

GOSHEN COMMON COUNCIL

Minutes of the April 28, 2025 Regular Meeting

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

At 6:01 p.m., assisted by Mayor Gina Leichty, Saúl Resendiz (a 4th-grader at Prairie View 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) – Arrived 6:04 p.m.

 Council President Brett Weddell (At-Large)
 Youth Adviser Tageeya Galeb (non-voting)

Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Leichty asked the Council's wishes regarding the minutes of the Dec. 30, 2024, Jan. 27 and Feb. 24, 2025 Regular Meetings as prepared by Clerk-Treasurer Aguirre. Councilor Nisley moved to accept the minutes as presented. Councilor Peel seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0 on a voice vote.

Approval of Meeting Agenda:

Mayor Leichty presented the agenda as prepared by the Clerk-Treasurer with the addition of new agenda item #3, *AmeriCorps Service Interruption and Interim Staffing Measures.* Councilor Peel moved to approve the agenda as amended. Councilor Lederach seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0 on a voice vote.

Privilege of the Floor:

At 6:05 p.m., Mayor Leichty invited public comments for matters not on the agenda.

River Norton of Goshen said his votes helped elect some Council members and he was worried that the heartfelt concerns expressed to Councilors often "fall on deaf ears." He said, "The Goshen City Council seems not to care about the genocide against Palestinian people, nor seem able to connect the dots to how we are all connected – to see that our taxes fund bombs and other weapons of wonton destruction."

Norton demanded that Councilors "condemn apartheid Israel and the actions of the Israeli and military-in-occupation. I also demand that you condemn the actions of the Trump administration and their appalling displays of fascism. How do I know that my Goshen community, filled with so many beautiful people from all over the world, will be safe? How do I know that you are all doing everything you can to make sure undocumented people are safe ... to make sure queer people are safe, to make sure indigenous people are safe, to make sure libraries are safe?"

Norton said he believed ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officers should be arrested. He also advocated for Goshen to become a "Sanctuary City," a safe placed for undocumented immigrants. Further, he asked if the Goshen Police Department had a quota system for arrests and issuing tickets. And he asked for the Common Council's meeting calendar to be updated on the City's website.



Norton concluded his comments by stating, "Just because you look away doesn't mean it's not happening. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Your silence does not absolve you of accountability, and your silence is consent, and nurtures the death of generations. I know y'all's favorite line is that your hands are tied so what can you do? What can you do? Why is it so hard for y'all to support oppressed people? Why did I vote for any of you?"

John Stoltzfus of Goshen discussed his privilege of living in Goshen alongside chickens, a dog named "Justice," and some male birds which are not quiet. He said City officials have an awareness of loud train whistles and are acting to limit noise. He said some of the loud birds have been relocated to a friend's house out of town and his neighbors are now happier.

Stoltzfus said all this prompted him to wonder "What it takes for Goshen as a City to become louder relative to basic human rights, and part of what I notice is a deep privilege to communicate with neighbors in Gaza, and then the West Bank and in Israel, and to hear people in town speak who live in Palestine. Given those conversations and those privileges, and given campaigns like 'Not Another Child, Not Another Hospital,' I see that there are excellent opportunities to engage both as individuals and as a City, whether that's a call for one campaign or more or whether that's direct action on the part of individual citizens."

Stoltfzfus concluded, "Thank you to all those of you in this City who do look out for the neighbors near me when I run amok of roosters that don't need to live in town and a dog who maybe doesn't need to be heard as much as he would reflexively like to talk about whatever he notices. Thank you for bearing with me."

At 6:11p.m., Mayor Leichty closed the public comment period.

1) Presentation: Honoring recent retirees with more than 30 years of service to the City

Mayor Leichty honored six individuals who recently retired after giving more than 25 years of service to the City of Goshen by awarding them with keys to the City. Before doing so, the Mayor reflected on the tradition of presenting such keys, which she said symbolized trust, honor, and gratitude.

Mayor Leichty said awarding a key to the City "represents the City's highest expression of appreciation for individuals who have made an extraordinary contribution to the community's life and well-being." She said these individuals "have spent decades strengthening Goshen, keeping it safe, healthy, connected, and thriving and their leadership, sacrifice and unwavering commitment have touched countless residents' lives and helped shape the City's very character." She added that the six "will always be a part of Goshen's story and a part of Goshen's heart." Mayor Leichty recognized the following individuals for their public service:

Officer Keith Miller began his full-time career with the Goshen Police Department on Feb. 17, 1989. Over the course of 36 years, he served the community with distinction in roles including evidence technician, department instructor and Division Chief of Investigations. He was honored for his leadership across multiple ranks within the patrol division "which exemplifies a life dedicated to the profession of law enforcement." **Officer Miller** was presented a City key and the audience responded with applause.

Officer Michael Johnson (and K-9 Officer "Jetta") joined the Goshen Police Department on July 3, 1987, bringing with him experience from the Elkhart City Police Department and service in the U.S. Marine Corps. Over his nearly 38 years in Goshen, he served in the Patrol Division, held supervisory roles, and contributed significantly as both a School Resource Officer and K-9 handler.



The Mayor said Johnson's commitment to the safety of our community has left an enduring impact on Goshen. **Officer Johnson** was unable to be present because he was being treated at Goshen Hospital.

EMS Captain Kit Castetter has been a member of the Goshen Fire Department since 1990, providing over 30 years of service. The Mayor said Castetter's "leadership in emergency medical services, coupled with his calm professionalism, earned the deep respect of both colleagues and community members." The Mayor said his legacy will continue to influence the department long after his retirement. **Captain Castetter** was presented with a City key and the audience responded with applause.

Lieutenant Jeff Wogoman retired from the Goshen Fire Department on Feb. 15, 2025, after more than 28 years of service. He served not only as a firefighter and officer but also as a mentor to many within the department. In addition to his work in Goshen, he has served with the Middlebury Fire Department since 1990, including time as Fire Chief. He will continue in that leadership role following his retirement from GFD. The Mayor said Wogoman's contributions to public safety in both communities were deeply appreciated. Lieutenant Wogoman was presented with a City key and the audience responded with applause.

Firefighter Corey Wortinger has dedicated over 35 years to public service in Goshen, including more than 20 years with the Goshen Fire Department. He began his career in the Street Department before joining GFD in 2004, where he served as both firefighter and Engineer. Corey was instrumental in training many of the department's Engineers, helping ensure safe and effective apparatus operation. The Mayor said Wortinger's "pursuit of continued education and commitment to mentorship have left a lasting mark on the department's readiness and professionalism." **Wortinger** was presented with a City key and the audience responded with applause.

Goshen Board of Aviation Commissioner Denny Richmond was appointed by Mayor Mike Puro in January 1995. Richmond served the City of Goshen on the Board of Aviation Commissioners for 30 years, including the last two decades as Board President. The Mayor said Richmond was a longtime advocate for aviation and community service and played a pivotal role in securing federal grants, completing critical property acquisitions, extending the runway, and overseeing terminal and hangar construction. He also helped lead the Goshen Air Show to national prominence. The Mayor said Richmond's "steady leadership and countless volunteer hours have left an enduring legacy at Goshen Municipal Airport." **Richmond** could not be present at the meeting.

2) Presentation: Recognition of City of Goshen colleagues who were recent Good of Goshen honorees and two City employees who received statewide awards for outstanding contributions

Mayor Leichty said that in March she delivered two "State of the City" speeches – one for the public and one for City of Goshen employees. After the second speech, she also honored 10 colleagues "whose integrity, service, and commitment to the community reflect the very best of Goshen." She said those honored were nominated by their peers to receive the "Good of Goshen" award for going above and beyond every day, supporting their teams, building a positive work environment and strengthening the service the City delivers to the public. Those honored were: Nick Battles, Water & Sewer Crew Leader. Known for his reliability and leadership, Nick was described by teammates simply and powerfully: "Nick never says no, which is nice." A Goshen native and Purdue graduate, he leads by example—keeping water systems running and mentoring his crew with "quiet determination." Amanda Guzman, Communications Manager. Amanda has redefined how the City connects with the public. As one colleague noted, "She is the reason the City of Goshen's voice is strong and clear." Her work ensures communication "is calm, transparent, and trustworthy—especially in moments that matter most."



Megan Hessl, Park Board President, Redevelopment Commission member and Shanklin Pool Steering Committee member. Megan is known for her ability to bring people together. One nominator wrote: "Megan is passionate about fostering collaboration, putting aside differences, and working toward the greater good." Her leadership has touched neighborhoods, public spaces, and long-term planning.

Rita Huffman, Human Resources Manager. Rita's compassion and professionalism make her a trusted resource across departments. One department head said, "Having Rita to consult ensures that I can make my staff feel safe, respected, and appreciated."

Chief José Miller, Goshen Police Department. Chief Miller is a "consistent, forward-thinking presence." One colleague put it simply: "I don't think I ever can't reach him." His work implementing reforms and strengthening accountability has made Goshen safer and more transparent.

Bodie Stegelmann, City Attorney. Behind every sound policy is Bodie's thoughtful guidance. "Bodie's behind-thescenes efforts reinforce public trust in city government," said one nominator.

