors Gerber and Lederach voting for Oswald.

Council President Weddell opened nominations for the second opening on the Redevelopment Commission.

Councilors Riegsecker/Schrock nominated Colin Yoder for appointment to the Redevelopment Commission.

Councilors Gerber/Lederach nominated Jason Oswald for appointment to the Redevelopment Commission.

Council President Weddell closed the nominations

Councilor Peel said her vote would be for Yoder, although she said Oswald would be an "amazing" Redevelopment Commission member and should be considered for a future appointment when there is a vacancy. However, she said she trusted Yoder and he has only served one year on the commission and deserved more time. Council President Weddell said he completely agreed with Councilor Peel's comments. Councilor Lederach said he also agreed with those comments but would be voting for Oswald.

On a voice vote, Councilors voted to appoint Colin Yoder to a one-year term on the Redevelopment Commission, by a 5-2 margin. Councilors Nisley, Peel, Riegsecker, Schrock and Weddell voted for Yoder and Councilors Gerber and Lederach voted for Oswald.

Council President Weddell said the Council had three vacancies on the Community Relations Commission and would be making two appointments to three-year terms. The applicants: E-man Monge and Lori Copsey.

Councilors Nisley/Lederach nominated E-man Monge and Lori Copsey, who are current CRC members, for re-appointment to the Community Relations Commission.



On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously voted to appoint E-man Monge and Lori Copsey to three-year terms on the Community Relations Commission, by a 7-0 margin.

Council President Weddell said the Council would make two appointments to the **Board of Building Appeals**. The sole applicant was **Josh Munson** (a current member). The **Council President** also recommended that the Council also appoint **Jason Oswald**.

Councilors Nisley/Peel nominated **Josh Munson** and **Jason Oswald** to the **Board of Building Appeals**.

Councilor Gerber pointed out that **Oswald** was not consulted about his possible appointment to the Board. **Mayor Leichty** said there would be adequate time to bring the appointment back to the Council for another vote if **Oswald** declined appointment to the Board. She also said the Board has only met once in 20 years. So, the Mayor recommended that the Council proceed with a vote and said **Oswald** was a good candidate for the Board.

Council President Weddell closed the nominations.

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously voted to appoint Josh Munson and Jason Oswald to the Board of Building Appeals, by a 7-0 margin.

Council President Weddell said the Council would now be making one appointment to the **Board of Zoning Appeals**. There was one applicant: **Lee Rohn**, a current member.

Councilors Nisley/Riegsecker nominated **Lee Rohn** for appointment to the **Board of Zoning Appeals**.

On a voice vote, Councilors voted unanimously, 7-0, to appoint Lee Rohn to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Finally, **Council President Weddell** said the Council would be making one appointment to the **Shade Tree Board**. There was one applicant: **Adam Knott**.

Council President Weddell invited nominations for the second position on the **Shade Tree Board**.

Councilors Nisley/Peel nominated **Adam Knott** for appointment to the **Shade Tree Board**.

By a voice vote, Councilors voted unanimously, 7-0, to appoint Adam Knott to the Shade Tree Board.

Mayor Leichty thanked the Council and the applicants.

3) Resolution 2025-01 – A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Goshen Initiating Annexation of Municipally Owned Real Estate (for the South Fire Station)

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Resolution 2025-01 *A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Goshen Initiating Annexation of Municipally Owned Real Estate (for the South Fire Station)*. **Council President Weddell** asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Resolution 2025-01 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Nisley made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-01.

BACKGROUND:

Resolution 2025-01 would initiate the City of Goshen's annexation of municipally-owned real estate for the new South Fire Station. According to Resolution 2025-01:

- The City owns certain real estate located outside but contiguous to the corporate boundaries of the municipality;
- The City desires to annex this real estate pursuant to Indiana Code § 36-4-3-5.1 to incorporate said real estate into the corporate boundaries of the City for the purpose of constructing and operating the New South Fire Station to serve the City and its residents;



- The City owns 100% of the real estate proposed for annexation, as evidenced by Warranty Deed dated Oct. 21, 2024 and recorded Dec. 6, 2024 as Document No. 2024-20366 in the Office of the Recorder of Elkhart County, Indiana;
- The real estate is contiguous to the City, as required by Indiana Code § 36-4-3-1.5, with at least one-eighth (12.5%) of aggregate external boundary of the real estate adjoining the City's corporate boundary;
- A legal description and map of the real estate to be annexed is attached hereto as Exhibit A and Exhibit B, respectively, and incorporated herein by reference; and
- The City will comply with all statutory requirements, including providing notice of and conducting a public hearing regarding this proposed annexation.

Upon passage of the resolution, it would be resolved by the Common Council:

1. The real estate proposed for annexation is described in Exhibit A and depicted in Exhibit B, which are attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
2. The City owns 100% of the real estate proposed for annexation, as evidenced by Warranty Deed dated October 21, 2024 and recorded December 6, 2024 as Document No. 2024-20366 in the Office of the Recorder of Elkhart County, Indiana.
3. The real estate proposed for annexation is contiguous to the City's corporate boundaries, satisfying the requirements of Indiana Code § 36-4-3-1.5.
4. The annexation of the real estate is for the purpose of constructing and operating the New South Fire Station, which will enhance public safety and provide critical emergency services to the residents of Goshen and the surrounding area.
5. A public hearing on the proposed annexation will be held on Monday, Feb. 24, 2025 at 6 p.m. local time, or soon thereafter, said hearing held in the Court Room / Council Chambers at 111 East Jefferson Street, Goshen, Indiana. Notice of the public hearing will be published in accordance with Indiana Code § 5-3-1 at least twenty (20) days prior to the hearing date.
6. This Resolution serves as the City's petition for annexation pursuant to Indiana Code § 36-4-3-5.1. Following the public hearing, the City Council intends to consider the adoption of an ordinance annexing the real estate into the corporate boundaries of the City.

SUMMARY OF JAN. 27, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2025-01:

City Attorney Bodie Stegelmann said the current proposed location of the City's new fire station is outside the City boundaries, so there's a need to go through an annexation to bring that within the City boundaries.

