

COMMON COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

February 2, 2026

The regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Shelbyville, Indiana, was held in the Common Council Chambers of City Hall on Monday, February 2, 2026 at 6:00 P.M. Councilwoman Means-Davis opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, and Councilman Adams followed that with a prayer. All members were present with Mayor Furgeson presiding.

Mayor Furgeson entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the January 21, 2026 regular meeting. Councilman Reed made that motion, and Councilwoman Means-Davis seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

Under old business, Mayor Furgeson initiated a discussion on the data center, providing updates. An engineer has been secured to perform a site survey. Additionally, information was received from Prologis and subsequently forwarded to Reed Financial Group for immediate review.

The engineer has confirmed that their property analysis cannot be completed by the next council meeting on February 19th. City Attorney Jenny Meltzer confirmed that the city is still within the 90-day period following the Plan Commission certification in early January, the council agreed that there is sufficient time for Banning Engineering, a firm already familiar with the site, to finalize its work. To allow ample time for review and to prevent scheduling conflicts with spring break, Councilwoman Sanders proposed, and the council agreed, to postpone the discussion until the April 6th meeting. The council also discussed holding the meeting at Shelbyville High School. With that being said, Councilman Adams made a motion to discuss the matter at the April 6th council meeting, and Councilwoman Sanders seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

There was no new business to discuss.

Under miscellaneous business, Melissa O'Connor, Executive Director of the Shelby County Youth Assistance Program, provided the council with an update on the program. Since 2016, the program has grown, focusing on the prevention and early intervention of at-risk youth. It aims to keep youth out of the juvenile justice system by offering free, confidential family services for as long as they are needed and providing opportunities youth might not otherwise have.

The program, which began in March 2016, has received 1,293 total referrals and currently serves 169 active clients. Last year saw 172 new referrals, an average of 14 per month, which was an increase from the previous year. The program has 26 active volunteers. Tutoring programs are currently serving 10 students at the Shelbyville Library and Triton Central Middle School. Mentoring programs expanded last year through a partnership with Southwestern and Waldron to provide weekly "lunch buddies" mentoring. 16 mentors participated in the fall semester, with some continuing into the spring. New mentors were trained for spring group mentoring, and the program plans to partner with Shelbyville Middle School for this initiative.

The organization continues to foster positive development in youth through engaging activities, offering referrals for counseling, and connecting them with community support. They offer scholarships that enable youth involvement in athletics, extracurricular activities, before and after school care, and summer day camps. Last year, they sponsored over 50 youth in club memberships, day camps, and various recreational activities.

Additionally, they provide essential assistance to families, including basic needs support, food, and holiday aid, while offering trauma-informed services. They maintain strong coordination and partnership with Shelbyville Central Schools, the Shelbyville Police Department, and other community agencies, including the Handle With Care notification system. The organization is also actively involved in addressing chronic absences and truancy issues by participating in absence review meetings, county school safety meetings, and various community child-focused meetings and task forces.

The organization has recently expanded its full-time staff to two members. This expansion allows for a greater focus on enhanced services, increased case management, and the development of volunteer programs. They actively collaborate with various partners to address community needs and provide training. Upcoming initiatives include a youth worker café in partnership with the Indiana Youth Institute and Girls Inc. later this month. Additionally, the organization is involved with the CIT steering committee to offer critical incident training to law enforcement officers and other community members next week.

To enhance community involvement and build resources for youth and families, YAP staff actively participate in and often chair various community teams and coalitions. The program is also continually strengthening its board and board committee membership to improve services. Last year, the program utilized a complimentary professional consultant from the Indiana Youth Institute to assess organizational assets, needs, and priorities, as well as to focus on board best practices.

The program has several exciting upcoming events and next steps. These include the plan to implement the Strengthening Youth Programs and Indiana Lilly Endowment grant award, which will provide support for trauma-impacted youth in the community. They will also be offering financial literacy courses in partnership with Centra Credit Union. Most notably, the program is celebrating 10 years of service in Shelby County.