Captain Patrick Linn, Goshen Fire Department. Pat's impact stretches beyond emergency response. His colleagues described him as "the embodiment of integrity, courage, and service," noting the ways he supports others—whether mentoring firefighters or comforting families in crisis.

Charlie Riggs, Maintenance Manager, Wastewater. Even while facing health challenges, Charlie has kept the City's treatment plant and 41 lift stations running—and taken on additional work at the Goshen Recycling Center. One leader said, "He may be frustrated, but he never gives less than 100%."

Dustin Sailor, Director of Public Works & Utilities. Dustin's decisions are always future-focused. "He gives 100% every single day," one nominator said, while another added, "When Dustin makes decisions, he looks at how they will impact the city for years to come."

Jeffrey Weaver, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer. Jeffrey is known for strengthening the team around him. "He is a great team player and a great steward of the City's needs," said a colleague. Whether fixing issues, explaining problems clearly, or improving workflows, he always makes things better.

Patty Morgan, Volunteer, Board of Aviation Commissioner. For years, Patty has quietly served 5–7 hours a week to help Goshen Municipal Airport run smoothly – never asking for compensation or credit. As she prepares to retire from the board, we want to be sure she hears what one colleague captured so well: "Your work has made a lasting impact, and we see you. We honor you. Thank you."

Mayor Leichty said that those employees were honored in March, but four could not be present. So, she asked the following people to come forward to be receive their awards at the Council meeting. She then honored:

Mattie Lehman, GIS Coordinator. Mattie has made geographic information an essential part of how the City works. Her leadership helps departments respond faster, plan smarter, and coordinate more effectively. One colleague summed it up: "She makes our work smarter, faster, and more effective."

Christine Guth, Urban Forestry Volunteer. For six years, Christine has shown up for Goshen's trees – personally tending to hundreds of new plantings and leading invasive plant removal. A colleague wrote, "Her commitment has left a lasting impact on the landscape of Goshen, quite literally." She also empowers others to become stewards of the environment.

Don Shuler, Assistant City Attorney. Don has helped the City act more decisively on blight and compliance. "He has opened doors, ideas, and possibilities," wrote a nominator, "and helped the Building Department pursue real solutions for struggling neighborhoods." His extra time and effort are changing the way we support our communities.



Mayor Leichty also asked Councilors to join her in honoring these four individuals. She added, "each one reminds us that the strength of local government lies not just in systems or policies, but in the people who choose, every day, to make Goshen better."

Mayor Leichty thanked the three and gave them awards and the audience responded with applause. Mayor Leichty also honored two other City employees, Kelly Saenz and Theresa Sailor, who have recently received statewide recognition "for their outstanding contributions to public service and environmental resilience." About the honorees and their awards:

Kelly Saenz received the Bonna Burns Award for Utility Leadership. Saenz, manager of Goshen Utilities' Business Office, received the award from the Indiana Section of the American Water Works Association. The award recognizes professionals who demonstrate the highest standards in utility recordkeeping, financial accountability, and customer service.

Since 2017, **Saenz** has guided the business office through evolving demands – from managing Goshen's lead service line inventory to maintaining in-person operations during COVID-19. She led the migration to new billing and accounting software, helping staff and customers adapt while ensuring financial accuracy. Her leadership also drives proactive programs, such as early water leak detection that protect property and preserve water resources. Her service reflects the best of what local government can offer.

Saenz was recognized during the Indiana Section AWWA's 117th Annual Conference, which took place April 21–24, 2025, at the Marriott Downtown in Indianapolis.

Theresa Sailor received the 2025 Hoosier Resilience Hero Award from Indiana University's Environmental Resilience Institute, one of only 12 honorees statewide. The award, which was announced in March, celebrates individuals advancing climate resilience, sustainability, and environmental equity in Indiana communities. Sailor's decades-long advocacy has helped shape Goshen's environmental vision. Her work has elevated issues of clean energy, neighborhood health, and social equity—bringing underserved voices to the table and helping align policy with public need. Her leadership has made Goshen stronger and more inclusive.

3) AmeriCorps Service Interruption and Interim Staffing Measures

Mayor Leichty said she wanted to brief Councilors about the sudden termination of federal support last Friday for five AmeriCorps members and action taken over the weekend to ensure their continued service to the City of Goshen.

Before the meeting, **Mayor Leichty** emailed to Councilors a two-page memorandum, dated April 28, 2025 and titled AmeriCorps Service Interruption and Interim Staffing Measures. In the memo, she described the abrupt cessation of federal funding for the City's AmeriCorps members and the City's response. She also included Appendix A: 2024-2025 AmeriCorps Project Summary, a three-page document of the work of the members (EXHIBIT #1)

The Mayor said the following: at the meeting:

"At 10:48 pm. on Friday (April 25), I received a notice that our federal funding for AmeriCorps service members had been cut, meaning that five full-time people that are working in the Parks Department, Environmental Resilience and the Engineering Department were laid off without notice at 10:48 p.m. and told to not come back to work.

"These individuals had committed to a full year of service. Their term started in August of 2024, and they had one year projects that were supposed to conclude in August of 2025.



"They promised to work for a full year for a modest salary of \$29,000, and the promise of an \$8,000 education scholarship upon completing their term, and that promise that promise was broken.

"Over the weekend I met with our department advisors, Dustin Sailor, Theresa Sailor, Aaron Sawatsky Kingsley, Tanya Heyde, Jeffrey Weaver and Michael Wanbaugh, to develop an immediate and responsible plan to keep these important projects on track and to do right by these young professionals."

Mayor Leichty continued:

"Our team worked quickly and collaboratively to ensure three things: 1, Fiscal responsibility to use existing grant funds that we could transition to pay for the continuation of these projects without creating a new budget strain; 2, Responsible project management, so critical City initiatives could continue, and we would not waste all of the effort that our department heads, and these individuals, have put into those projects over the past eight months; and 3, Respect for the individuals who had committed themselves to serving our community over the past year.

"By reallocating our Urban Forestry Grant funds, we were able to extend part-time temporary employment offers to our AmeriCorps members so they can continue their work through August 2025, and they will be able to resume their work tomorrow.

"Now we have been able to address the employment gap, but the federal government's decision eliminated approximately \$17,500 in education awards. That's about \$3,500 per person that these individuals were counting on for their future. In the weeks ahead, I will look at philanthropic support to help close that gap and, if necessary, I might come back to the Council with a proposal for consideration to help close that gap.

"But tonight is not about that action. I want to share a full story with you just about these students and their remarkable response.

"Less than 12 hours after learning that they had been summarily fired and told not to come back to work, the Goshen AmeriCorps team showed up, unpaid, to help distribute more than 600 trees at the City's tree giveaway at Shanklin Park. They'd been told their service ended. They had been instructed to not report to their assignments, but they came anyway because they gave us their word and because they believe in the work. and because they believe in Goshen.

"Whether or not the Federal Government kept its word to them, they kept their word to us. So, when you ask about future generations and what the outlook looks like for our community and for the City of Goshen, I say there's none better than the team of AmeriCorps professionals that we are privileged to welcome through our AmeriCorps program, which we will now call Goshen Corps.

"They deserve more than our thanks. They deserve the opportunity to finish what they started. So, at this time I would like to ask our five former AmeriCorps, now Goshen Corps, members to please stand: Lucy Kramer, Benji Wall, Jordan Gibbs, Ollie Freshour, and Lee Strader-Bergy. Can you please join me in thanking them?

"Thank you for your integrity, your service, and your powerful example to all of us. We look forward to continuing to support you and bringing your important projects to a close ... And we thank the next generation for building the Goshen we want to see today and tomorrow."

4) City budget reports from March 2025 (Clerk-Treasurer's Office)

Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Jeffery Weaver delivered a financial and budget update from March 2025 to Councilors.



BACKGROUND:

In an April 28, 2025 memorandum to the Common Council, **Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Jeffery Weaver** wrote that he was attaching financial reports summarizing the budget and cash balance performance for Civil City funds included in the 2025 budget, which was approved by the Council in October 2024. These reports were intended to provide a reasonable understanding of the City's financial position. They are unaudited and may require some interpretation. **Fund Balance Report**

Weaver wrote that this report showed the cash balance of each fund and was intended to demonstrate that each fund maintains a sufficient balance to support budgeted expenditures.

- In the month of March, the City's budgeted cash balances decreased about \$2.7 million. In the first few months of the year, the cash balances decrease because most of the City's revenues are receipted in June and December.
- The Debt Service fund currently showed a negative balance due to bond payments made in January and February, prior to receiving levy revenue in June.
- The Old Law Enforcement Continuing Education fund (#2504) was now empty. The balance was transferred to the Law Enforcement Continuing Education fund (#2228) to help simplify the City's funds.
- The TIF Debt Service Reserve was now empty since the balance was applied toward the final payment on the 2015 Refunding Revenue Bonds.

Budget Report

Weaver wrote that this report outlined the budget performance for each fund and the departments within the General Fund. Revenues were detailed on the first two pages, while expenditures were then reported.

