

Town of Beverly Shores
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – September 15, 2026
Administration Building – 500 S. Broadway, Beverly Shores, IN

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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, Donna Norkus, and David Phelps, and Candice Peterson-Smith were present. Also, present: Clerk-Treasurer Ellen Hundt, Marshal Vernon Garard, Attorney Connor Nolan, and Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Sally Bagnall. Matrona Malik was absent.

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](#).

Public Hearing and First Reading for the 2027 Budget / Ordinance 2026-11

Attorney Nolan introduced the Ordinance for first reading. Councilor Benson motioned to open the public hearing. Councilor Norkus seconded. The motion passed unanimously. CT Hundt read the ordinance into record. There were no questions from the public. Councilor Benson motioned to close the public hearing. Councilor Norkus seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the public hearing was closed. The ordinance will be on next month's agenda for adoption.

Public Presentations

Wendel McCollum, Ed.D., Superintendent Michigan City Area Schools, presented on the proposed 2026 Michigan City Area Schools (MCAS) Operating Referendum. The power point presentation is attached to these minutes.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of August 18, 2026: Councilor Benson motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Vice President Peterson-Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Report of Police & Street Departments

Violation Report:

15692/McKinney: Councilor Benson motioned to deny appeal. Councilor Norkus seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

15851/Song: Councilor Benson motioned to deny appeal. Councilor Norkus seconded. There was a discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

16210/Zegar: Councilor Benson motioned to deny appeal. Councilor Norkus seconded. There was a discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Police Report: Marshal Garard gave report.

Street Report: Street Superintendent Garard gave report. Garard reported he was successful in obtaining 1 quote from 3 vendors solicited for the Community Crossings Grant 2027-01 road work. CT Hundt opened a quote from Reith-Riley. The quote was for 27 road segments for crack

sealing. The total cost estimate was 692,356.50. Councilor Benson motioned to take the quote under advisement. Councilor Norkus seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Councilor Norkus thanked Street Superintendent Garard for brush removal. Vice President Peterson-Smith discussed forming a volunteer committee for continued brush removal around town.

Ordinances & Resolutions:

Ordinance 2026-13: Issuance of 2026 GO Bond: Attorney Nolan introduced the Ordinance for First Reading. The Ordinance will be on the October agenda for Second Reading/Adoption.

Ordinance 2026-14: Appropriation for 2026 GO Bond (for informational purposes only this month): Attorney Nolan explained the Ordinance. Councilor Benson motioned to set a Public Hearing for the October meeting. Councilor Norkus seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Councilor Benson motioned to use Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP for Bond Counsel. Vice President Peterson-Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer's Report

Consideration of Claims –CT Hundt presented the August/September 2026 APV register, noting items that were not standard expenses. Councilor Benson motioned to approve the APV as presented. Vice President Peterson-Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously. CT Hundt also presented the Fund Report, 2026 Combined August Report, Revenue Report, Appropriation Report, Depository Balance Report, Bank Rec Checking, Bank Rec Trust IN, Bank Rec Water, BOK Financial/2020 Bond Series, August 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: There was no meeting.

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: There was nothing to report.

NIKPC: There was nothing to report.

Parks & Recreation Committee: Vice President Peterson-Smith gave report. Peterson-Smith reported that ERG would like to donate a gift of services of Erdelac Land Management removal of invasives at Lituanica Park. Councilor Benson motioned to accept the gift of services. Vice President Peterson-Smith seconded. There was a discussion regarding the scope of the project and liability. The motion passed unanimously.

Plan Commission: There was no meeting.

TWB: There was nothing new to report.

Unfinished Business:

Grants updates:

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap (CAWAG): Councilor Benson reported that there will be a quarterly meeting on Thursday, September 17th. They expect a preliminary engineering report by the end of the year. Benson further reported that the state is working on changes to septic tanks.

RDA Catalyst Grant, Terms Sheet: President Phelps reported they are waiting on the report.

NWI Thrive Grant: President Phelps reported there will be a public engagement meeting by the end of October.

Porter County Animal Contract for 2027: There was no update.

2027 GO Bond: This was previously discussed.

Town Sign Project: Vice President Peterson-Smith requested Council approve the final version of the large sign for Reborna parking lot. Councilor Benson motioned to approve the sign design as presented. Councilor Norkus seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Park Committee memo on Park Warming Hut: This was discussed in the Parks & Recreation Committee report.

New Business

Request from CT for additional appropriation from Garbage Fund; \$1,000 for trash removal coverage, \$2,000 for software extension. : Councilor Benson motioned to approve the sign design as presented. Vice President Peterson-Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve engagement letter of bond council: This was discussed previously.

