

Town of Beverly Shores
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – August 18, 2026
Administration Building – 500 S. Broadway, Beverly Shores, IN

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.
(This meeting was a hybrid meeting and broadcasted live via Google Meets and was recorded.)

Roll Call - Council Members: Geof Benson, Matrona Malik, Donna Norkus, and David Phelps were present. Also, present: Clerk-Treasurer Ellen Hundt, Marshal Vernon Garard, Attorney Connor Nolan (arrived at 5:30 p.m.), and Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Sally Bagnall. Candice Peterson-Smith attended virtually.

Title VI Survey Availability

President Phelps announced the availability of the Title VI public involvement survey. This survey is available online via the Town's website.

Budget Workshop

CT Hundt presented the Council with a draft budget. There was a discussion about the Clerk-Treasurer's pay. Councilor Benson motioned to approve raising the rate of the certification pay for the Clerk-Treasurer to \$2,615 per certification. Councilor Norkus seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously. CT Hundt to make amendments accordingly and publish the budget on Gateway in time for the public hearing at the September Council meeting.

Public Presentations

Council President Phelps presented a statement to the residents of Beverly Shores (a copy of the statement is attached to these minutes).

Approval of Minutes

Approval of July 21, 2026: Councilor Malik motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Councilor Benson seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of August 11, 2026:: Councilor Benson motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Councilor Malik seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously

Report of Police & Street Departments

Violation Report:

15690 / Morris: Councilor Malik motioned to deny appeal. Council Benson seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

15781 / Messer: Councilor Malik motioned to deny appeal. Council Benson seconded. There was a discussion. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

15189 / Strumfeld: 15690 / Morris: Councilor Malik motioned to deny appeal. Council Benson seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

15872 / Mulhearn: 15690 / Morris: Councilor Malik motioned to deny appeal. Vice President Peterson-Smith seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Police Report: Marshal Garard gave report. Garard encouraged residents to call the Police Department for wellness checks. Garard introduced a new officer.

Street Report: Garard gave report.

Ordinances & Resolutions:

2nd Reading and Adoption of Ordinance 2026-09 Supplemental LIT Distribution: Attorney Nolan introduced Ordinance 2026-09 for 2nd reading. Councilor Benson motioned to adopt the Ordinance on 2nd reading. Councilor Malik seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing and 1st Reading/ Adoption of Ordinance 2026-10 An Additional Appropriation for the Police Donation Fund: The public hearing was opened at 6:20 p.m. Attorney Nolan introduced the Ordinance. There was no public comment. Councilor Benson motioned to close the public hearing. Councilor Malik seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously. The Public Hearing was closed at 6:21 p.m. Attorney Nolan presented the ordinance on first reading. Councilor Benson motioned to approve the ordinance on first reading. Councilor Malik seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously. Councilor Benson motioned to consider on second reading during the same meeting as it was introduced. Councilor Malik seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously. Attorney Nolan presented the ordinance for second reading. Councilor Benson motioned to adopt the ordinance. Councilor Malik seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2026-04 Declaring a Local Disaster Emergency: Councilor Benson motioned to approve the resolution. Councilor Norkus seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer's Report

Consideration of Claims –CT Hundt presented the July/August 2026 APV register, noting items that were not standard expenses. Councilor Benson motioned to approve the APV as presented. Councilor Malik seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously. CT Hundt also presented the Fund Report, 2026 Combined July Report, Revenue Report, Appropriation Report,

Depository Balance Report, Bank Rec Checking, Bank Rec TrustIN, Bank Rec Water, BOK Financial/2020 Bond Series, July payroll. Councilor Norkus will sign off on reports.

Consideration of Claims for Bonds, 2020 Series: None.

Reports from Committees/Liaisons:

ADA progress: Nothing to report.

Building & Building Site Committee: Councilor Malik gave report.

Board of Zoning Appeals: There was no meeting.

Capital Planning Committee: There was no meeting.

Fire & Emergency Management: Councilor Benson gave report.

Greenspace Committee: Vice President Peterson-Smith gave report.

Indiana Dunes National Park: Councilor Norkus gave report.

NIRPC: President Phelps gave report.

Parks & Recreation Committee: Vice President Peterson-Smith gave report. The following was discussed during written communication but reported here due to topic. Peterson-Smith requested the Council accept the donation from ABSR of services being done at the Reborra garden by Spaulding for \$3,500. Councilor Benson motioned to accept the donation from the ABSR of the \$3,500 for plants and labor at Reborra Plaza. Councilor Norkus seconded. Councilor Norkus offered a friendly amendment to authorize them to complete the work in the spring. Councilor Benson accepted the friendly amendment. President Phelps offered another friendly amendment that the Town is accepting a gift of services valued at \$3,500. There was a discussion. Councilors Benson and Norkus both accepted the second friendly amendment. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Plan Commission: Councilor Norkus gave report

TDD: There was nothing new to report.

Unfinished Business:

Grants updates:

Councilor Norkus reported on updates.

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap (CAWAG): No update at this time.

RDA Catalyst Grant, Terms Sheet: No update.

NWI Thrive Grant: Phelps reported they will review the Town's concerns.