- If expenditures were distributed evenly throughout the year, we would expect 25% of the budget to be spent by the end of March, with 75% remaining.
- 30% of the Public Safety LIT budget was spent, largely due to equipment purchases made earlier in the year and an increased pension contribution required for 2025 compared to 2024.

Weaver wrote that he was available to answer questions about the report.

SUMMARY OF APRIL 28, 2025 COUNCIL DISCUSSION OF CITY FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mayor Leichty invited a presentation from Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Jeffery Weaver.

Weaver said this report, like the previous ones, showed that "things are on track, as we had anticipated, and as we had budgeted for. My comments on the front mostly refer to some cleanups that we've been getting into the report. Also, there are some transfers that we need to make each year from one fund to another, just to make sure that those are consistent."

Weaver provided a summary of highlights from the report and said he had condensed the report because it had more lines than were necessary and was difficult to read. He explained, "When you get to the General Fund, there are multiple departments in the General Fund. I could just put that on its own page, and everything else would be condensed into one or two pages."

Weaver invited questions from Councilors.

Councilor Peel thanked Weaver for his report. In response to a series of questions from Councilor Riegsecker, Weaver clarified reported revenue and encumbrances in the report.



In response to this discussion, **Mayor Leichty** said, "I think Councilor Riegsecker makes an important point that's important for the other Councilors and the public to understand that there are two types of budgets. There's a funded budget and a balanced budget, and a balanced budget would be your revenues and your expenses equal each other in a given year."

The **Mayor** continued, "A funded budget means that you have an adequate amount of resources to pay that. So, it may appear that there are fewer revenues, but you have a cash resource to pay for that. So, last year the Council agreed to pass a funded budget. Due to COVID and the City's inability to move forward with a number of infrastructure projects, the City accumulated a large amount of cash reserves that were dedicated for infrastructure improvement.

"So, it's not like we could spend those cash balances on anything that we want. They were specifically approved for and have been carried forward for specific infrastructure projects. So, our budget has increased this year to reflect catching up to what is still delayed in infrastructure spending that we were not able to do in the years right after COVID."

Mayor Leichty concluded, "It may appear that we have a deficit in our budget, but it is actually a funded budget. We intentionally are spending down cash reserves that we had accumulated during COVID to pay for those expenditures. It is by design that that the expenditures are more than the revenues. "

In response to another question from **Councilor Riegsecker**, **Weaver** said the City expects to collect about \$63 million in revenue.

Councilor Lederach said, "I think the point that the Mayor makes is important. There was a lot of talk from this last legislative session of how the cities in Indiana have such a large cash surplus, but that cash surplus was already encumbered to be spent on projects that were already approved. So, it's not like we're flush with money that we can spend in any way we want."

Weaver said a good example of that were the \$6.7 million in funds the City received from the American Rescue Plan grant in 2022. He said that about \$5.5 million remains, but it has already been committed to be spent on infrastructure projects that take time to complete.

At 6:48 p.m. Mayor Leichty invited questions on the report from the audience. There were none. Mayor Leichty invited a motion to approve the financial and budget report.

Councilors Weddell and Peel made a motion to approve the Clerk-Treasurer Office's budget report from March 2025.

On a voice vote, Councilors voted unanimously, by a 7-0 margin, to approve the financial and budget report at 6:49 p.m.

5) Public hearing and consideration of Resolution 2025-09, SRF Loan Program Preliminary Engineering Report Acceptance, and Resolution 2025-10, SRF Loan Program Signatory Authorization Resolution Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Resolution 2025-09, SRF Loan Program Preliminary Engineering Report Acceptance. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Resolution 2025-09 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Lederach made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-09.



BACKGROUND:

In a memorandum, dated April 28, 2025, that was provided to the Council before the meeting, Utilities City Engineer Jamey Bontrager-Singer provided an overview of the Drinking Water System Upgrade and Expansion. He said the following sites, which he described as the "backbone" of the City's drinking water system, would be impacted by the proposed project: the Hilltop Booster Station, the North Wellfield, the Kercher Wellfield and the New South Wellfield.

Bontrager-Singer provided an eight-page Preliminary Engineering Report for the project. It provided a work description, with needs, and alternatives is identified for each location. The following is a summary of the report: A. North Wellfield and Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Site

1. Evaluate condition of existing wells and options available (a. Needs, i, ii, iii, iv and b. Alternatives, I, ii, iii)

2. Evaluate WTP disinfection system (a. Needs, i and b. Alternatives, I, ii, iii)

3. Evaluate condition and replacement of aerators located over the clear well (a. Needs, i and b. Alternatives, I, ii, iii)

4. Evaluate condition of clear well and location in a floodplain (a. Needs, I, ii, iii and b. Alternatives, I, ii, iii, iv)

5. Evaluate condition of pressure filters (a. Needs, i and b. Alternatives, I, ii)

6. Evaluate structural condition of the original 1935 building (a. Needs, i and b. Alternatives, I, ii, iii)

B. Kercher Wellfield and WTP Site

1. Evaluate the present well situation and pressure filter status to confirm the City's proposal to ultimately abandon this well field and WTP (a. Needs, I, ii, iii , iv, v, vi, vii and b. Alternatives, I, ii, iii)

C. Hilltop Booster Station

1. Due to high groundwater in area of underground tank, the full 500,000-gallon volume of tank is not effectively available for storage due to possible tank buoyancy when it emptied (a. Needs, i and b. Alternatives, I, ii)

2. The two existing booster pumps can currently meet a residential fire demand but will likely have inadequate capacity for more commercial development in the high pressure zone (northeast Goshen region) and a new fourstory senior living facility that will open in the near future (a. Needs, I, ii and b. Alternatives, I, ii, iii)

D. New South Wellfield and WTP Site

1. Construct a new wellfield and WTP on 79 acres of property the City owns just north of the Goshen Airport (a. Needs, I, ii and b. Alternatives, I, ii, iii)

Estimated Cost of the project:

The estimated total project cost to design and construct the Proposed Project, as detailed in Chapter 4 of the PER, is approximately \$68,000,000.

Estimated Project Schedule:

Submittal of DWSRF Application and PER (completed)	March 28, 2025
Publication of Notice for Public Hearing	April 18, 2025
Public Hearing	April 28, 2025
Submittal of PER Required Chapter 6 Materials to IFA	May 6, 2025
Publication of Project Priority List (approximately)	July 1, 2025
Initiate Design of DW Improvements	August 2025
Complete Design and Submit Const. Permit App to IDEM	June 2026
IDEM Approval of Const. Permit Application	August 2026
Bid Opening	August 2026



SRF Loan Closing Issue Notice to Proceed for Construction Construction Substantial Completion Construction Final Completion Submit Record Drawings for Project to IFA October 2026 October 2026 October 2028 December 2028 December 2028

Resolution 2025-09, which was before the Council for approval, would authorize acceptance of the SRF Loan Program Preliminary Engineering Report. According to Resolution 2025-09:

- The City of Goshen, Indiana, Water Utility has caused a Preliminary Engineering Report ("PER"), dated March 28, 2025 to be prepared by the consulting firm of Donohue & Associates, Inc; and
- Said report has been presented to the public at a hearing held April 28, 2025, for their comments; and
- The City of Goshen, Indiana, Common Council finds that there was not sufficient evidence presented in objection to the recommended project in the Preliminary Engineering Report.

If approved by the Common Council, it would be resolved that:

1. The "Water System Upgrade and Expansion," Preliminary Engineering Report, dated March 28, 2025, be approved and adopted by the Common Council; and

2. That said PER be submitted to the State Revolving Fund Loan Program for review and approval.

SUMMARY OF APRIL 28, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2025-09: At 6:50 p.m., Mayor opened public hearing on Resolution 2025-09. There were no comments.

Mayor Leichty invited a presentation on Resolution 2025-09

Utilities City Engineer Jamey Bontrager-Singer provided an overview of the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the City's Drinking Water System Upgrade and Expansion. He did so using a 22-page PowerPoint presentation on the proposed project which includes the Hilltop Booster Station, the North Wellfield, the Kercher Wellfield and the New South Wellfield (EXHIBIT #2). The PowerPoint was developed from his report to the Council. Bontrager-Singer said the Hilltop Booster Station, the North Wellfield Treatment Plant, the Kercher Wellfield Treatment Plant and the New South Wellfield are the "backbone" of the City's water system. He said he would discuss work at all four facilities, including needs and alternatives, following by preliminary engineering recommendations prepared with the City's consultant, Donohue & Associates, Inc. of South Bend. Highlights of Bontrager-Singer's presentation, including answers to Councilor questions: Hilltop Booster Station:

- Because of high groundwater, the City cannot use the tank's full volume (500,0000 gallons) by emptying it.
- So, the City needs to reduce the high groundwater with a new drainage system around the tank and by running a pump to drain it off into a lake in North Goshen.
- In addition, booster pumps have inadequate capacity and cannot meet commercial fire service demands.
- The preferred alternative solution is to build a new booster pump station building with larger and more accessible and larger vertical turbine pumps.
- Residents would not lose their water during construction.



