

Town of LaFontaine
Town Council Meeting Minutes
April 13th, 2026
LaFontaine Town Hall
13 W Branson St
LaFontaine IN 46940



Present: Maria Smyth, Pam Whitener, Nikki Brubaker, John Krhin, Lori Brane, Conner Hindmen, Rob Bullici, Tom Polk, Tom Simpson, Melissa Norby, Arielle Galligan, Gary Herring, Chris Harrison, Tracie Hensley, Tina King, Wendy Black and Mat Galligan

The meeting was called to order by John Krhin.

Lori motioned that the March 9th, 2026 meeting minutes be approved, Nikki seconded the motion, John abstained since he was not present, a vote of 2-0 to approve.

John read the resolution authorizing application, submission, and local match commitment. It was passed and the number will be assigned before the application is turned in. This is a resolution of the Town of LaFontaine, authorizing a submittal of the Stellar application to the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs addressing related matters. John made the motion to pass the resolution, Nikki seconded the motion, a vote of 3-0 to pass the resolution.

John made a motion to pass Ordinance Number 1 2026, the updated Fair Housing Ordinance. Lori seconded, a vote of 3-0 to pass. John then made a motion to suspend the rules, Nikki seconded, a vote of 3-0 to suspend the rules. John then made another motion to pass Ordinance Number 1, 2026, the updated Fair Housing Ordinance, Nikki seconded the motion, a vote of 3-0 to pass. John then made a motion to unsuspend the rules, Lori seconded, a vote of 3-0 to unsuspend the rules.

Water Project – Presented by Rob Bellucci of Commonwealth: They got what was needed by Peerless Midwest Meters to incorporate the repairs that need to be done to the well. Their engineers will be pulling all that information together and getting it bundled up to get it transmitted to RD colleague before the end of this week. Rob is optimistic we'll be receiving our authorization to go to bid before the end of the month. The town council will be copied on all transmittal information so they will know when it comes in. Once that comes in, Rob will have a set of drawings and specs printed for the council to give to Jeff or keep at the office. They will also have a link to the PDF of everything but, he will give Jeff a printed set so he can start going through and familiarizing himself. The base project has the meters in it a new water plant. There was a little bit of work planned out in the distribution system, putting a looping line down by Rolling Meadows. It has already been designed, it will be bid but as an alternate because they want to make sure that the well work gets incorporated. All of that was previously addressed in preliminary engineering report so RD knows about it. it just wasn't until

has checked in with IDEM and since it is a change in our treatment process, the town will need a construction permit from IDEM to make the change. Rob said that Commonwealth Engineers can help the town with that because the permit has to be certified by an engineer, it is a form they complete all the time and he was not worried about the cost and does not need a contract to do it. He explained that is how Commonwealth got introduced to the Town of LaFontaine, work was done at the wastewater plant without a permit. Rob wanted to make sure that no work was started without the construction permit by IDEM. He also expressed that the bigger issue is the capital investment to get it built. John felt the town needs to do the project and that there needs to be a meeting to discuss how to pay for it. Whether they want to try and piecemeal or do it all at once and if they want to borrow the money. Rob said that once the board decides, they need to let him know and he will get started, just don't let anyone go off and start anything without the construction permit.

Pam asked Rob if there is any update on the USDA funds for the Water Project. He explained that was what he was talking about earlier in the meeting. Commonwealth has gotten what they needed from Peerless to get the well work in. So, they should get everything submitted to RD before the end of the week and then they should get authorization to go out to bid before the end of the month. John asked if after that is done will the town start getting some funds back in? Rob said as soon as they close with RD, the town will get reimbursed at closing. He will get with Pam to get copies of the invoices for anything and everything associated with the project.

John asked Rob if there was any news from Midwest Meter on the meters that need to be worked on. Rob said he needs to follow up with both the rep and Jeff. Since he will be in the office all day tomorrow, he will do that and the report back tomorrow. There was discussion as to whether Jeff needed the replacements or if he had them and the weather delayed putting them in. Similar to the wastewater project, you'll be required to set up a dedicated project account if that has not already been done. Once the reimbursement is processed, those funds will be deposited automatically to that account. John said he would have to speak with Jeff also because the buildings downtown have some plumbing adjustments that need to be done before they can be installed and what the cost would be. Rob said he would try and get ahold of him and get his understanding as to where that stuff's at and what is needed. Rob will get find out and get with the board tomorrow to let them know where everything stands. Pam asked if we could use the bank that we deposited the BAN money into as the dedicated bank account, he said yes, they can use the water project BAN.