Typically, if a developer was seeking to have land annexed, **Stegelmann** said the developer would file a petition with the City and the Common Council would have to act on that petition. In this case, he said the City owns the land, so it has to annex the property into the City.

Stegelmann said tonight is just a first step with a resolution to memorialize the fact the City is starting the annexation process. He said annexation will come back to the Council in February for further action.

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

At 6:27 p.m., **Mayor Leichty** asked if there were any questions or comments about Resolution 2024-24 from the audience. There were none.

In response to a question from **Councilor Schrock**, **Stegelmann** clarified the scope of the annexation.



On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Resolution 2025-01, *A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Goshen Initiating Annexation of Municipally Owned Real Estate (for new South Fire Station)*, by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors present voting yes, at 6:27 p.m.

4) Ordinance 5212 – Amending Ordinance Violations Bureau

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Ordinance 5212, *Amending Ordinance Violations Bureau*. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Ordinance 5212 by title only, which was done. **Weddell/Schrock made a motion to approve Ordinance 5212 on First Reading.**

BACKGROUND:

Ordinance 5212 would make changes to the City's Ordinance Violations Bureau.

According to Ordinance 5212:

- Indiana Code § 33-36-2-1 allows a municipal corporation to establish an ordinance violations bureau;
- Indiana Code § 36-1-6-3 allows municipal corporations to enforce ordinances through admission of violation before an ordinance violations bureau and allows that bureau to turn over to the municipal corporation all sums collected as civil penalties for ordinance violations; and
- The Goshen Common Council Indiana established an ordinance violations bureau which is codified in the Goshen City Code at §1.2.1.1;
- The Common Council has revised the ordinance violations bureau from time to time, most recently in Ordinance 5171, on Nov.13, 2023, and
- The Common Council wishes to further revise the provisions of the ordinance violations bureau by adding Goshen City Code violations that are subject to admission before the violations clerk, and define appropriate levels and amounts of civil penalties to be imposed for such violations.

Ordinance 5212 includes provisions for the creation and responsibilities of the Violations Bureau and its staff, the list and types of violations, the schedule of civil penalties for violations, the personnel responsible for enforcement, and how and where those cited for violations can contest or admit to violations and pay the penalties.

Ordinance 5212 would add the following violations (and those responsible for enforcement):

Fire Prevention Ordinance (Members of the Fire Department)

For Off-Road vehicles, Operation, equipment, operator, financial responsibility violations (Ordinance Compliance Officers, Police Officers)

For Golf Carts, Operation, equipment, operator, financial responsibility violations (Ordinance Compliance Officers, Police Officers)

For Visual Obstructions, Creating or allowing visual obstruction at intersection (Ordinance Compliance Officers, Police Officers)

For Disorderly Properties, Maintaining a Disordering Property (Members of Legal Department, Building Department, Police Department, or Ordinance Compliance Officer)

For Trees – Planting, Maintenance, and Removal, Planting, Maintenance, and Removal (Ordinance compliance officer or Members of Environmental Resilience Department)



For Garage Sales, Garage Sales – Duration and Frequency (Members of Legal Department, Building Department, Police Department, or Ordinance Compliance Officer)

Ordinance 5212 also states that for certain Building violations, members of the Building Department are responsible for enforcement and not just the Building Commissioner and for cemetery curfew violations or consumption of alcoholic beverages in cemeteries, Police Officers (and not Ordinance Compliance Officers) are responsible for enforcement.

SUMMARY OF JAN. 27, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 5212:

City Attorney Stegelmann said the ordinance establishing the City's Ordinance Violations Bureau has come before the Council three or four times for modifications. He said the bureau includes an alternative enforcement process that avoids going to court – police or code enforcement officers write tickets to people, who go to the Goshen City Court. **Stegelmann** said Ordinance 5212 would add certain violations that have been subject to new ordinances or revised ordinances. He said these include a fire prevention, the off-road vehicle ordinance and the golf cart ordinance as well as language clarifying the ordinance. Again, he said this was just bringing in some new ordinances that have been adopted and adding some that reflect fairly common violations.

In response to a question from **Councilor Riegsecker**, **Stegelmann** said included in the Council packet was the draft ordinance and a version which highlighted the proposed changes,

Mayor Leichty invited additional questions from Councilors. There were none.

At 6:29 p.m., **Mayor Leichty** invited questions from members of the audience. There were none.

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

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Ordinance 5212, Amending Ordinance Violations Bureau, on First Reading, by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting yes, at 6:29 p.m.

Councilors gave unanimous consent to proceed with a Second Reading and vote on Ordinance 5212.

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction on Second Reading of Ordinance 5212, *Amending Ordinance Violations Bureau*. Council President **Weddell** asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Ordinance 5212 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Riegsecker made a motion to approve Ordinance 5212 on Second Reading.

The Mayor invited further comments or questions from the Council and the audience. There were none.

Council President **Weddell** said Councilors were ready to vote.

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Ordinance 5212, Ordinance 5212, Amending Ordinance Violations Bureau, on Second Reading, by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting yes, at 6:30 p.m.

5) Ordinance 5214 – Amend Ordinance 5198, 2025 Compensation for Civil City and Utilities Employees, to Add Two Days to be Observed as Holidays

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Ordinance 5214, *Amend Ordinance 5198, 2025 Compensation for Civil City and Utilities Employees, to Add Two Days to be Observed as Holidays*. Council President **Weddell** asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Ordinance 5214 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Schrock made a motion to approve Ordinance 5214 on First Reading.



BACKGROUND:

Ordinance 5214 would add two days to be observed by Goshen Civil City and Utilities employees.

According to Ordinance 5214:

- Ordinance 5198, 2025 Compensation for Civil City and Utilities Employees, was passed by the Goshen Common Council on Oct. 28, 2024;
- Ordinance 5198 designates the dates the City of Goshen observes as holidays.
- The City observed 15 days as holidays in 2024; however, Ordinance 5198 currently designates 13 days to be observed as holidays since there are no primary election or general election days in 2025.
- City administration wishes to amend Ordinance 5198 to add two days to be observed as holidays in 2025.