North Wellfield Treatment Plant:

- The plant has a number of serious issues that eventually may force it to be closed.
- Its largest well cannot be re-screened.
- There is limited space for new wells.
- The plant is located within the Rock Run Creek Floodway.
- The well is a superfund site and there is trace VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) contamination.
- The old water treatment disinfection system poses the risk of an accidental release of deadly chlorine gas into the Chamberlain neighborhood and the Boys and Girls Club.
- The aerators are 60 years old and have exceeded their design life.
- The clear well is 60 years old and the concrete is deteriorating.
- The pressure filters also are 60 years old and have exceeded their design life.
- The 1935-constructed building needs repair or replacement.
- Although there are ways to address and alleviate all these issues, many would be too costly and the best option may be gradually decommissioning the wellfield.

Kercher Water Treatment Plant:

- Well No. 12 is pumping sandy water, cannot be re-screened and there's no space for a new well
- Well No. 14, which has the largest capacity in the system, is on Greencroft Retirement Community's property and must be cleaned of iron bacteria that is fouling the water every 2-3 years.
- There is a trichloroethylene (TCE) plume in the industrial park to the west and it is moving northeast.
- Three pressure filters located outdoors and must be operated in winter to keep from freezing.
- The Primary Flow Meter is not working.
- The generator is from the 1970s, was bought used and the City cannot easily find repair parts.
- Also, the disinfectant system uses chlorine gas, which poses a risk to the adjacent Greencroft Retirement Community.
- Alternatives to address the problems include adding containment and/or a scrubber system for chlorine gas to protect employees and neighbors or add a well to the east and replace aging equipment.

New South Water Treatment Plant:

- This wellfield by the Goshen Airport will be home to a new water treatment plant and is the "bright spot" in the City's water system.
- The City needs to develop a wellfield without any contamination which can be a wellhead protection area.
- The wellfield needs to enable the City to meet its demand for water amid the loss of the current capacity.
- The City needs to resolve contamination and other issues so the North or Kercher wellfields can help meet the total water demand of 13 million gallons per day.
- The City needs to install wells and a new water treatment plant with 6.4 million gallons per day capacity now and 10.4 million gallons per day in the future because eventually the North plant will be decommissioned and the Kercher plant will be the other wellfield.
- No action would result in an inadequate water supply for the City.
- The City has drilled nine wells on the South Wellfield and six eventually will be used for water production.



Utilities City Engineer Bontrager-Singer briefly discussed the schedule for making the water system improvements. He said a key step was today's public hearing. He said the City hopes to learn soon the possible loan amount from the State Revolving Fund, followed a design proposal and design work followed by construction. Summarizing the presentation, Mayor Leichty said, "So, just to clarify and add on to what you're presenting here today, we understand that the well systems that we have now are facing the end of life. We know we need additional alternatives. We're exploring those new alternatives.

"We have a number of considerations that you've presented. It's a lot of information. We are going to revisit this conversation with the Council at our next work session, so you will have an opportunity to digest and ask additional questions."

The Mayor continued, "In addition to that, I know that on the financing side and strategic planning of side, Jamey (Utilities City Engineer Bontrager-Singer) and Dustin (Director of Public Works & Utilities Sailor) have a series of meetings coming up with Baker Tilly (Municipal Advisors) to evaluate feasibility and costs and options for the City as we figure out what is the best path forward. So, there are still a number of opportunities that it will come back to the Council for additional consideration about next steps and a timeline."

Mayor Leichty said City staff thought it would be helpful to have a few Councilors who would be able to attend the Baker Tilly meetings to act as Council liaisons. She asked if any Councilors would be willing to volunteer. Councilors Peel, Lederach and Nisley volunteered to participate in the evaluation process.

Councilor Nisley asked if the City had an emergency plan if the North Wellfield was unavailable. **Sailor** said, "The City has never had a 100% emergency plan when they put in the Kercher Wellfield back in the 1990s that added additional capacity. So, each wellfield, let's say it's 100% operational, each wellfield is able to do 5 million gallons a day with 10 million gallons capacity. As we start losing wells or components, we start drawing back on that.

"So, right now we're about 9 million gallons a day in the summertime right now. 2012 is our worst scenario. We were 8 million gallons demand on high demand days. Normally, in the summertime, we're about 5 million gallons, so we still have reserve capacity in the system."

Sailor continued, "As long as both plants are operational, we have part of our operational plan is we do all our maintenance in the winter, so we have them evaluated in October, and they test all our pumps. We rebuild them during the winter, so before May comes every year all our system has been ran through, pumps have been rebuilt, so we're ready for a full summer again.

"Worst case scenario, if we had a fire or something at one of the facilities, and it took it out, we would be on restrictions. But again, we were able to operate in the wintertime, generally with one plant. In the summertime, we would be on a 'no irrigation' scenario. We have enough for domestic use, but losing a plant, we would not have enough water for irrigation."

Sailor added, "We have a separate backfill program throughout the City. So, we do not have an issue with that as long as we keep our pressure above 20. PSI, we're stable."

Councilor Gerber asked about the City's projections for population growth, particularly with the Cheery Creek housing development, which is under construction. She asked how much more water the City will need.

Bontrager-Singer said there has been some analysis based on a 20-year population projection. He added that the cost estimates for the improvements that are being recommended was \$68 million. He said the new South Wellfield Treatment plant is estimated to cost \$35 million.

Mayor Leichty clarified the votes before the Council tonight concern the City's application to a state loan program.



Bontrager-Singer said the City will be submitting a low-interest loan application. So will 50 or 60 different projects from other cities and that 10 or 15 projects will receive loans. The **Mayor** said it was a highly competitive process. **Bontrager-Singer** said the City will be able to use \$450,000 remaining from a previous project for design of these improvements. He said the City will need a proposal from Donahue & Associates for the engineering and then City staff and Councilors will meet with Baker Tilley to figure out how to fund that engineering work as well as discuss the impact on water rates and other impacts of the projects.

Bontrager-Singer said the Council will hold a work session on the water system improvements on June 13 and Baker Tilly will conduct a rate study later this year.

There were no additional questions or comments from Councilors, so Mayor Leichty invited audience questions at 7:31 p.m. There were none.

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

On a voice vote, Councilors then unanimously passed Resolution 2025-09, *SRF Loan Program Preliminary Engineering Report Acceptance*, by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting "yes," at 7:32 p.m.

Resolution 2025-10, SRF Loan Program Signatory Authorization Resolution

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Resolution 2025-10, *SRF Loan Program Signatory Authorization Resolution.* Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Resolution 2025-10 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Nisley made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-10.

BACKGROUND:

Resolution 2025-10 would authorize and initiate an application for a State Revolving Fund Loan for the City of Goshen. According to Resolution 2025-10:

The City of Goshen, Indiana, Water Utility ("City") has plans for a Drinking Water infrastructure improvement project which will meet anticipated increases in demand for Domestic Water while also complying with State and Federal regulations and the City intends to proceed with the construction of such project:

If Resolution 2025-10 was approved, the Common Council would resolve that:

1. Mayor Gina M. Leichty would be authorized to make application for a State Revolving Fund Loan ("SRF Loan") and provide the SRF Loan Program such information, data and documents pertaining to the loan process as may be required, and otherwise act as the authorized representative of the City; and

2. The City would agree to comply with State and Federal requirements as they pertain to the SRF Loan Program;

3. Two certified copies of this Resolution would be prepared and submitted as part of the City's Preliminary Engineering Report.

SUMMARY OF APRIL 28, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2025-10: Mayor Leichty invited questions or comments from Councilors. There were none At 7:32 p.m., The Mayor invited comments from the audience. There were none. On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Resolution 2025-10, *SRF Loan Program Signatory Authorization Resolution*, by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting "yes," at 7:32 p.m.



6) Resolution 2025-07, A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Goshen, Indiana, Authorizing the Filing of an Application for a Community Development Block Grant

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Resolution 2025-07, *A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Goshen, Indiana, Authorizing the Filing of an Application for a Community Development Block Grant.* Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Resolution 2025-07 by title only, which he did. Weddell/Nisley made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-07.

BACKGROUND:

Resolution 2025-07 would authorize the filing of an application for a Community Development Block Grant. In a memorandum to the Common Council, dated April 28, 2025, Theresa Cummings, Community Development Specialist, wrote that attached to the memo was Resolution 2025-07, a resolution of the Council to authorize the filing of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application (annual plan) for Program Year 2025. Cummings wrote that Goshen's 2025 HUD allocation has not been released. The budget is estimated at \$272,000. Cummings wrote that during the public comment period, no opposing comments were received, and no changes were made to the draft plan, which was discussed at a public hearing on April 1 during a Community Relations Commission meeting.

Below is the estimated budget:

2005 estimated
\$48,500.00
\$68,000.00
\$51,750.00\$
\$110,000.00
\$61,500.00
\$339,750.00
\$272,000.00
\$38,000.00
\$29,750.00
\$339,750.00

Cummings concluded her memo by stating that "upon authorization of the resolution the application for funding can be filed when HUD releases allocation amounts. The final 2025 budgets of all proposed activities, if necessary, will be proportionally increased or decreased from the estimated funding levels to match actual allocation amounts, subject to the required caps and maximum funding requests, with no public hearing or further public notice as was specified in the draft plan." The draft plan was available for review at http://goshenindiana.org/cdbg.