Director O'Connor clarified that the planned youth worker cafe would be held at Girls Inc. When Councilman Johnson inquired about the location, O'Connor explained that while the cafe is usually a hybrid event (both virtual and in-person), this particular meeting will be the in-person event for the year and will focus on grief support. The community will be offered a free lunch at this event.

Councilwoman Means-Davis praised the "lunch buddies" program, noting its success at Waldron and expressing hope that mentioning it at the meeting would generate more volunteer interest, as she has observed the positive interaction between the children and the volunteers. Director O'Connor confirmed the ongoing need for additional volunteers and shared that they receive positive feedback from the children, families, and current volunteers. In response to Councilwoman Sanders' inquiry about volunteer training, Director O'Connor outlined the process, which includes interviews, reference checks, background checks, and formal training.

Next under miscellaneous business was the Reedy Financial Group report presentation from Katelyn Shafer regarding an overview of proposed sewer and stormwater rate increases. She explained the proposed increases are driven primarily by the need to fund a \$17.15 million dollar wastewater treatment project and to address long-deferred infrastructure and operating costs. Ms. Shafer explained that utility rates fund a number of revenue requirements expenses and must cover day-to-day expenses required to operate and maintain exceptional service to rate payers, extensions and replacements to fund capital needs, debt service and debt service reserve, payments in lieu of taxes, and a working capital, noting that in comparison to other utilities, Shelbyville's sewer and stormwater rates currently do not support a working capital.

The financial review included an examination of salaries and wages, confirming the 2% increase approved in the 2026 budget, which also affects benefits. Health insurance increases applicable to the utilities were also reviewed. Furthermore, all capital-related expenses were removed from the operating budget, as these should be funded through extensions and replacements. The operating budget is intended solely to support day-to-day operations. Maintaining capital through depreciation or extension and replacement funds is essential for ensuring the system remains efficient and well-maintained. Given the substantial balance in the operating fund, Ms. Shafer proposed transferring \$1.3 million from the operating fund to the ENR fund. This transfer would support future capital projects, allowing for proactive planning and reducing the need to issue a bond for the full cost of future endeavors.

The proposal outlines increases to both sewer and stormwater fees. A typical customer using 4,000 gallons would see a \$7.07 monthly increase for sewer service, raising the current rate from \$29.18 to \$36.25, which totals an annual increase to \$84.84. Stormwater fees, currently \$6.00, would rise by \$2.08 per month, as recommended by Reedy Financial Group, setting the proposed rate at \$8.08 and totaling \$24.96 annually. Ms. Shafer noted that even with these adjustments, Shelbyville's rates would remain relatively low compared to the region.

Additionally, increases were proposed for inspection, tapping, septic dumping, and fats, oils and greases disposal fees. Ms. Shafer clarified that the septic dumping fee increase applies only to haulers, not city residents, and that these modest adjustments will help alleviate pressure on customer rates. Septic hauling fees are currently at \$0.01 and proposed to increase to \$0.08 per 1 gallon. FOG tipping fees are currently at \$0.05 and proposed to increase to \$0.25 per 1 gallon. Inspection fees are currently at \$25 and proposed to increase to \$112. These increases were based on the average wage of two employees for two hours.

Mayor Furgeson clarified that any septic hauler in Shelby county can bring septic waste from homes in Shelby county to dump at the treatment plant. The rate change will not affect the residents of Shelbyville, but will affect the residents of Shelby County, outside the city limits, since they utilize the service more frequently.

Water Resource Recovery Superintendent, Michele Higdon, expressed her agreement with the proposed rate increases. She noted that few surrounding facilities accept FOG (Fats, Oils, and Grease) waste and indicated that not accepting it at their

plant was acceptable. Councilwoman Sanders inquired if the plant had the capacity to handle FOG waste. Superintendent Higdon responded that it could not at this time. She explained that the additional solids from FOG make proper mixing in the tank difficult. Even though the lack of heating is not an issue, the lack of mixing creates problems. To address this, staff must add water to loosen the solidified grease for pumping into the digester. Unless the FOG is moved to the digester immediately after being dumped, it solidifies.