Porter County Animal Contract for 2027: Phelps to meet with Chesterton to discuss options for municipalities.

2027 GO Bond: There was a discussion regarding options for issuing a new bond. The Council is considering a 10-year bond for \$1,500,000. Nothing was decided at this time. Attorney Nolan will have figures and timeline for the next meeting.

Town Sign Project: Vice President Peterson-Smith to order signs for Rebora Plaza as originally approved. President Phelps reported that the ABSR would like to pay for the large sign at Rebora through their grant process. Councilor Benson motioned to approve the Council allow the Vice President to submit a grant application for the large sign at Rebora Plaza. Vice President Peterson-Smith seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER EMERGENCY: See Ordinance and Resolution Report.

2027-2029 Republic Contract Extension: CT Hundt presented a single fee, 3-year price contract extension. Councilor Benson motioned to approve the contract. Councilor Malik seconded. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Park Committee memo on Park Warming Hut: Susan Loeb, President of the Parks & Recreation Committee, requested that the Council supply guidance and/or a long-term plan for the Warming Hut. The Parks Committee will not move forward with any significant repairs until a long-term plan is created.

Written Communications

McAllister Prairie Trail Posts: Council Norkus reported the information that was requested had been received.

Other correspondence received included comments about NIPSCO inaccurate reporting system, Council's responsibility to residents, the intersection of Highway 20 and 520, leaning trees, and 211 and reporting storm damage.

Public Comment

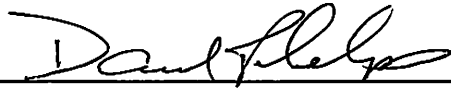
Gail Saum, 122 W. Fairwater, inquired about electric restoration.

Town Council Comment

Councilor Norkus commented that she knew the Town was in good hands with all the people working on its behalf. She further extended thanks to Dave Wagner for all of his volunteer work in spite of dealing with outages at his restaurant.

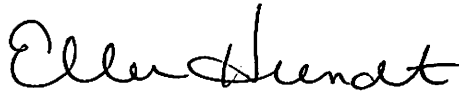
Adjourn:

Councilor Benson motioned to adjourn. Councilor Norkus seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 07:39 p.m. There was a roll call vote. Benson – yes. Malik – yes. Norkus – yes. Phelps – yes. Peterson-Smith – yes. The motion passed unanimously.



Town Council President:

Attest:



Clerk-Treasurer
Ellen Hundt

Opening Statement to the Residents of Beverly Shores

Residents and friends,

Over the past several days, our town has weathered a major storm that brought down trees, damaged parts of our electrical infrastructure, and disrupted our communications systems — including internet and cable service. It has been difficult, inconvenient, and at times deeply frustrating. I know that. I feel that. And I want you to know that I'm frustrated that you're frustrated, because I care about this community and the people who call it home.

At the same time, I think it's important to acknowledge perspective. While Beverly Shores experienced real damage, what we faced was nowhere near the level of destruction seen in Portage, Chesterton, Ogden Dunes, Gary and Hobart. These communities are dealing with catastrophic losses to homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure. We should keep them in our thoughts as they begin the long process of recovery.

I also want to speak directly to those who feel disappointed — whether in actions I took, or in actions you assumed I didn't take. If I let you down, I am truly sorry. That was never my intention. I assure you that your town government has been working diligently, consistently, and persistently to advocate for a prompt resolution to the outages and disruptions we are experiencing. We have been in communication with the utilities, the governor's office, the Indiana Department of Transportation, Porter County Emergency Management and service providers, pushing for updates and restoration timelines.

If you have questions about what I'm doing — or not doing, as some may allege — please call me. Let's talk. Let's share facts as we each understand them. Let's work toward solutions together rather than turning to social media with frustration or ad hominem attacks. That's not who we are as a community. Beverly Shores is a place where neighbors help neighbors, where people show up for one another, and where we solve problems by talking to each other, not past each other.

We are a resource-constrained town, and yet we accomplish extraordinary things. We have six elected officials — five part-time council members — and one part-time clerk-treasurer supported by a part-time assistant clerk. They deliver value far beyond what they are paid. Our part-time building commissioner works more hours than many full-time employees and volunteers for everything. Our new Marshal, our two new full-time deputies, and our roster of part-time deputies — most of whom also serve in other agencies — bring professionalism, community-minded policing, and dedication every single day.

Our volunteer fire department is made up of friends and residents who show tremendous commitment to this town. We have one part-time street employee who has been with us for decades. We have committees filled with volunteers who give their time, energy, and expertise. And of course, we have the legendary Chain Saw Gang — volunteers who save this town thousands upon thousands of dollars every year by clearing trees, debris, and storm damage with skill, speed, and heart.

This town government reminds me of the classic children's book *The Little Engine That Could*. We may be small, but we keep climbing the hill, repeating "I think I can, I think I can," and somehow — through grit, teamwork, and community spirit — we do.

We do all of this for the good of the town, and for our friends and neighbors. Thank you to all from the bottom of my heart for your contributions.

Let's take a moment to be thankful for this beautiful place we call home. And let's continue to work together, support one another, and show the resilience that has always defined Beverly Shores.

Thank you.