According to Resolution 2025-07:

• The Common Council of the City of Goshen desires to develop a viable community, including decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low-to-moderate income; and



- It is necessary and in the public interest that the City of Goshen, the Applicant, (to) participate in the Community Development Block Grant Program and avail itself to the financial assistance provided by Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Pub. L. 93-383, referred to as the "Program," and
- The Common Council of the City of Goshen is committed to compliance with all federal, state and applicable
 Program rules. It is recognized that the Federal contract for such financial assistance pursuant to said Title I
 imposes certain obligations and responsibilities upon the Applicant and the Applicant assures and certifies
 compliance.

If Resolution 2025-07 was approved, it would be resolved by the Common Council:

1. That the United States of America and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development be, and they hereby are, assured of full compliance by the City of Goshen, Indiana.

2. That an application on behalf of the City of Goshen for an estimated grant of \$272,000 for the Program outlined in the application is hereby approved and that the Mayor of the City of Goshen, Indiana, is hereby authorized and directed to execute and file such application and any required accompanying documentation with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and to provide such additional information and to furnish such documents as may be required on behalf of the City of Goshen.

SUMMARY OF APRIL 28, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2025-07: Mayor Leichty asked if Councilors had any questions about Resolution 2025-07.

Council President Weddell clarified with the Mayor that the intent of the resolution was to apply for the funding and not for the disbursement of funds.

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

On a voice vote, Councilors unanimously passed Resolution 2025-07, A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Goshen, Indiana, Authorizing the Filing of an Application for a Community Development Block Grant, by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting "yes," at 7:34 p.m.

At 7:34 p.m., Mayor Leichty invited questions from the audience. There were none.

7) Resolution 2025-08, Amendment #1 to the Project Coordination Contract with the State of Indiana for the College Avenue Auxiliary Lanes Project

Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Resolution 2025-08, Amendment #1 to the Project Coordination Contract with the State of Indiana for the College Avenue Auxiliary Lanes Project. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Resolution 2025-08 by title only, which was done. Weddell/Riegsecker made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-08.

BACKGROUND:

Resolution 2025-08 would approve Amendment #1 to the Project Coordination Contract with the State of Indiana for the College Avenue Auxiliary Lanes Project.

According to Resolution 2025-08:



- The City of Goshen and the State of Indiana entered into a Project Coordination Contract dated March 9, 2020, for federal funds for the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of two-way left turn lanes on College Avenue from US 33 to the Norfolk-Southern Railroad (hereinafter referred to as the "Project").
- It is necessary to amend the Project Coordination Contract dated March 9, 2020 to expand the Project scope to include a bike/pedestrian bridge over the Horn Ditch, and to reflect additional federal funding allocated to the Project as expanded.
- The maximum amount of federal aid funds allocated to the Project is dependent upon the Metropolitan Planning Organization's current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) allocation. As of March 26, 2025, the maximum amount in federal aid funds allocated is \$4,502,266 according to the TIP dated Feb. 15, 2025.
- The Goshen Redevelopment Commission will continue to fund the City's share of cost for this Project, including any cost in excess of the City's twenty percent (20%) of eligible Project costs which are not covered by federal funds.

If approved, it would be resolved that the Goshen Common Council approves the terms and conditions of Amendment #1 to the Project Coordination Contract with the State of Indiana for the College Avenue Auxiliary Lanes Project attached to and made a part of this resolution.

Amendment #1 to the Project Coordination Contract with the State of Indiana for the College Avenue Auxiliary Lanes Project, a three-page document with Attachment A1 and Attachment D-1, were attached to Resolution 2025-08.

SUMMARY OF APRIL 28, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2025-08: Mayor Leichty invited questions or comments from Councilors.

Director of Public Works & Utilities Dustin Sailor said Resolution 2025-08 was a "paperwork correction" that added a designation number, and in that system for the pedestrian bike path over Horn Ditch. "It's always been in the project. It just adds a separate designation for that project. So, it's all one project for the road, but then it adds the bridge portion as a separate project number, and allows the funding for that portion of the bridge." City Attorney **Bodie Stegelmann** said Resolution 2025-08 should not include the current second page that designated as "Resolution _____ – 2025." He said the page was mistakenly added and should be removed.

Councilors Nisley and Riegsecker made a motion to amend Resolution 2025-08 by removing the current second page that was designated as "Resolution _____ – 2025." At 7:36 p.m., the motion passed unanimously by a 7-0 vote.

Mayor Leichty invited additional questions or comments from the Council about the resolution.

Council President Weddell asked for a clarification – if this resolution was in reference to what the Redevelopment Commission discussed at its last meeting "as far as separating out a quote for a pedestrian path off of this project." **Sailor** responded, "It's different than this. The bridge has always been in. It's creating a separate designation for INDOT in that system"

Councilor Riegsecker asked if it was always budgeted. Sailor said it was.

At 7:37 p.m., Mayor Leichty invited questions from 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 Resolution 2025-08, Amendment #1 to the Project Coordination Contract with the State of Indiana for the College Avenue Auxiliary Lanes Project, by a 7-0 margin, with all Councilors voting "yes," at 7:37 p.m.

8) Ordinance 5220, An Ordinance to Provide for a Recruitment Incentive and Referral Bonus Mayor Leichty called for the introduction of Ordinance 5220, An Ordinance to Provide for a Recruitment Incentive and Referral Bonus. Council President Weddell asked the Clerk-Treasurer to read Ordinance 5220 by title only, which was done.

Weddell/Peel made a motion to approve Ordinance 5220 on First Reading.

BACKGROUND:

Ordinance 5220 would provide a \$5,000 recruitment incentive to a new employee filling an eligible position and a \$2,000 bonus to a City employee who refers a candidate for employment to a position that the City has authorized the payment of a referral bonus.

Full-time positions eligible for a bonus will be those difficult to fill in the absence of the recruitment incentives, that require special or unique competencies for the position, such as knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics an individual needs to perform the duties for a position and is assigned a Grade 20 (maximum annual salary of \$103,227) or above.

According to Ordinance 5220:

- The City's administration wishes to provide a recruitment incentive to be offered for certain positions that are likely difficult to fill, along with a referral bonus to encourage current employees to refer qualified candidates for certain vacant positions.
- If approved, it would be ordained by Ordinance 5220 that the Common Council would authorize the payment of a recruitment incentive and a referral bonus as follows:

SECTION 1 Recruitment Incentive – The City may pay a recruitment incentive to a new employee filling an eligible position in accordance with the Recruitment Incentive Policy attached as *Exhibit A*, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of an agreement with the new employee. The total amount of the recruitment incentive to be paid to a new employee shall not exceed the sum of \$5,000.

SECTION 2 Referral Bonus – The City may pay a referral bonus to a referring employee that refers a candidate for employment to a position that the City has authorized the payment of a referral bonus in accordance with the Referral Bonus Policy attached as *Exhibit B*. The total amount of the referral bonus to be paid to a referring employee shall not exceed the sum of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000) for each referred candidate.

Exhibit A sets for the terms and conditions of the Recruitment Incentive Policy, which would be administered by the Mayor. The policy includes its purpose, the positions eligible for it and factors that would prompt the payment. Exhibit B sets for the terms and conditions of the Referral Bonus Policy, which would be administered by the Mayor. The policy includes its purpose, the positions eligible for it and factors that would prompt the payment.

SUMMARY OF APRIL 28, 2025 COUNCIL CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 5220:

Mayor Leichty explained that the City is "having some difficulty filling specific positions, so we want to incentivize our colleagues to provide referrals."



The **Mayor** said, "If a qualified candidate would be hired, then we could have the opportunity to, on a select basis for very difficult positions to fill, provide that opportunity to employees for making those referrals."

Councilor Riegsecker responded, "I like this and I don't like this all at the same time. So, how often do you think we're going to use this? What's your best guess?" The **Mayor** responded, "Once a year."

Councilor Riegsecker said, "I don't want to nickel and dime our budget to death. So, I'm concerned about all the things that we keep throwing in here, but I understand why you're doing it."

Mayor Leichty said, "For context, we've had an Engineering position open for three years. The City, a few years ago, spent \$30,000 on a recruitment initiative, to find a candidate, that yielded one qualified candidate. It's very difficult to get engineering candidates who are willing to move to the City of Goshen and apply for jobs here. This is one beyond doing advertising through other means. This is just one tool in the toolkit for that specific position. It's those highly technical positions that we are finding that we're really struggling with, particularly in the Engineering Department."

The **Mayor** continued, "This is not something I anticipate using broadly, but we have to fill that position, and this would be one additional resource that we could leverage which is referrals through our employee network. So, trying to incentivize people to bring qualified applicants in addition to all the other methodologies of advertising through it, affiliate organizations. And we do not want to engage in another \$30,000 hiring campaign. And so, we're trying to propose a \$2,000 to \$5,000 incentive."

Councilor Riegsecker said, "I understand, and I put full faith in you and the department heads to make this work out without being excessive, I guess, is what my comfort level is."

Councilor Schrock asked if this incentive would apply to any City department, including Police and Fire. **Mayor Leichty** said, "If we had an extremely difficult position that was of critical importance to the operation of the City, feasibly it could be, but that is not its intended purpose."