Written Communications

An email was received regarding renewing the Town's Bird Town USA designation. Resident John Blackburn will be submitting the renewal application.

Public Comment

Dave Wagner, 603 E. North Forest, thanked the DWC and ABSR for donating gift cards to the chainsaw crew.

Jason Lukas, 45 S. Oval, suggested the Town take measurements of how much herbicide is being used in Town for information purposes.

Dave Eckley, 323 E. Ripplewater, complained about the state of the hiking trails on the west side of town. He volunteered to mow the trails. President Phelps offered to meet with him to discuss.

Town Council Comment

None.

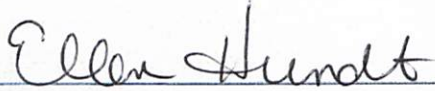
Adjourn:

Councilor Norkus motioned to adjourn. Councilor Benson seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.



Town Council President:

Attest:



Clerk-Treasurer

Ellen Hundt



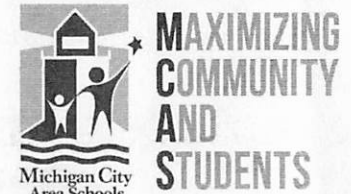
MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS

MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS

Why the Operating Referendum Is Needed

MICHIGAN CITY AREA SCHOOLS
SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Securing programs, people, and essential services for students



Why MCAS needs the operating referendum

The district has already reduced expenses. State policy, tax caps, enrollment loss, and rising costs have now overtaken those savings.

\$2M+

SAVED THROUGH INTERNAL REDUCTIONS

EDUCATION AND OPERATIONS SPENDING

\$5.8M+

PROJECTED ANNUAL TAX-CAP LOSSES

PRIMARILY OPERATIONS FUND REVENUE

280

FEWER STUDENTS

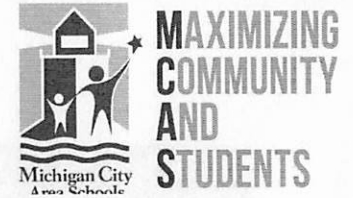
EDUCATION FUND REVENUE

The immediate issue

Without new operating revenue, MCAS must identify at least \$4 million in additional annual reductions to balance the budget.

Debt Service dollars have restricted uses and generally cannot pay salaries or recurring operating expenses.

Internal reductions alone can no longer close the structural gap.



The operating referendum proposal

A focused, time-limited investment in students, staff, and essential services.

UP TO \$10M

ANNUALLY

8 YEARS

PROPOSED TERM

\$0.2998

PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUE

What voters are considering

The referendum would provide operating revenue for academic programs, transportation, student support, employee retention, and school safety.

The proposal appears on the November 3, 2026 ballot.



Legislative and financial forces

SEA 1

SEA 1 phases in tax-base changes from 2026 through 2031. MCAS projects less room for local revenue growth as those provisions take effect.

PROPERTY-TAX CAPS

Circuit-breaker credits and the new homestead credit reduce the revenue MCAS can collect. Annual losses are projected above \$5.8 million.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