Marshals Report given by Mathew Galligan:

- 24 calls for service
- 32 traffic stops
- 7 ordinance issues with 1 resulting in a citation.
- 4 arrests for the month of March. 1 for operating while never being licensed, 1 for operating while intoxicated that was right in front of a daycare, 1 for being suspended prior, and 1 was while working in conjunction with the Sheriff's department stemming from a domestic call that resulted in charges for a felon in possession of a firearm.

- Assisted the County with a stolen vehicle investigation

Fire Dept Report for the month of March was given by Tom Simpson:

- 10 fire calls
- 2 of the 10 were vehicle accidents
- 8 EMS calls

No Utility Report was presented

Park Report given by Wendy Black:

- Reminder of open board position. Being a town resident is a requirement.
- Recognized Gary Herring for all of his work at the park. Wendy explained that if anyone would like to help him, its equivalent to a cash donation because it is in kind work.
- While working with Commonwealth took up a lot of the Boards time, they are still focusing on fundraising to help with the next phases.

LaFontaine Community Alliance Report given by Tom Polk:

- After some confusion, the contest was cancelled. The artist would like to meet with some community members and will be generating a preliminary drawing.
- In reviewing the side of the building where the mural is to be placed, is not suitable for painting. They are getting quotes to possibly mount sign board to the building so that the surface can be painted. John asked what the issue is with the paint on the building. Tom explained that the type of paint used will not allow the mural to be long term and, due to the possibility of there being lead based paint underneath it, removing it is not an option. Sign board two pieces of aluminum sandwiched with a piece of plastic usually quarter inch thick. It is durable and meant to last. It would be mounted to a frame and then the frame would be mounted to the building. At this time the Alliance had no quotes. From a timing stand point, it may not happen this year.

Clerks Report given by Pamela Whitener:

- Reimbursement for Jeffs wages for the first quarter have been submitted in the amount of \$17,342.00
- Construction of the bathroom at the town barn has been completed. Council approved the bid of \$26,850. in September of 2025. The final bill was over bid in the amount of \$4025.00 as additional items were added. Those items were requested by Jeff and are included in the bills for approval.
- We received our first Wabash County wheel tax allotment in the amount of \$282.89.
- Pam attended the State Board of Accounts conference in March. A big topic of discussion was Cyber Security. After reaching out to the towns Tech guy and IMG insurance she felt like the Town has very good protection with what is in place.
- Bills for approval: \$36,251.48. Lori motioned approving the bills in the amount of \$36,251.48. Nikki seconded, the vote was 3-0 to approve.
- Billing Adjustments:

- a. Acct# 2269002 – Credit for \$217.89. The bill was the previous owners. Lori motioned to approve the credit, Nikki seconded, the vote was 3-0 to approve.
- b. Acct#100000501 – Wastewater Credit \$284.26 Leak Lori motioned to approve the credit, Nikki seconded, the vote was 3-0 to approve.
- c. Credit for the following accounts due to a lag in the Pay.Gov credit card system:
 - Account# 31275021 for \$14.96
 - Account# 2300001 for \$19.83
 - Account# 312750200 for \$14.97Lori motioned approval of the credits, Nikki seconded and the vote was 3-0 to approve the credits.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Agenda Request:

- Tracie explained 2 residents had brought up the question about a Town Seal but neither of those residents were in attendance. The board was not opposed to having one. In the discussion, Tom Polk mentioned that maybe the seal needs to be a contest. John then suggested that LaFontaine Community Alliance take lead with that. Tom will take the lead on that, with the Town Council having final approval.

John asked the attendees if there was anything else. Tom Simpson from the LaFontaine-Liberty Volunteer Fire Dept said there had been a lot of chatter on social media about the tornado/severe thunderstorm whistle not working. Due to the age and complexity of the system there is no way to have dispatch set them off. Many years ago, the firefighters would go down and manually set the alarm. That stopped a few years ago and due to the fact that these are volunteers, leaving their homes and families when everyone can get the alerts on their smart phones, just is not an option. Tom explained that a new siren is very costly and that's not something that a volunteer fire department can foot the bill for. He suggested that the town possibly look into some type of grant or add one on as an extra thing to add when all the money is not spent. Last time he had checked, they were about \$45,000. for a system that connects to central dispatch. John clarified that there is not anything the town has currently that could be used for a siren but maybe in the future there will be. Melissa Norby from Kleinpeter said she would make a note and will be looking into a possible grant. Lori mentioned the REACH Alert system, Mat was asked to check with Sandy at Central Dispatch to see if that was possible. Lori made the motion to adjourn the meeting, John seconded, the vote was 3-0 to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tracie Hensley