Councilor Schrock said the draft ordinance specifies that the incentive could be used to fill any position designated as grade 20 or higher. The **Mayor** said, "These would be top-level professional positions."

Council President Weddell asked for a clarification of the service period that would be required to qualify for the bonus. **Mayor Leichty** clarified the payment. **City Attorney Stegelmann** said, "The general idea would be that if the potential employee would receive the recruitment incentive, an agreement would be reached between the City and the employee. and that agreement would contain terms of payment of that bonus. It wouldn't be paid upfront. It would be paid over a one-year period, or over a four-year period, and that agreement would lay out what the terms of that agreement would be."

Council President Weddell asked for a further clarification. The **Mayor** said, "I think what **Attorney Stegelmann** is saying is, there would be terms in there that if they didn't stay for a certain amount of time, we could request a payback." **Stegelmann** added, "There would be conditions under which the recruited employee must repay the City for the recruitment incentive."

Councilor Riegsecker asked for a further explanation, which was provided by the **City Attorney**, who said, "The incentive period will be one to four years for payment of the incentive bonus. So, I guess my thought would be the Board of Works would probably want for a larger incentive, a longer period of payment. Maybe if there's a top end, it would be the four years that the City would pay that bonus out. If it's a smaller amount, it could be a shorter period." **Councilors** asked further clarifying questions, which the Mayor addressed and then said, "We're just trying to add to our arsenal of tools when we reach an employment crisis on what we can do to help incentivize."



Councilor Nisley asked why the City was having such difficulties hiring employees to come to Goshen. He asked if the salaries were too low or if there was another negative factor.

Mayor Leichty said, "When we evaluated the position before, we made sure that the pay was competitive, and it appears to be a competitive salary with other public entities. It is not as competitive with the private sector. In addition to that, there's a national shortage of engineers, particularly with civil engineers. It's a great time to be a civil engineer. If you're a civil engineer with experience, it's an even better time.

"So, all of the things that I was referencing earlier with the delay in projects COVID. Then, after that was over, there was a huge spike in demand for catching up on projects, and there was an inflationary increase on the cost of that labor for those projects. So, all of those things have been contributing factors to why it's difficult to hire for these positions,

"I can tell you, as a former board member on Interra Credit Union, that there are lots of industries when you're trying to attract and retain highly technical talent to this region that there are numerous challenges with attracting and retaining talent in Northern Indiana. I've sat on the entrepreneurship board and for the South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership. and there are numerous strategies that have been deployed to try to attract and retain more of that technical, highly skilled talent to this region."

Council President Weddell said, "I'll echo that . Five or six years ago, I was looking for an associate, and it is very difficult. There are a lot of people that don't necessarily want to (come to Goshen) unless you have a direct connection with this area, most people don't want to come up this way."

Council President Weddell said it wasn't unprecedented for the City to offer a hiring incentive. He pointed out that the City approved a clause for the Deputy Clerk-Treasurer to receive a \$5,000 bonus each year for being a Certified Public Accountant.

Councilor Nisley asked what budget or fund would pay for the incentive. **City Attorney Stegelmann** said the draft ordinance specifies that the recruitment incentive would be paid by the City department employing the recruited employee. The **Mayor** said there would be no budget impact this year because the position was funded for a year. **Councilor Nisley** said he didn't believe a multi-year payment of \$5,000 would be a benefit or incentive for a higher-paid employee. **Councilors** briefly discussed the value of the incentive.

Councilor Nisley asked clarifying questions about the referral bonus. **Councilor Nisley** then said, "Just a month ago, we were told we're going to have to pinch pennies or raise fees and taxes. I just think we're kind of spinning our wheels on this."

Mayor Leichty said, "One of our ways in which we are trying to be good stewards of our dollars is to make sure that we are operationally efficient, and we cannot be operationally efficient when you have one person doing two jobs that are as technically demanding as the jobs that we have open. So, we have to find a way. We have to find a solution in order to address that and we are exhausting every available opportunity that we have. So, we're trying to be as judicious as possible, but this is one tool that we have that could be a potential advantage in helping us identify additional candidates."

Councilor Peel said, "The amount of money that we're talking about is really not that significant, but it could be significant to somebody that is potentially looking for a job that says, 'Oh, they're willing to offer this' if we are doing that. And I think that's I think that's something. If we never use it, we never use it, but Dustin (Sailor) is overworked, and it's taking more time than it needs to if we were to be fully staffed to get a lot of things done in the City."



Councilor Nisley responded, "You're saying that it's not significant, but to me, any penny that we spend is a taxpayer's money and is significant. It's significant to somebody." **Councilor Peel** said, "It is significant, but it's not that much money when we're talking about it as a whole."

Mayor Leichty invited the Fire and Police chiefs to comment on their recruitment incentives under the City's current agreements.

Fire Chief Anthony Powell said if the City hires a licensed paramedic, the City pays a \$7,500 bonus over three years. If the employee leaves before completing three years, the employee must repay for bonus.

Still, **Chief Powell** said this is cheaper for the City because it must pay about \$25,000 to send someone through the paramedic class. If an employee goes through that class and then leaves the City the employee must repay up to \$15,000 to the City.

Chief Powell said, "We have recruited several paramedics from other departments for that \$7,500 bonus, and I'm not saying it shouldn't be revisited at some time, but it does work."

The Mayor asked Chief Powell to discuss other incentives paid to firefighters beyond their base salary. Chief Powell said, "Their base pay is \$68,000, but then, on top of that the City pays for their insurance, which is another \$22,000 a year, and then their pension is over \$14,000, plus their bonus \$7,500. Then, additionally, they get a 9% bonus for being a paramedic each year; this year was \$5,820, plus their specialty (pay) on top of that. So, we're getting closer to the neighborhood of \$90,000 to \$100,000 for each individual."

Councilor Nisley said he agreed this was "a public safety issue." **Councilor Peel** replied, "How is being three years without an engineer, not a public safety issue? They're trying to do a lot of things for the City that are important, too." **Council President Weddell** said he understood that the City is offering to pay a new engineering roughly the same salary as that paid by other public entities. "Wha always frustrated me is when we had the wage comparison study, they did not take into consideration all of the benefits that are provided as a City employee because if you just look at salaries, private industry gets paid way more on engineering. And so, there's just a frustration. So, when you say we're comparable with other cities and communities, that's true. But it still does mean we're going to get a good higher end because of how we're competing with the private industry."

Council President Weddell also said he agreed with **Councilor Nisley** that it would be better to give a larger hiring bonus to a new employee immediately as long as they agreed to repay a portion if they left early.

Mayor Leichty asked Police Chief José Miller to discuss Police Department hiring incentives.

Chief Miller said, "Our sign-on bonus is \$8,000 over four years. To qualify for that that sign on bonus, they've got to be a Tier 1 graduate in good standing, which means we don't have to send them to the Academy for four months, so essentially that saves four months of salary."

Chief Miller said, "It costs the Police Department roughly \$120,000 to fill a vacancy depending on if they're manpower and you're short. If you hire somebody that needs to go through the Academy and go through the field training, it takes approximately nine to ten months, and if you add in the application process, it's essentially a year before we get to count somebody as manpower.

"So, by getting somebody that's already been to the Academy and graduated, they've got experience and we don't have to send them away for four months. So, when you add that up, \$8,000 is minimal compared to what our costs would be to hire them."



Chief Miller continued, "We've gotten several officers and applicants over the years with that sign-on bonus. Ours is \$2,000 at the initial hiring, \$2,000 after year two, and then \$4,000 after year four. And if they leave before year two, they've got to pay back their funds, but if they make it to four years, then we've saved much more than the \$8,000 that we've spent on that sign-on bonus just by having them for four years.

"And then, same as the is the Fire Department, they get their specialty pays of up to \$1,600 a year, depending on their specialties. Longevity pay is \$200 a year, up to like year 17, then it's a bigger jump, but it maxes at \$5,400 a year. They get clothing allowance after the first year, holiday pay, shift differential pay, and that all kind of comes together for their total package deal for the yearly salary without any overtime."

Council President Weddell said after reviewing the ordinance, it appeared the Board of Works would have the flexibility to pay a larger up-front bonus to a specialty employee. **City Attorney Stegelmann** said that was correct. **Councilor Schrock** said, "I just want to throw something out there being a business owner. Sometimes it's not about the money. Sometimes you can throw all the money in the world to somebody and if they don't hear and see what they like, they're not going to move, right? I mean, it's not always about the money ... It's whether they want to come here and whether they like the people that they would work with."

Councilor Peel agreed, adding, "When you go to work in school, public education, it's not about the money. When you go work for a nonprofit, it's clearly not about the money. It's about the cause and the mission behind it. And when you can work for a city, you really need to believe in that city and the work that they're doing."

Councilor President Weddell said that when he recruited a top employee, "I tried to highlight Goshen as much, if not more, than my own practice. I had information about my own practice, but I also had information on our park system. I had information on First Fridays, all of those things, because again, I'm asking somebody to come potentially move to Goshen. And so, I want them to know what Goshen had to offer as well as the work."