Councilwoman Sanders asked Superintendent Higdon if the plant intended to continue accepting FOG (Fats, Oils, and Grease) waste. Superintendent Higdon clarified that while existing legislation permits the Health Department to accept grease trap waste, the plant has its own grease trap program. She noted that if the plant discontinues this program, businesses will need an alternative disposal location. Although the plant has handled FOG waste for years, and it was not detrimental, it was also not ideal right now. With the project underway, once completed, it will make accepting these materials easier to handle. While most septic haulers are local, a few operate from outside the immediate area. Regardless of the non-local hauler's origin, the plant will only accept waste from septic tanks pumped within Shelby County.

Mayor Furgeson confirmed that sewage rates had not been raised since 2013 and stormwater rates had not been raised since its inception 22 years ago. Ms. Shafer recommended annual fee reviews and possible inflationary adjustments built into ordinance language. At the suggestion of the council, she will also review the possibility of higher fees for non-county residents. The presentation was informational only, with formal public hearings and council action on any rate changes expected at future meetings. Copies of the Accountant's report as well as the stormwater and sewage works rate studies or statements can be found attached to the meeting minutes in the Clerk-Treasurer's office.

Next under miscellaneous business, Councilman Johnson made a motion to relieve Christopher Clark from the Board of Zoning Appeals, and Councilwoman Sanders seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

Next under miscellaneous business, Shelbyville Police Chief Bill Dwenger provided an update on personnel, announcing the hiring and swearing-in of two new police officers. The new recruits are Ella Lowe, from Greensburg, and Austin Miller, a Shelbyville native. The year-long process involves pre-basic training, the academy, and the field training program, all of which must be completed.

Mayor Furgeson provided an update regarding the potential construction of a new police station on the city's west side. The current police department location, which is shared with the county, is facing persistent problems with space and overall conditions. The city has narrowed its focus to the former Hubler Collision Repair property on South Miller Avenue after evaluating several potential sites. The project is being considered as a build-operate-transfer (BOT) agreement through the Board of Public Works and Safety. They only had two applicants at this point and chose to proceed with Envoy Inc. and HWC Engineering.

Mayor Furgeson emphasized that the initiative remains in its initial stages and that public meetings would be scheduled should the project advance. As there is currently no contract, the design phase will be provided at no cost under the BOT agreement. This structure ensures that halting the process at any point would not present a financial or contractual problem for the city. Considerations for the existing property involved assessing whether to maintain the current building entirely or to retain only a section for use as a training facility. Mayor Furgeson also requested that two council members serve on the committee to meet with the designers, ensuring input from the city council. Councilwoman Sanders volunteered to join the committee.

Following that, Mayor Furgeson announced upcoming meetings focused on securing funding for improvements to parks and storm water infrastructure. Given current budget constraints, the Mayor expressed an openness to innovative solutions, such as exploring long-term leasing projects with participating companies, to continue vital park upgrades.

Further miscellaneous business, Mayor Furgeson and the council members debated whether department heads should be required to attend City Council meetings, particularly when the agenda lacks items directly relevant to their departments. Councilwoman Sanders proposed that department heads submit reports detailing their department's current activities, or alternatively, that the departmental liaisons be made responsible for providing these updates to the council.

Councilwoman Means-Davis raised concerns about transparency, specifically referencing the communication related to the data center. Mayor Furgeson concurred, adding that a key problem with future projects is the inability to provide definitive information during public forums before the projects are finalized. Mayor Furgeson stressed the imperative for greater transparency, highlighting that communication must be improved. Specifically, information from department heads needs to be effectively relayed to the City Council. The department heads regularly attend the weekly Board of Public Works and

Safety meetings, where they report on their departments as necessary, and this information should then be passed on to the council. Councilwoman Sanders stressed the necessity of a unified "team effort" and expressed the belief that all participants could improve. She noted that city council members are often the point of contact for public inquiries and therefore must remain as informed as possible to address citizens' concerns effectively.

Expanding on transparency, during an ordinance committee meeting concerning a data center ordinance, Councilwoman Means-Davis suggested using technology to enhance public access to the information, making it easily accessible to the public. Councilwoman Sanders noted that having additional time allows for a closer focus on the data center issue. This extended period will enable the council to work more closely with city departments and Attorney Meltzer to thoroughly review all aspects and develop effective solutions.