If Ordinance 5214 was approved, the list of holidays would be amended as follows:

- (1) **New Year's Day** (January 1) – observed Wednesday, Jan. 1.
 - (2) **Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday** (Third Monday in January) – observed Monday, Jan. 20.
 - (3) **Good Friday** – observed Friday, April 18.
 - (4) **Memorial Day** (Last Monday in May) – observed Monday, May 26.
 - (5) **Juneteenth National Independence Day Holiday** (June 19 and following Friday) – observed Thursday, June 19 and Friday, June 20 (added holiday.)
 - (6) **Independence Day** (July 4) – observed Friday, July 4.
 - (7) **Labor Day** (First Monday in September) – observed Monday, Sept. 1.
 - (8) **Indigenous Peoples' Day/Columbus Day** (Second Monday in October) – observed Monday, Oct. 13.
 - (9) **Veterans Day** (Nov. 11) – observed Tuesday, Nov. 11.
 - (10) **Thanksgiving** (Fourth Thursday in November and following Friday) – observed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 27 and 28.
 - (11) **Christmas** (December 24, December 25 and following Friday) – observed Wednesday, Dec. 24, Thursday, Dec. 25 and Friday, Dec. 26 (added holiday).
- (B) After thirty (30) days of employment, each employee in a position scheduled to work at least 1,560 hours each year and paid on an hourly basis shall receive holiday pay based on the employee's current wage rate and the number of hours the employee would otherwise have been regularly scheduled to work on that holiday.
- (C) Each employee in a position scheduled to work at least 1,560 hours each year and paid on an hourly basis who is required to work on a holiday shall receive one and one-half (1½) times the employee's regular rate per hour for all hours worked in addition to the holiday pay. For the purposes of this paragraph, the employee must work the actual holiday which may not necessarily be the date observed by the City.
- (D) Each employee in a position scheduled to work at least 1,560 hours each year and paid on a salary basis shall not have their salary reduced in weeks in which a holiday is observed.

SUMMARY OF JAN. 27, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 5214:

Mayor Leichty said that although it would appear the City was seeking to add two holidays this year, if approved Ordinance 5214 would keep the same number of holidays as in 2024. She said last year the City started giving employees primary and general election days as paid holidays but, there is no primary or general election in 2025. The **Mayor** said the City didn't want to take away what was already given to City employees, so Ordinance 5214 would maintain the same number of holidays in 2025 as the City had in 2024.



Mayor Leichty proposed that in 2025 the City add an additional holiday on June 20, which would be the day after the Juneteenth holiday, which falls on a Thursday. She also proposed that the City add an additional holiday on the Friday after this year's Christmas holiday, which will be celebrated on a Wednesday (Christmas Eve) and Thursday (Christmas Day). Next year, the City would shift back to celebrating as holidays the primary and general elections.

Mayor Leichty invited questions from Councilors.

Councilor Peel said she was struggling with adding the two holidays. She asked about the impact of adding those holidays for the Police Department. She asked if this would affect the budgets of City departments.

Mayor Leichty said there would be an impact on the pay for employees because it costs more to pay people for those days. But, she added, "My concern is giving people something and then removing it. And since the Council established that as an acceptable practice, I think it would be demoralizing to our employees to then take that away this year, so I would encourage the Council to consider keeping it."

Council President Weddell responded, "Anytime there's any vacation day, especially for police and fire, you have overtime, as they still have to work. But because they're already getting it, it's the same. You could have all 15 holidays consecutively and, it would still be the same ... It's not going to cost the City anymore."

Mayor Leichty confirmed that, and **Councilor Peel** said she now had a better understanding of the request but was "just struggling with the days."

Councilor Gerber said if the ordinance was approved, City employees would have off three days around the Christmas holiday. She asked, "Will it be explained to them that this is a one-time situation, so that they don't come to expect that, because ... once you give people things, it's very hard to take them back." **Mayor Leichty** said employees would be told that in 2026, employees will have 15 holidays, including the two election days.

Council President Weddell said he hopes the reason for the two new 2025 holidays days are explained so that no one is offended when the day after Juneteenth 2026 is no longer a City holiday. **Mayor Leichty** said, "Your point is well taken, sir, but that day, the 19th, is also a federal holiday that is recognized by the state and the City as well."

Councilor Riegecker clarified the holidays in 2026 and said there might need to be yearly changes in the holidays.

Councilor Schrock said holidays are shifted yearly in the private sector.

Mayor Leichty thanked Councilors for the conversation.

At 6:38 p.m., **Mayor Leichty** invited questions from members of the audience. There were none.

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

The Mayor requested a roll call vote.

On a roll call vote, Councilors unanimously passed Ordinance 5214, Amend Ordinance 5198, 2025 Compensation for Civil City and Utilities Employees, to Add Two Days to be Observed as Holidays, on First Reading by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting yes, at 6:38 p.m.

Councilors gave unanimous consent to proceed with a Second Reading and vote on Ordinance 5214.

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction on Second Reading of Ordinance 5214, *Amend Ordinance 5198, 2025 Compensation for Civil City and Utilities Employees, to Add Two Days to be Observed as Holidays.*

Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Ordinance 5214 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Schrock made a motion to approve Ordinance 5214 on Second Reading.



The Mayor invited further comments or questions from the Council and the audience. There were none. Council President Weddell said Councilors were ready to vote.

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Ordinance 5214, Amend Ordinance 5198, 2025 Compensation for Civil City and Utilities Employees, to Add Two Days to be Observed as Holidays, on Second Reading by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting yes, at 6:39 p.m.

6) Ordinance 5207 – Amend Title 2, Civil Rights, Article 1, Community Relations of the Goshen City Code
Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Ordinance 5207, *Amend Title 2, Civil Rights, Article 1, Community Relations of the Goshen City Code*. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Ordinance 5207 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Nisley made a motion to approve Ordinance 5207 on Second Reading.

BACKGROUND:

Before the Council for Second Reading was Ordinance 5207, which would amend Title 2, Civil Rights, Article 1, Community Relations of the Goshen City Code.

According to Ordinance 5207:

- The Goshen Common Council created a Community Relations Commission in 2004 as part of Ordinance 4201, as amended by Ordinance 4339, Ordinance 4526, and Ordinance 5178.
- The Common Council seeks to amend and clarify the powers and duties of the Community Relations Commission.
- Ordinance 4201, as amended by Ordinance 4339, Ordinance 4526, and Ordinance 5178, are codified in Goshen City Code Title 2, Civil Rights, Article 1, Community Relations.
- If approved by the Common Council, Goshen City Code Title 2, Article 1 would be amended.