Mayor Leichty said, "And when we're recruiting typically at a job at this level, we're recruiting in some ways two people, because you have to convince a person and their partner to consider Goshen as a prime alternative. So, there are a lot of factors involved. So, this is one small tool to help."

Councilor President Weddell said the \$5,000 incentive could help pay moving expenses.

Councilor Peel said, "Private businesses have more in their toolbox that they can offer. They can offer to pay for moving expenses. They can offer to do all different things. Cities have got their hands tied. I appreciate what you're trying to do here."

At 8:05 p.m., Mayor Leichty invited questions or comments from the audience.

Ida Short of Goshen said she wanted to "affirm the idea that you are trying to creatively find solutions to fill positions. I have several friends that I'm constantly trying to convince to move to Goshen, and something even as small as \$1,000 can make a huge difference in moving costs, or in initial childcare, or all of those things. And so, I just want to say that if it seems like a small amount or a large amount or a strange idea, I think that could show that we are willing to sweeten the pot. And I just want to affirm that."

Kyle Richardson of Goshen said, "Just one thing I want to add, as someone who has experience with managing business as well, when you have a position that has been unfilled for three years, and you have one person doing two people's job. There's also a real risk of burning out that person and losing that employee as well. This is an emergency. You've got to fill that position."



The Mayor closed the comment period at 8:07 p.m. Mayor Leichty asked Councilors if they were ready to vote. They indicated they were.

On a voice vote, Councilors passed Ordinance 5220, *An Ordinance to Provide for a Recruitment Incentive and Referral Bonus.*, on First Reading by a 6-1 margin, with Councilors Gerber, Lederach, Peel, Riegsecker, Schrock and Weddell voting "yes" and Councilor Nisley voting "No" at 8:07 p.m.

Councilors did not gave unanimous consent to proceed with a Second Reading and final vote on Ordinance 5220, so it will be brought before the Common Council at the next meeting, on May 19, 2025.

Elected Official Reports:

Mayor Leichty asked if Councilors had any reports they wanted to share. Councilors briefly discussed the date (May 19) of the May meeting.

Adjournment:

Councilor Nisley then 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 8:09 p.m.

EXHIBIT #1: Before the meeting, Mayor Leichty emailed to Councilors a two-page memorandum, dated April 28, 2025 and titled "AmeriCorps Service Interruption and Interim Staffing Measures." It described the abrupt cessation of federal funding for the City's AmeriCorps members and the City's response. She also included Appendix A: 2024-2025 AmeriCorps Project Summary, a three-page document.

EXHIBIT #2: A 22-page PowerPoint presentation prepared by Utilities City Engineer Jamey Bontrager-Singer that provided an overview of the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the City's Drinking Water System Upgrade and Expansion, which includes the Hilltop Booster Station, the North Wellfield, the Kercher Wellfield and the New South Wellfield. The PowerPoint was presented to Councilors during consideration of agenda item 4, Public hearing and consideration of Resolution 2025-09, SRF Loan Program Preliminary Engineering Report Acceptance, and Resolution 2025-10, SRF Loan Program Signatory Authorization Resolution.



APPROVED:

Gina Leichty, Mayor of Goshen

Richard R. Aguirre, City Clerk-Treasurer

ATTEST:

Exhibit #1



GINA M. LEICHTY Mayor of Goshen, Indiana City Hall • 202 South Fifth Street, Suite 1 • Goshen, IN 46528-3714 mayor@goshencity.com • goshenindiana.org (574) 533-9322

TO: Goshen City Council
FROM: Gina Leichty, Mayor
DATE: April 28, 2025
RE: AmeriCorps Service Interruption and Interim Staffing Measures

Summary

Late on Friday night, April 25, I received an email at 10:48 p.m. notifying the City that the federal government had severed contracts with AmeriCorps members serving in Indiana. This decision affected five young professionals who had been serving the City of Goshen through our partnership with MACOG.

These individuals began their one-year service terms in mid-August 2024, with the expectation of completing them in mid-August 2025. In return for their full-time commitment, they agreed to work for a \$29,000 salary and a promised \$8,000 education scholarship from the federal government upon successful completion of their term.

City Response

Over the weekend, I met with department advisors (Dustin Sailor, Theresa Sailor, Aaron Sawatsky Kingsley, Tanya Heyde, Jeffery Weaver, and Michael Wanbaugh) to develop an immediate and responsible solution that allows the City to complete key projects without overburdening staff following the sudden loss of five full-time team members. Our approach reflects the core values of good governance: fiscal responsibility, responsible project management, and respect for colleagues who serve our community.

We took the following actions:

- 1. **Reallocated Urban Forestry grant funds** to support the hiring of AmeriCorps members as part-time, temporary City employees, enabling them to complete their projects and service commitments without an added burden to our budget.
- 2. Extended part-time, temporary employment offers through August 2025 to all five individuals to ensure continuity in project delivery and community impact.

Project Overviews: Practical, High-Return City Work

Appendix A includes a summary of the projects currently underway through collaboration between the former AmeriCorps members and the City's Parks, Environmental Resilience, and Engineering Departments. These young professionals are dedicating their time to cost-saving strategies, infrastructure planning, and resource stewardship initiatives that are helping the City make smarter decisions, stretch limited dollars, and strengthen long-term operations.



Scholarship Gap: Future Consideration

While we've addressed the employment gap, the federal government eliminated \$3,500 per person, or \$17,500 total, from the education awards these individuals were promised upon completion of their service.

I will explore local philanthropic support to help close that gap. If those efforts do not fully succeed, I may propose to the Council in the next two months to consider a partial or full match. This is not a request for Council action currently, but I want to put this forward at this time for your awareness.

Recognition at the April 28 Council Meeting

On the morning of Saturday, April 26, less than 12 hours after learning that the federal government had severed their contracts, the Goshen AmeriCorps team showed up to support the City's tree giveaway at Shanklin Park.

They had been told clearly: their service had ended, and they were summarily fired and instructed not to report to their job placements after Friday, April 25. But they came anyway. They knew they were not getting paid, but they told their supervisors they wanted to volunteer and help.

They came because they had given their word.

That morning, they helped coordinate and carry out the distribution of more than 600 trees to Goshen residents, advancing one of the City's most valued environmental initiatives. Whether or not the federal government kept its word to them, they kept their word to us.

This is the caliber of young professionals we are privileged to welcome through the AmeriCorps program. And this is why I believe we owe them more than thanks. We owe them the opportunity to finish what they started.

At the April 28 Council meeting, these five former AmeriCorps members will be in the audience. I will ask them to stand and be recognized for their service, their integrity, and their example.

Respectfully,

Gina Leichty Mayor, City of Goshen

APPENDIX A: 2024-25 AmeriCorps Project Summary

Provided by Theresa Sailor and Aaron Kingsley

Project Leader Lucy Kramer	Project Focus Land Maintenance and Staff Training	Bottom-Line Impact Reduces mowing and chemical costs; improves staff efficiency and training.
Benji Wall	Urban Forestry and Public Education	Lowers replanting costs; reduces reliance on contracted labor; enables low-cost land use by community groups.
Jordan Gibbs	GIS Mapping and Streetlight Efficiency	Improves infrastructure accuracy; identifies energy savings and utility billing corrections.
Ollie Freshour	Energy Benchmarking and Ordinance Review	Supports low-cost building energy improvements; informs smarter utility use and policy updates.
Lee Strader-Bergey	Tree Nursery and Habitat Program	Decreases tree procurement costs; strengthens local supply; supports cost-effective canopy expansion.

1. Cost-Efficient Land Maintenance and Training Development

Led by Lucy Kramer

Lucy is partnering with the Parks Department during a gap year from Colorado College. She is identifying hard-to-maintain public properties and developing practical strategies to reduce long-term maintenance demands, such as naturalizing, reforesting, or installing low-input landscapes. She's also helping create a standardized staff maintenance manual that includes mowing, herbicide use, buffer zones, and native plant care.

Her research and recommendations align with NRPA certification standards and are based on proven industry best practices. She is also contributing to staff training with knowledge in horticulture, pesticide management, invasive species removal, and sustainable plant selection.

Local Value: Lucy's work equips the City to manage land more strategically, with less fuel, labor, and equipment wear.

Bottom-Line Impact: Reduces the frequency and cost of mowing and chemical applications, improves staff efficiency, and lowers the long-term burden on public works budgets.

2. Urban Forestry Operations and Public Education

Led by Benji Wall

Benji is supporting the Environmental Resilience Department as a Forestry Assistant, performing pruning, planting, and documentation for Goshen's urban canopy. He is producing a series of tree care training videos for residents to reduce future damage to trees from improper maintenance.

He is also analyzing Goshen's Classified Forest to assess gaps in biodiversity and improve long-term health. Benji is developing a Food Forest planning tool that helps churches and community groups turn underutilized land into productive, low-maintenance food systems.

Local Value: Enhances forestry operations, supports habitat diversity, and helps residents and nonprofits become more self-reliant.

Bottom-Line Impact: Reduces reliance on contracted forestry labor, minimizes future replanting costs through better planning, and helps external partners build productive landscapes without city funding.