Local resident Whitney Carson requested clarification regarding the data center discussions, specifically asking when Mayor Furgeson became aware of the data center agreement being signed, which occurred in either March or August of 2025. Mayor Furgeson stated he was aware of the agreement but did not attend the Redevelopment Commission meeting. He indicated that while information was shared with him, his meeting with Prologis didn't happen until August. The agreement itself was signed in March by the Redevelopment Commission, citing an offer on a portion of the land previously owned by the city. However, the rest of the land now being proposed was not known to the Mayor until his August meeting with Prologis. Councilman Johnson added a clarification that Prologis is a real estate developer, not a data center company.

Regarding information from the State of the City address, Ms. Carson inquired about discussions with prospective companies regarding their needs concerning utility providers such as Indiana American Water, Duke Energy, or Rush Shelby Energy. Mayor Furgeson explained that these interactions were primarily question-based, noting that companies typically seek information related to land, water, or energy resources.

Mayor Furgeson addressed Ms. Carson's request for clarification regarding the data center discussion from the January 21st city council meeting, specifically addressing Indiana Water's statement, released just before the meeting, that they had not yet been consulted. The Mayor countered this by stating that Indiana Water had been involved, having attended a meeting with Prologis where the water needs were outlined. Furthermore, he noted that City Engineer Tyler Comstock had been given the necessary information to confirm capacity.

Mayor Furgeson emphasized that local Indiana American Water personnel do not issue data center commitments or statements; such communication must come from corporate. He was assured by Indiana American that local staff *had* been involved, and because no capacity issues were identified, the matter did not need to be escalated beyond the local level. He was not happy about the statement that was released before that January meeting which was why Banning Engineering was hired to review the site carefully. Mayor Furgeson confirmed the April 6th meeting will take place to discuss the final analysis.

Following that, Councilwoman Means-Davis announced that since she has replaced Councilman Harrold as the liaison for the Plan Commission; she is also serving as the liaison for the Parks Department, which she is willing to continue; however, the added responsibility has left her feeling overextended with extra meetings. She asked if another council member would be willing to share the Parks Department liaison duty with her. The department is actively involved in many exciting projects and events, including the amphitheater. Mayor Furgeson, Parks Department Director Trisha Tackett, and Parks Board President Gary Nolley have already met to discuss the operation of the new amphitheater which will not be finished until 2027. Councilwoman Means-Davis cited further discussions about embracing the use of the local rivers. As an avid kayaker herself, she felt this initiative was also exciting.

Councilman Johnson expressed gratitude to the street department for their dedicated efforts in clearing roads after a recent winter storm. He specifically acknowledged the challenging working conditions, which included both heavy snow and frigid temperatures. Mayor Furgeson also shared his appreciation, noting that employees who dealt with low temperatures had to collect twice the usual amount of trash in a foot of snow.

Under reports from committees, boards or commissioners, Councilman Harrold announced that the tax abatement committee will meet Thursday February 5, 2026 at 4:00 P.M. Councilwoman Means-Davis stated that she missed the parks board meeting due to a field trip she had to attend that day.

Clerk-Treasurer Scott Asher announced that the 2025 year-end financials are now available, following the office's rollover to the new year. He invited anyone with questions to contact his office.

Mr. Asher noted that his office is currently in a critical three-week period to finalize all year-end reports and the annual report in Gateway. He highlighted the increased workload in Gateway, including new duties related to the Redevelopment Authority added by the State Board of Accounts.

Despite these added responsibilities, the Clerk-Treasurer commended his office for its outstanding work. He explained that the city's growth has led to a significant increase in the office's duties, which now include reconciling 56 bank accounts monthly and managing added responsibilities related to the aviation department, opioid funds, and a surge in public records requests.

Mr. Asher acknowledged that the limited manpower makes fulfilling public records requests challenging during year-end, but assured that the office is committed to fulfilling all requests in a timely manner.

There were no further comments, questions or requests from citizens, and there were no further reports from committees, boards or commissioners.

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Furgeson entertained a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Sanders moved to adjourn the Common Council.

ATTEST


Scott Asher
Clerk-Treasurer



Scott Furgeson
Mayor