Ordinance 5207 includes provisions for the City's public policy of endorsing equal opportunity and the establishment of a Community Relations Commission as well as its membership, appointment, terms, vacancies and removal. It also has provisions on the meetings, officers and quorum of the Commission, its powers and duties and its funding.

If approved, Ordinance 5207 would make the following changes in the ordinance that created the Commission and the revisions made in 2006 by Ordinance 4339:

Under 2.1.1.5 Powers and duties, Section "h" would now read: "The Commission shall submit to the Mayor and Common Council an annual report of the Commission's activities, including the number and type of complaints referred.

SUMMARY OF JAN. 27, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 5207:

Mayor Leichty thanked people for their continued conversations about the ordinance. She said, "Civil rights and community relations are something that are of utmost importance to the Council and my administration, so I appreciate the thoughtfulness and care that the Council has invested in making sure that we are serving our community well and providing adequate resources to people who are most vulnerable, while also reaching out and engaging people in a process of active participation in our City."



Mayor Leichty said her office received two emails today about ensuring the commission had a community relations director, which she said she would comfortable doing if there was a Council motion to that effect.

The **Mayor invited questions from Councilors.**

Councilor Peel said she also has appreciated the conversations about the ordinance, and noted they have been going on for a long time. "It's not something that is brand new and, specifically, we've been discussing changes to the ordinance and to the commission for a year – and what the CRC does and what the Community Engagement Department is going to do."

Councilor Peel said "I know that there is a perception that this has been pushed through quickly, and it has not been. And I want to make that pretty clear." She encouraged people to attend CRC meetings, adding, "If you really want to know what's going on in these meetings, come to any one of our public meetings so that you can have a voice and some knowledge about what we've been doing."

Councilor Peel said there have been good conversations about the future of the CRC. She also said "This Commission is very important part of our community, and we all here want to see it succeed. We want to see it thrive, and we want it just to be something we can be proud of in our community. And I think that the Mayor's Office is really trying to make that happen."

At **Council President Weddell** request, **City Attorney Stegelmann** clarified the version of the ordinance that the Council would be considering. It included an amendment passed at the last Council meeting which dealt with an annual report to be prepared by commission.

Councilor Lederach said he wanted to propose an amendment that was then circulated by **Councilor Gerber**. The amendment was follows: "The Mayor may appoint a Community Relations Manager. The Manager shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor and may be dismissed without cause. Among other tasks assigned by the Mayor, the Manager would facilitate the Community Relations Commission (CRC) meetings. The facilitation could include, but is not limited to, collaborating with the CRC Commissioners to create agendas for the meetings, working with CRC Commissions to develop short- and long-term goals based on the duties described in section 2.1.1.5 (a)-(h) of this ordinance, and providing guidance and support to CRC Commissioners to accomplish these goals." (**EXHIBIT #1**)

Councilor Lederach explained the rationale for the amendment, which he said was supported by people in the community and was discussed by Councilors. He said there has been a lot of discussion about this CRC position but not as much about the duties of the commission.

Councilor Lederach said the commission is empowered to study and recommend to the Common Council and the Mayor programs and policies that enhance communications and understanding among the residents and community; develop and maintain programs that build positive relationships; engage with neighborhoods; and identify emerging community issues and proactively develop strategies to address them through collaboration with residents and local organization. He said this could include town hall meetings, public forums, listening sessions, and creating task forces and working groups that address specific community needs.

Councilor Lederach said, "There's a lot of worthy work in that and meaty work and work that that has significance for what happens to the community of Goshen. And then the rest of it is about reporting ... certain things should be passed on to the Indiana Civil Rights Commission."

Councilor Lederach read the one-paragraph amendment aloud and then said, "I think this amendment listens to some of the concerns we've heard. It clarifies the role of the manager. It focuses the work on the duties that are a top priority to the Commission, and it points to a really important first task – coming up with a strategic plan."



Councilors discussed where to insert the proposed amendment in the draft ordinance. **City Attorney Stegelmann** recommended that it be placed as Chapter 1, 2.1.1.5, Powers and Duties, Section 5, subparagraph (i).

Councilor Lederach then made the motion to amend the ordinance by inserting a paragraph that specified that the Mayor may appoint a Community Relations Manager and which outlined the Manager's duties. Council President Weddell seconded the motion.

Councilor Gerber said, "I think this is an essential amendment. I think it signifies the intent and I think it underscores the importance of having a strong manager in that position. I also echo the importance of having a really good strategic planning process that involves the commissioners, is led by the Manager and involves members of the community." Mayor Leichty responded, "I concur."

At 6:56 p.m., Mayor Leichty invited public comments on the proposed amendment to Ordinance 5207.

Julia Gautsche of Goshen supported the amendment, which she said answered most of her questions about the Manager role. She said, "I think it defines that well, and I am strongly in support of it."

David Janzen of Goshen said he has lived in Goshen for 12 years and before that lived in Elkhart for 40 years. He said, "I know from my black friends what they felt about Goshen back 50, 40 years ago, and I'm delighted about what's happened in Goshen – the changes that have gone on. It's been a community-wide thing.

"We enter a time that's pretty perilous, it seems to me, about will we continue, that. There are reasons that the Ku Klux Klan dropped their flyers in Goshen. I think they thought there would be a receptive audience, perhaps. And that there wasn't speaks a lot to Goshen's change," Janzen said. "So, this is a good step again, keeping the momentum going the right direction, and I urge you to support and add the person."

Terry Martin of Goshen said he also supported adding back the CRC Manager position. He said the CRC's work "is vital to the social health of our community. In addition to initiating the Juneteenth celebration several years ago, they have developed numerous other opportunities for our City's residents to interact across cultural, political, and socioeconomic differences."

Martin continued, "Through the CRCs efforts, we have gotten to know our neighbors better. Indeed, one of the CRCs goals is to encourage respectful interactions among Goshen's diverse population. My studies abroad as an undergrad studying Spanish helped me recognize the importance of getting to know our neighbors, both local and global, from diverse cultural backgrounds.