3. GIS Infrastructure Mapping and Streetlight Efficiency

Led by Jordan Gibbs

Jordan works in the Engineering Department under the City's GIS Coordinator, maintaining GIS datasets that support essential services like drinking water distribution and wastewater collection. She also conducted a full audit of the City's streetlight system, identifying outdated infrastructure, opportunities to reduce lighting in over-illuminated areas, and errors in utility billing.

She has been researching Night Sky-friendly policies that reduce glare, light pollution, and unnecessary energy consumption while maintaining public safety.

Local Value: Jordan is strengthening the accuracy of Goshen's utility data and helping staff improve infrastructure management.

Bottom-Line Impact: Identifies energy savings and billing corrections, improves infrastructure efficiency, and supports better long-term planning for public utilities and lighting.

4. Energy Benchmarking and Tree Ordinance Review

Led by Ollie Freshour

Ollie, a senior at the University of Arizona, is benchmarking energy usage across municipal buildings and developing a dashboard tool to help departments visualize electricity use and identify waste. Ollie is also performing Level 1 building energy audits to prioritize low-cost improvements.

Ollie is reviewing model Tree Ordinances from other communities and drafting recommendations to help update Goshen's ordinance for long-term effectiveness. Ollie is also involved in tree planting and pruning, supporting urban canopy documentation.

Local Value: Promotes internal awareness of energy use and ensures Goshen's policies reflect best practices in urban forestry.

Bottom-Line Impact: Supports measurable energy savings in city buildings, reduces future tree replacement costs, and helps departments target the most cost-effective building improvements first.

5. Native Tree Nursery and Habitat Program Expansion

Led by Lee Strader-Bergey

Lee, a Goshen College graduate in their second year of service, leads the Backyard Habitat Program and organized this year's Seedling Pre-Order Program, which provided hundreds of trees to residents. Lee is also leading the development of a new City tree nursery, including writing a comprehensive Nursery Business Plan that covers layout, species selection, propagation, budgeting, and maintenance strategies.

In addition to maintaining the orchard and nursery, Lee regularly engages the public at the Farmers Market and through educational events.

Local Value: Increases community involvement in conservation and helps ensure the City can produce trees locally, rather than relying on external suppliers.

Bottom-Line Impact: Reduces long-term tree purchasing costs, avoids supply chain issues, and builds local capacity to meet canopy and reforestation goals with minimal external spending.

Exhibit #2



Engineering Department CITY OF GOSHEN 204 East lefferson Street, Suite I

Goshen, IN 46528-3405

Phone (574) 534-2201 • Fax (574) 533-8626 • TDD (574) 534-3185 engineering@goshencity.com • www.goshenindiana.org

Drinking Water System Upgrade & Expansion

Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) Summary Presentation - Goshen Common Council Meeting April 28, 2025

Plant Locations





Engineering Department CITY OF GOSHEN 204 East Jefferson Street, Suite 1

Goshen, IN 46528-3405

Phone (574) 534-2201 • Fax (574) 533-8626 • TDD (574) 534-3185 engineering@goshencity.com • www.goshenindiana.org

Summary... Work Description at Each Facility (4) with Needs and Alternatives Identified

Followed by Preliminary Engineering Recommendations (Report - PER) Water System Upgrade and Expansion Preliminary Engineering Report

March 2025



Donohue & Associates, Inc. 105 E. Jefferson Blvd, Suite 325 | South Bend, IN, 46601 donohue-associates.com

Donohue Project No.: 14413 Goshen Project No.: 2023-004

Hilltop Booster Station

- High Groundwater Cannot empty tank to use full volume (500,000 gal.) concerned it may float.
 - Needs:
 - Reduce high groundwater
 - Alternatives:
 - Install groundwater drainage and pump Selected
 - No action limits capacity & peak flow
- Booster Pumps Inadequate capacity & cannot meet commercial fire demand
 - Needs:
 - Pumps are undersized and difficult to access and maintain in underground vault
 - Alternatives:
 - Rehabilitate the existing Pump Station and install larger, more accessible pumps
 - New Booster Pump station with larger more accessible vertical turbine pumps
 - No action continued issues with pressure and minimal fire capacity



Hilltop Booster Station



Hilltop Booster Tank



North Water Treatment Plant


HS Pump Room, Chlorine Room & Clearwell





(1 of 3)

FLOOD FEPv2 PROD: ROCK RUN CREEK

BCKWTR_SRC		
BKWTR		
CODE1		
CODE2		
CODE3		
DA	-9,999.00	
HUC10	0405000119	
LOCATION		
REACHINDEX		
STREAMNAME	ROCK RUN CREEK	
VERSION	1.0	
WSEL02		
WSEL1	792.82	
Zoom to		

North Water Treatment Plant

Condition of Wells

- Needs:
 - Largest well cannot be re-screened
 - Limited space for new well(s)
 - Trace VOC contamination Currently below limits, but wellfield is a superfund site
 - Location within the Rock Run Creek Floodway
- Alternatives:
 - Install New well offsite
 - Gradually decommission wellfield
 - No action limits capacity of wellfield
- Water Treatment Disinfection System Chlorine Gas
 - Needs:
 - Accidental release is significant risk to surrounding residents, Chamberlin & Boys & Girls Club
 - Alternatives:
 - Construct sodium hypochlorite liquid system
 - Add containment and/or scrubber system to protect employees and neighbors
 - No action does not inhibit risk

North Water Treatment Plant

Aerators

- Needs:
 - 60 years old exceeded design life
- Alternatives:
 - Install new of same type
 - Install new stainless steel, like Kercher WTP
 - No action limits future ability to oxidize dissolved iron

Clearwell

- Needs:
 - 60 years old & concrete is deteriorating
 - Located within the Floodway (and is not high enough)

Alternatives:

- Resurface if it will be allowed in the Floodway
- Replace in same location if it will be allowed in the Floodway
- Replace in a location outside of floodway
- No action will eventually result in no longer being able to be used

North Water Treatment Plant

Pressure Filters

- Needs:
 - 60 years old have exceeded their design life, No. 3 filter was repaired in 2023
- Alternatives:
 - Inspect and repair filters as when they fail
 - No action use until failure

1935 Building

- Needs:
 - Deck where vehicles are stored over basement needs structural evaluation
- Alternatives:
 - Full repair
 - Limited (budget sensitive) repair of structural steel good enough now, but doesn't address root cause
 - No action may result in deck failure

Kercher Water Treatment Plant



Kercher Water Treatment Plant

- Wellfield & WTP Evaluate present conditions to confirm abandoning Plant
 - Needs:
 - Well No. 12 Pumps sandy water, Cannot be re-screened, no space for new well
 - Well No. 14 Largest capacity in system, On Greencroft property, must be cleaned of Iron bacteria fouling every 2-3 years.
 - Trichloroethylene (TCE) plume in industrial park to West. Currently moving to North-East
 - Three Pressure Filters located outdoors, must be operated in winter to keep from freezing
 - Primary Flow Meter is not working
 - Generator is 70's era, was bought used, cannot easily find repair parts
 - Disinfectant System uses chlorine gas, poses risk to adjacent Greencroft retirement community
 - Alternatives:
 - <u>Phase I (Now)</u> Operate with current deficiencies except to add containment and/or scrubber system for chlorine gas to protect employees and neighbors
 - <u>Phase II</u> Expand Facility by buying property to East (away from contamination plume), Replace media in existing filters, add a fourth filter, enclose all filters and aerators in building expansion, replace flow meter, replace generator, construct sodium hypochlorite system for disinfection,
 - No action Abandon wellfield and WTP would require expansion of North Plant or larger new Wellfield and WTP.

Well House #12 & Generator

14 14 19 21



New South Water Treatment Plant

Construct New Wellfield

- Needs:
 - Wellfield without contamination that can be a future wellhead protection area
 - Enable the City to meet demand with loss of current capacity

Alternatives:

- Resolve contamination and other issues so North or Kercher can meet total demand of 13 MGD
- Install wells and WTP with 6.4 MGD capacity now and 10.4 MGD future
- No action Result in inadequate well and treatment capacity for Goshen

South Water Treatment Plant



16" Test Well – South Wellfield

Submittal of DWSRF Application and PER (<i>completed</i>)	March 28, 2025
Publication of Notice for Public Hearing	April 18, 2025
Public Hearing	April 28, 2025
Submittal of PER Required Chapter 6 Materials to IFA	May 6, 2025
Publication of Project Priority List (approximately)	July 1, 2025
Initiate Design of DW Improvements	August 2025
Complete Design and Submit Const. Permit App to IDEM	June 2026
IDEM Approval of Const. Permit Application	August 2026
Bid Opening	August 2026
SRF Loan Closing	October 2026
Issue Notice to Proceed for Construction	October 2026
Construction Substantial Completion	October 2028
Construction Final Completion	December 2028
Submit Record Drawings for Project to IFA	December 2028



Questions?

Next Steps

- Engineering Obtain Amendment for previous PER \$450,000
- Engineering Design Consultant Proposal
 - BAN with help of Baker Tilly
- Preliminary Working Group (Rates)
- Council Work Session June 13
- Baker Tilly Rate Study for 2026