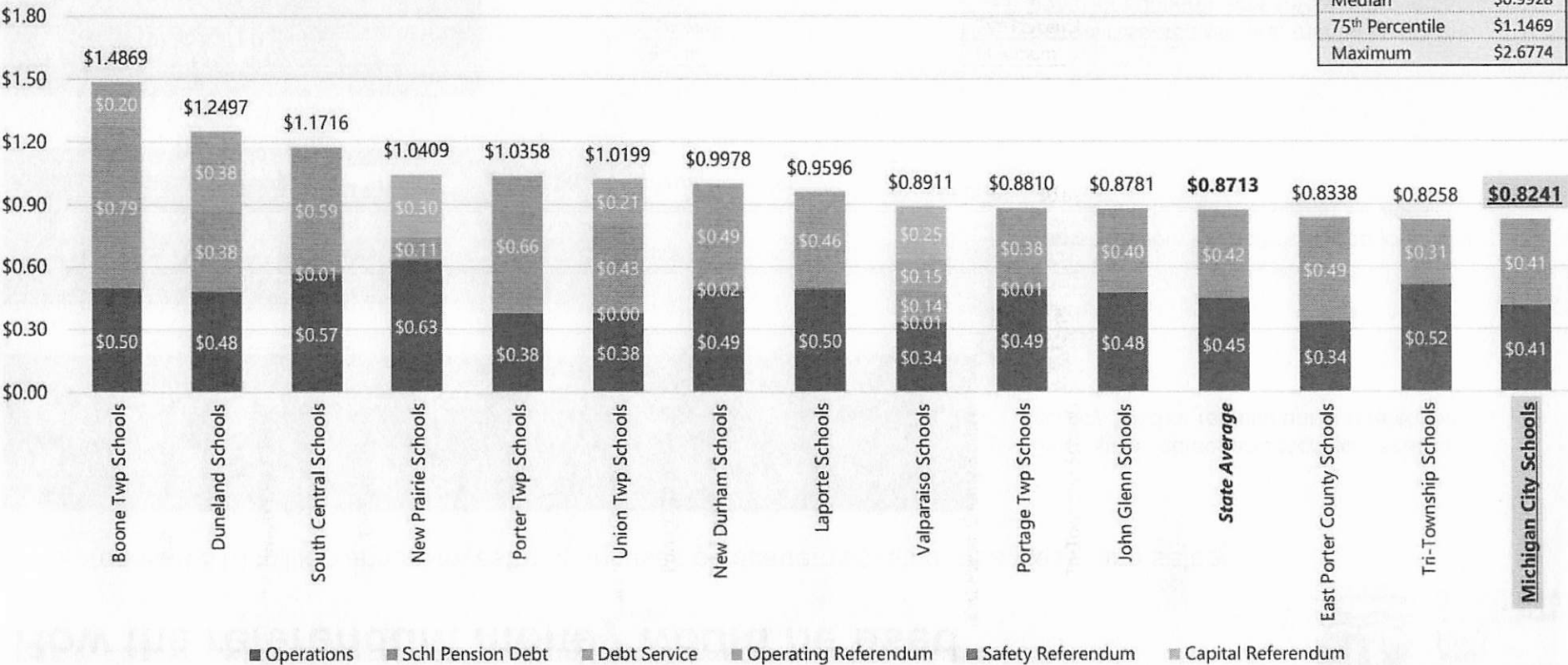
Education, Operations, and Debt Service dollars have different legal uses. Debt dollars generally cannot pay salaries or recurring services.

Enrollment loss compounds the pressure: 280 fewer students reduced Education Fund revenue by more than \$2 million.

2026 Property Tax Rates

Schools within Laporte and Porter Counties

Total School Rate	
Minimum	\$0.4565
25 th Percentile	\$0.8359
Median	\$0.9928
75 th Percentile	\$1.1469
Maximum	\$2.6774



How the referendum money would be used

The proposed \$10 million annual investment focuses on academics, student access, and safety.

65%

\$6.5M

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Class sizes, career and technical education, literacy, teacher recruitment and retention

20%

\$2.0M

STUDENT ACCESS

Transportation, extracurricular opportunities, activities, and student support services

15%

\$1.5M

School resource officers, mental health and behavior supports, and safety improvements



What MCAS has already done

MCAS acted before asking the community for additional support.

25

POSITIONS REDUCED

\$2M+

SALARY AND BENEFIT SAVINGS

15%

MAXIMUM EDUCATION-TO-OPERATIONS TRANSFER

Reviewed and renegotiated contracts and services to seek savings.

Right-sized staffing, programs, and organizational structures.

Established tighter controls for future staffing decisions.

Continued advocacy with state legislators for sustainable funding.

These steps reduced costs, but they cannot offset the combined effect of tax caps, SEA 1, enrollment loss, and rising operating costs.

What is at stake for the community

IF IT DOES NOT PASS

Fewer bus routes, larger walking zones, and reduced transportation.

Cuts to academic supports, electives, activities, and enrichment.

Fewer counselors, social workers, success coaches, and behavior supports.

Reduced custodial, maintenance, safety, and facility services. School closures could become necessary.

IF IT PASSES

Maintain current programming and protect student opportunities.

Preserve transportation and access to school activities.

Strengthen student mental health, behavior, and safety support.

Retain strong employees and maintain reliable services through future school transitions.

Strong schools support a prepared workforce and help Michigan City remain a place where families and employers want to invest.

Learn more: [EducateMC.net/MCAS](https://educatemc.net/MCAS) Calculator: [EducateMC.net/Calculator](https://educatemc.net/Calculator)



MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS

Learn more and join the conversation

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

**WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 23**

6:00 PM
Edgewood Elementary
502 Boyd Circle

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 22**

6:00 PM
Krueger Middle School
2001 Springland Avenue



SCAN FOR REFERENDUM INFORMATION

EducateMC.net/MCAS

Estimated household impact: [EducateMC.net/Calculator](https://educatemc.net/calculator)

Questions and answers will follow each presentation.