"Building relationships with our neighbors from cultural backgrounds different from our own is an excellent way to dismantle racism and stereotypes and realize that we are more similar, then we are different. The CRC deserves a qualified and passionate manager who will continue leading their work to strengthen our community and make Goshen a better place for all," **Martin** concluded.

The Mayor invited comments from **Marilyn Torres of Goshen**, who had submitted a letter about the CRC to the Mayor's Office. She declined the opportunity to provide additional comments.

Dan Shenk of Goshen also affirmed Councilor Lederach's amendment. He recalled efforts that he and Leroy Berry of Goshen made in 2014 with CRC leaders about bringing forward a resolution about the City of Goshen's history as a "sundown" city, one which discouraged the presence of African-Americans at night.



Shenk said the resolution eventually was endorsed by the CRC and Goshen Ministerial Association and eventually by the Common Council. He said that experience showed that it was good to have a CRC director and chairman. "And both of them were very helpful as this happened in Goshen a decade ago."

Mayor Leichty closed the comment period at 7:01 p.m.

Mayor Leichty asked if Councilors were ready to vote on the amendment. Council President **Weddell** indicated that they were.

On a voice vote, Councilors, by a unanimous 7-0 vote, approved a motion by Councilors **Lederach** and **Weddell** to amend Ordinance 5207 by inserting a paragraph that specified that the Mayor may appoint a Community Relations Manager and which outlined the Manager's duties.

The Mayor asked if Councilors had additional questions or comments about Ordinance 5207. They did not. At 7:02 p.m., Mayor **Leichty** invited further questions from members of the audience. There were none.

On a voice vote, Councilors then unanimously passed Ordinance 5207, Amend Title 2, Civil Rights, Article 1, Community Relations of the Goshen City Code, on Second Reading by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting yes, at 7:02 p.m.

After the vote, Council President **Weddell** thanked Councilors **Lederach**, **Gerber** and **Peel** for working on the amendment.

Councilor **Lederach** said, "I think it's worth noting that I haven't been on the Council long, for a year, but I've had more contact on this particular issue than any which speaks, I think, to the climate of the of politics now, but also to the involvement of our community."

Council President **Weddell** said, "I want to hammer back on something that Councilman **Peel** said. If you're passionate about the CRC, then go to CRC meetings. Start participating; start being part of that group." He added, "I think we're going to see an improvement in the action coming forward from that group."

Mayor **Leichty** responded, "I concur. And one of the things that we're doing with all City meetings is trying to have a consistent time. So, having board and commission meetings at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and they will be live, streamed and recorded. So, even if you cannot participate in person, there are other means by which you will be able to see, listen in and contribute thoughts and ideas as well. So, we're hoping to make those (meetings) more accessible to people and they will be in this in this space as well, so adding consistency in our meeting location."

Councilor **Gerber** said, "I just want to add that I really appreciate the engagement from the members of the community. I've had some really good conversations and it's very inspiring to see how committed people are."

Councilor **Schrock** asked if it would be possible to further amend Ordinance 5207 to require that the CRC's annual report also mention positive things that have happened. Councilors and the Mayor discussed the procedures to further amend Ordinance 5207 now that it has been approved. The Mayor said the CRC reports normally include positive activities of the commission. There was no further action.



7) Resolution 2024-03 – Adopting a Policy to Allow Participation in Meetings by Electronic Means of Communication

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Resolution 2024-03 *Adopting a Policy to Allow Participation in Meetings by Electronic Means of Communication*. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Resolution 2024-03 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Peel made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-03.

BACKGROUND:

Resolution 2024-03 would allow Common Council members to participate in Council meetings by electronic means of communication, essentially online video conferencing, allowing users to be seen and heard.

According to Resolution 2024-03:

- Indiana Code 5-14-1.5-3.5 allows a member of the governing body of a political subdivision who is not physically present at a meeting of the governing body to participate in a meeting by any electronic means of communication that:
 1. Allows all participating members of the governing body to simultaneously communicate with each other; and
 2. Allows the public to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting, except for a meeting held in executive session;
- To allow this, the governing body must adopt a written policy establishing the procedures that apply to a member's participation in a meeting by an electronic means of communication, which may include procedures that are more restrictive than the procedures established by I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.5; and
- The Goshen Common Council seeks to adopt a written policy establishing the procedures that apply to a member's participation in a meeting by an electronic means of communication.

By approving Resolution 2024-03, the Council would adopt the following Electronic Meetings Policy, summarized as follows:

Section 1. Attendance at Meetings of the Common Council by Electronic Means of Communication

A. Council member not physically present for a Council meeting may participate by electronic means that:

1. Allows all participating members of the Common Council to simultaneously communicate with each other; and
2. Allows the public to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting, except for a meeting held in executive session.

B. The following conditions apply to a Common Council member not physically present but participating in the meeting by an electronic means of communication:

1. At least fifty percent (50%) of the Common Council members must be physically present at a meeting at which a member may participate by an electronic means of communication.
2. All votes taken during a meeting at which at least one (1) member participates by an electronic means of communication must be taken by roll call vote.
3. Subject to Section 2, paragraph C, a member who participates in a meeting by an electronic means of communication may participate in final action only if the member can be seen and heard.
4. Subject to Section 2, paragraph C, a member who participates by an electronic means of communication shall be considered present for purposes of establishing a quorum.



Section 2. Limitations

A. A member of the Common Council may not attend more than two (2) meetings in a calendar year by an electronic means of communication, unless the member's electronic participation is due to:

1. Military service;
2. Illness or other medical condition;
3. Death of a relative; or
4. An emergency involving actual or threatened injury to persons or property.

B. A member of the Common Council may attend two (2) consecutive meetings ("a Set of Meetings") by an electronic means of communication; however, a member must physically attend, in person, at least one (1) meeting between Sets of Meetings that the member attends by an electronic means of communication, unless the member's absence is due to:

1. Military service;
2. Illness or other medical condition;
3. Death of a relative; or
4. An emergency involving actual or threatened injury to persons or property.

C. A member of the Common Council may NOT participate in a meeting by an electronic means of communication at which the Common Council may take final action to:

1. Adopt a budget;
2. Make a reduction in personnel;
3. Initiate a referendum;
4. Establish or increase a fee;
5. Establish or increase a penalty;
6. Exercise the Council's power of eminent domain; or
7. Establish, raise or renew a tax.

Section 3. Technological Failure

A. Technological failure in an electronic means of communication that disrupts or prevents:

A. The simultaneous communication between a member who is not physically present at the meeting and the Common Council; or

B. A member of the public who is not present at the meeting from attending and observing the meeting; does not prevent the Common Council from conducting the meeting or affect the validity of an action taken by the Common Council at the meeting if the sum of the Common Council members physically present at the meeting and the Common Council members participating by electronic communication without technological failure satisfy the quorum and (if a final action is taken) the voting requirements of the Common Council.

Section 4. Minutes or Memoranda

The minutes or memoranda of a meeting at which any member of the Common Council participates by an electronic means of communication must:

A. Identify each member who:

1. Was physically present at the meeting;



2. Participated in the meeting by using any electronic means of communication; and
3. Was absent; and

B. Identify the electronic means of communication by which:

1. Members participated in the meeting; and
2. Members of the public attended and observed the meeting, if the meeting was not an executive session.

Section 5. Declared Emergencies

A. Members are not required to be physically present for a meeting of the Common Council during such time when following authorities have declared a disaster emergency and the disaster emergency remains in effect:

1. The governor under I.C. 10-14-3-12; or
 2. The mayor under I.C. 10-14-3-29,
- to the extent allowed by I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.7.

B. Members may participate in a meeting during a declared emergency by an electronic means of communication provided that:

1. At least a quorum of the members participate in the meeting by an electronic means of communication or in person.
2. The public may simultaneously attend and observe the meeting unless the meeting is an executive session.
3. The minutes or memoranda of the meeting must comply with requirements for meetings where members are allowed to attend by an electronic means of communication.

C. All votes taken during a meeting at which at least one member participates by an electronic means of communication must be taken by roll call vote.

Section 6. Definitions

The definitions found in I.C. 5-14-1.5-2, as amended, shall apply to this policy.

Section 7. Application

The policy adopted by this resolution shall be known as the "Electronic Meetings Policy" of the Common Council and it shall apply to meetings of the Common Council and all other governing bodies of the City of Goshen, excluding the Goshen Board of Aviation Commissioners, until such time as such other governing bodies adopt policies substantially similar to this policy, in accordance with Indiana law.

Section 8. Intent of Policy

A. It is the intent of this policy to comply with the provisions of I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.5 and I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.7, as each may be amended from time to time, to allow for a member of the Common Council who is not physically present at a meeting to participate by any electronic means of communication. In the event that I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.5 and I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.7 are amended or repealed, then this policy shall be amended to comply with said amended statutory provisions.

B. This resolution incorporates by reference the provisions of I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.5 and I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.7, as each may be amended from time to time; however, the more restrictive provisions of this resolution shall govern.



Section 9. Effective Date

This resolution shall be effective from and after adoption.

On Nov. 18, 2024, the Common Council members extensively discussed Resolution 2024-03 and then tabled it indefinitely for consideration at a future meeting.

SUMMARY OF JAN. 27, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2024-03:

Council President Weddell said he appreciated the Council delaying consideration of this matter until he could be present. He then said he would be making a motion he believed would get a "second," but didn't think would pass.

Council President Weddell made a motion to remove Sections 1, Sections 2 and Sections 3 of Resolution 2024-03. Council Nisley seconded the motion.

Council President Weddell said he made this motion because "I do not agree with having remote participation under any circumstances. We were elected to serve on this, to be present. It's just a strong feeling I have ... If you miss a meeting, that's fine, whether it's a medical reason, whether it's work related, whether it's to take a vacation. I don't second guess, or I don't begrudge anyone for missing a meeting, but I feel strongly that being part of this Council means you are here participating in person."

Councilor Nisley said, "And that is why I seconded, pretty much the same thing. The thing is, we all knew what we were getting into when we were ran for these positions. We knew what the times were, what it was all going to entail, and I feel strongly that if you can make the meeting, you should make the meeting. Like Brett said, if you got something else going on, I understand that. I missed a meeting a month ago because of medical (reasons)."

Council President Weddell said he would leave in the remaining sections of Resolution 2024-03 "because of the states of emergency declared by the Governor or the Mayor, we still have to have a policy. So, those sections cover those cases. For instance, COVID was one of those instances."

At the **Clerk-Treasurer's** request, **Council President Weddell** clarified that his motion would delete Sections 1, 2 and 3 and prohibit remote participation unless there was a declared state of emergency. He added that he didn't know that there had to be any Council discussion on the proposed amendment. There could just be a vote.

Mayor Leichty said, "The purpose of introducing this is to provide for those extraordinary circumstances where a Councilor does need to be absent, but there may be a need to ensure a quorum And not only does this apply to our Council, but would be adopted by all of our boards and commissions; we need a consistent policy for all of our boards and commissions.

"And **Councilor Weddell**, I agree with you. I think if people commit to being on a board, they need to show up. I also recognize that there's a reality, that there are some rare occasions, and the State has developed a policy acknowledging that there are some rare occasions when people need to be able to participate remotely. And I think it would behoove the City to move forward with a policy that acknowledges that reality.

The **Mayor** continued, "There is a narrow window through which we would be adopting this, that because of the stringency of the State's guidelines about making decisions about budgetary matters and what qualifies as a reason for absence.

"So, I feel comfortable with the discussion that Councilors have had in the preparation of this proposal that we could move forward and still have the understanding, not only from those sitting in this room around these tables today, but from other boards or commissioners that we expect them to show up in person, and that that is the expectation."



Mayor Leichty asked the Clerk-Treasurer to conduct a roll call vote on the proposed amendment by Councilors Weddell and Nisley.

On a roll call vote, the motion by Councilors Weddell and Nisley, to delete Sections 1, 2 and 3 and to prohibit remote unless there was a declared state of emergency, failed by a 3-4 vote with Councilors Nisley, Schrock and Weddell voting "yes" and Councilors Gerber, Lederach, Peel and Riegsecker voting "no" at 7:12 p.m.

Mayor Leichty declared that the amendment failed on a 4-3 vote. She asked if Councilors had additional comments or questions about Resolution 2024-03.

Council President Weddell thanked Councilors for hearing him out. Councilor Gerber said she appreciated the effort. Council President Weddell said he appreciated the work that went into the resolution.

Councilors joked briefly with Councilor Riegsecker about his possible remote participation.

Councilor Riegsecker said he appreciated the Council President putting him "on the spot." He then said, "I'm on for attending every meeting. I've worked this calendar right here to work around Fair Board City Council and anything else that I have. And there's very limited time that I have to get away."

Councilor Riegsecker said the only possible remote participation could be because of special unexpected Council meetings might be added. "So, I would just like that emergency option to do that," he said. Councilor Riegsecker added it will be good to see how this works and it was also good to have this option to help the City's work proceed.

Councilor Gerber said, "I agree with what you've expressed, Don. Thank you for saying that." She requested that the video of livestreamed meetings be reversed so that the agenda is a smaller image and the Councilors be in the larger image. She said, "I've had some complaints, because people who try to watch the meetings online and are only seeing an agenda." Mayor Leichty said City staff can explore that option.

Clerk-Treasurer Aguirre said, "This has been mentioned before, but for those who will be participating remotely, it will be very important that this be tested well before the meeting, and not as the meeting begins just to make sure that any technical issues are worked out." Mayor Leichty said, "Yes, you'll have to have a strong Internet connection, and you have to be visible." Councilor Gerber said, "I think the understanding is that it's on us."

Mayor Leichty said, "So, just as a point of clarification, the way that our meetings are hosted, they're presented as webinars. And so, in order for you to be able to speak, because the general public cannot speak during a presentation, you have to be added. So, that's why Amanda Guzman (Communications Manager) would need to be notified before the meeting that you're planning to participate remotely. And we'd ask for ... a minimum of a 24-hour notice, so she can make sure that you're set up."

Councilor Peel said she would recommend that Councilors participating remotely log in 30 minutes in advance "because you never know what's going to pop up and have their cell phone on hand and make sure that you can communicate with them," City staff.

Council President Weddell mentioned that Councilors are supposed to get iPads soon. He then mentioned that Councilors still had to vote on Resolution 2024-03.

At 7:20 p.m., Mayor Leichty asked if there were any questions or comments about Resolution 2024-03 from the audience. There were none.

At the Council President's request, the Mayor requested a roll call vote.



On a roll call vote, Councilors approved Resolution 2024-03, *Adopting a Policy to Allow Participation in Meetings by Electronic Means of Communication*, by a 4-3 vote with Councilors Gerber, Lederach, Peel and Riegsecker voting “yes” and Councilors Nisley, Schrock and Weddell voting “no” at 7:20 p.m.

8) 2025 Common Council meeting schedule

Mayor Leichty presented the draft Council meeting schedule for 2025.

BACKGROUND:

This was the proposed **2025 GOSHEN COMMON COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE:**

| | | |
|------------------|--|---------|
| Friday, Jan. 17 | City Council: Exec. Session: Application Evaluations | 3:30 PM |
| Monday, Jan. 27 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, Feb. 10 | City Council pool bond hearing | 6 p.m. |
| Monday, Feb. 24 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Friday, March 14 | City Council: Work Session Fire Territory & Fee Study | 1:30 PM |
| Monday, March 24 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, April 28 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, May 19 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Friday, June 13 | City Council: Work Session Lead Line & 5 Year Capital Plan | 1:30 PM |
| Monday, June 23 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, July 28 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, Aug. 25 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, Sept. 8 | City Council: Budget Hearing 1 | 6 PM |
| Monday, Sept. 29 | City Council: Budget Hearing 2 | 6 PM |
| Monday, Oct 27 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, Nov. 17 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, Dec. 15 | City Council | 6 PM |
| Monday, Dec. 29 | City Council (optional) | 6 PM |

SUMMARY OF JAN. 27, 2025 COUNCIL DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE:

Mayor Leichty presented the proposed 2025 Council meeting schedule with **one addition** – a meeting on **Monday, Feb. 10** for the sole purpose of convening a required public hearing on the proposed issuance of a bond for the Shanklin Park pool project. She asked Councilors if they could attend. They indicated they could attend.

Mayor Leichty asked if there was a motion to approve the 2025 Council meeting schedule.

Councilors Weddell and Schrock made a motion to approve the 2025 Council meeting schedule as presented by the Mayor, with the added meeting on Feb. 10.

Councilor Nisley said he would be voting “no” for multiple reasons. He said, “I’m not in favor of moving from two meetings a month to one meeting a month. I’m also not in favor of doing special meetings on a separate day than what we have scheduled for Council meetings, and doing them in the middle of the day. I feel that we’re cutting out the citizen’s participation in that part of it, although we don’t have a lot of people coming.”



Councilor Nisley continued, "It just makes it harder for people to come to our meetings and say what they do. The other thing would be, and it's been brought to my attention of multiple times through the past week and then here again tonight, that we're meeting on the same night as a School Board meeting. And I think that needs to be changed. So, that's just a little bit of why I will be voting 'no' for this."

Councilor Schrock said, "And I did receive the same two emails that I think everybody else did today about people requesting not to have Council meetings on the same night as School Board meetings."

Council President Weddell asked the **Mayor** the benefits of the Council meeting on the 4th Monday of the month.

Mayor Leichty said, "As we looked at the calendar, I think we're in alignment with the School Board because they're finding that there's lots of holidays and things that conflicted on those other Mondays. So, that's why we ended up on the schedule that we have now. And the other reason was to provide an adequate amount of time for our Deputy Clerk-Treasurer and the Clerk-Treasurer to prepare the financial reports, so that we would have a monthly financial presentation for the Council. So, putting it after the 3rd week, provides an adequate amount of time for them to close the books from the previous month and present you with the most up-to-date information possible."

Mayor Leichty continued, "So, while I recognize the conflict, I hope that by focusing on having one meeting month it still allows people to participate in at least one of their School Board meetings if they so choose, but allows us to operate as efficiently as we need to."

Councilor Peel asked when the Council would be holding this year's joint meeting with the School Board. The

Mayor responded, "They declined having one this year, so there will not be one. But we're still looking at an opportunity to have the Kid Council and Youth Council join us at some point."

Councilor Gerber said, "I share some of the concerns that **Councilor Nisley** expressed. I also understand that this is extremely difficult to come to a calendar that suits the entire City, and a lot of work has gone into this. And so, I will support this tonight. I do hope that when looking at next year, we'll be able to take some of these concerns into consideration, and maybe make some adjustments as appropriate." **Councilor Schrock** thanked **Councilor Gerber** for the second mention of that.

Council President Weddell said, "One thing I always come back to thinking about is we had a request back when Allan Kauffman was Mayor – the tornado sirens that would go off Thursday at 2 o'clock. We had a request to have those changed because the individual's grandson was napping at that time. I understand the problem, but when you change something, you always have an effect on somebody else, too. So, that's the thing we have to consider, too. There are people that want us to change it, but there might be other people who say, 'Well, now, we've created a situation where now I can't make it.' So, there's always that to consider."

Councilor Peel said, "We didn't used to have the Council meeting on Monday, but we changed it specifically to Monday for very specific reasons. And having attended all the school board meetings because of my job, I wouldn't have been able to do that at the time. But we have these meetings on this particular week of the month for specific reasons, and one of those being how the schedule falls with vacations, and that's how the School Board tends to have theirs. So, we have the same issue and so we have the same day."

Councilor Peel added, "The City has a lot of public meetings that have to be scheduled ... so, I truly respect everybody's opinion, but I'm in agreement with this schedule."

Councilor Nisley responded, "Let's just remember that we've been on a two-meeting-a-month schedule for 40 years, and everybody was all right with that, comfortable with it. And, there again, we knew what we were getting into when we ran for the office."



Council President Weddell said the Council has met on the same day of the month as the School Board for three years. Clerk-Treasurer Aguirre pointed out that the Common Council had a long tradition of meeting Tuesdays. Council President Weddell said, "I've been a proponent of one meeting a month for probably five years and never had support for it." Councilor Peel said, "I think it's worth a try; see how it goes." Mayor Leichty requested a roll call vote on the proposed Council meeting schedule for 2025.

On a roll call vote, Councilors passed the motion to approve the 2025 Common Council meeting schedule for 2025 by a 6-1 vote, with Councilors Gerber, Lederach, Peel, Riegsecker, Schrock and Weddell voting "yes" and Councilor Nisley voting "no" at 7:30 p.m.

Elected Official Reports:

Mayor Leichty invited reports from Councilors.

Council President Weddell said neighbors along Kercher Road who previously coped with accidents across the bridge have expressed gratitude to the City for the installation of warning signs on the bridge by the City Street Department. Councilor Lederach said he also has received notes of appreciation and said that there can be icy conditions after the hill nearby and it would be good for the county to also install some warning signs.

Youth Adviser Galeb said at the end of December the City's youth advisors held a children's drive, and with the help of the school and Council, were able to donate many items to kids and mothers or mothers. For January, the youth advisors gave small gift bags and motivational cards to students during finals week.

Mayor Leichty thanked the youth advisor for her work. In turn, the youth advisor thanked the Mayor for providing a budget so the youth council could give back to the school and help and motivate students.

Council President Weddell congratulated Youth Adviser Galeb for being a Lily Scholar.

Councilor Lederach asked which college the youth adviser would be attending. She said "probably" Goshen College. He responded, "That's what I wanted to hear." Some in the audience applauded that news and the Mayor said, "Got some alumni in the room? Go Leafs!"

Councilor Riegsecker expressed his condolences and sympathies to the Goshen Fire Department for the passing of John Alheim, who led the department as Chief from 1990 to 2005. Councilor Riegsecker added, "He was very well respected in this community, and did a great job. So, we are sorry to see that."

Mayor Leichty said, "Absolutely. I believe he served 42 years." John Alheim died Jan. 26, 2025 at Goshen Hospital.

Adjournment:

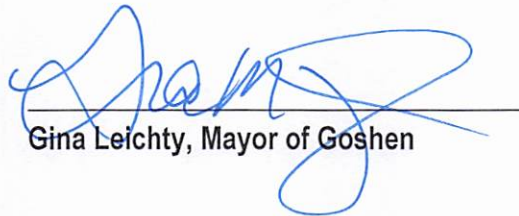
Councilor Nisley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Schrock seconded the motion. By a 7-0 voice vote, Councilors unanimously approved the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Leichty adjourned the meeting at 7:33 p.m.



EXHIBIT #1: *An amendment to Ordinance 5207, Amend Title 2, Civil Rights, Article 1, Community Relations of the Goshen City Code, which was proposed at the Council meeting by Councilor Lederach and circulated by Councilor Gerber. The amendment would allow the Mayor to appoint a Community Relations Manager and described the duties of the Manager. The amendment was approved by the Council and incorporated into Ordinance 5207, which was unanimously passed at the Council meeting.*

APPROVED:


Gina Leichty, Mayor of Goshen

ATTEST:

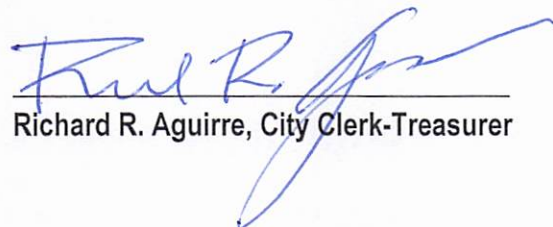

Richard R. Aguirre, City Clerk-Treasurer

Exhibit #1

Proposed Second Reading Amendment

"The Mayor may appoint a Community Relations Manager. The Manager shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor and may be dismissed without cause. Among other tasks assigned by the Mayor, the Manager would facilitate the Community Relations Commission (CRC) meetings. This facilitation could include, but is not limited to, collaborating with the CRC Commissioners to create agendas for the meetings, working with CRC Commissioners to develop short- and long-term goals based on the duties described in section 2.1.1.5 (a) - (g) of this ordinance, and providing guidance and support to CRC Commissioners to accomplish these goals."

Jan 27, 2025