Town of LaFontaine Council Meeting
13 W Branson St
LaFontaine IN 46940

Meeting Minutes February 9th, 2026

Present were Jay Gillespie, Jed Derek, Eithel Eib, Wendy Black, Gary Herring, Tom Polk, Maria Smyth, Chris Harrison, Brian Linkenhoker, John Krhin, Nikki Brubaker, Lori Brane, Jordan Tandy, Pamela Whitener, Tracie Hensley, Tina King, Mat Galligan, Jeff Smith, and Tom Simpson.

The meeting was called to order. John made a motion to approve the January 12th 2026 corrected, meeting minutes. Lori seconded, all in favor, none opposed.

Chris Harrison from Commonwealth Engineering presented some updates on the current projects:

- **Water**: Laura Hammond has assumed responsibility for USDA development. A response from her is expected soon to initiate the water project. Work continues with Peerless Midwest on Well #1, they are reviewing new casings and screen for the rehabilitation phase.
- **Park:** The initial kick of meeting was held. A site walk through was conducted by Gary, Isaac, and Matt. A large concrete slab was discovered and will need review to determine whether it can be incorporated into the project. The next Park Board meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday February 11th, 2026. Chris offered to help at the Town Hall for anyone uncomfortable with virtual participation. He assured the council that progress continues to move forward.

Marshals Report presented by Mat Galligan:

- 20 Calls for service in January
- 1 ordinance issue
- 8 traffic stops (limited due to weather, road conditions, and vehicle issues)
- Equipment issues included windshield replacement, emergency light replacement ($1600. At Cops Gear), and a failed speed sensor affecting the 4-wheel drive.
- 1 warrant arrest
- Deputy Marshal Gatlin Burton is awaiting firearms qualification.
- The new Caliber system is operation but experiencing implementation issues; vendor support meetings are ongoing.

Fire Department Report presented by Tom Simpson:

- 13 calls in January

- 3 Fire
- 10 EMS

Utility Report presented by Jeff Smith:

- There is a going water main break on Kendall St. Parts have been ordered to complete repairs. Every effort will be made to avoid shutting down the towns water system. If there is a shutdown, water service may be temporarily interrupted; a REACH alert and boil advisory will be issued if necessary.

Park Board Report presented by Wendy Black:

- The board is currently working with the Town Council and Commonwealth on the park grant application.
- The Boots and Bows fundraising event is scheduled for Friday, February 20th at the LaFontaine Community Building.
- Robert Byles expressed interest in filling the vacant Park Board seat.
    - Wendy brought up that the current ordinance requires board members be residents of the Town of LaFontaine. Mr. Byle lives just outside of the town limits. John felt that must be a clerical error because, it was to read that anyone with a LaFontaine address would be able to be on the park board.
    - There was discussion regarding potential modification, legal review is to be conducted.

Mural Project (LaFontaine Community Alliance) presented by Tom Polk:

- A proposal was presented for the mural contest. John said that the council is ok with the to proceed with the following, as long as, the Council gets the final design approval.
- Tom asked if the entries could be dropped off the Town Hall, Pam approved that.
- The contest is to begin with school students and potentially expand to the community.
- The suggested theme is "LaFontaine – Our Past, Our People, Our Future"
- Submissions will be reviewed and refined by a selected artist.
- Guardrails be established (copyright release, content standards, etc.)
- Target installation will be June, dependent on fundraising which are ongoing.

LaFontaine Community Alliance Update presented by Maria Smyth:

- Fund raising efforts are ongoing. Maria spoke to the council about a possible donation to the Mural.
- Maria would like to create a small business event in collaboration with Grow Wabash County in April.

- Maria asked for an update on a donation to the mural project. John explained that there had not been in any discussion but felt that with the cost of painting the building.
- Maria explained that the group was looking at creating a website. Trying to centralize all the town information is important.
- The group is awaiting feedback on a possible collaboration with the History Club adding place makers with QR codes that explain points of interest.

Clerks Report presented by Pam Whitener:

- All banks have been reconciled and balanced for the month of January.
- 2025 Fund accounts will be closing this week.
- New water meters and installation invoices have been paid.
    - The appropriation accounts are temporarily overdrawn pending USDA reimbursement.
- The Boyce Keystone contract has been renewed and paid for 2026.
- The Towns insurance and employee bonds has been paid and renewed for 2026.
- Pam will be attending State Board of Accounts meeting March 8 – 12 in Plainfield and will be absent from the March Council meeting.
- Due to possible staffing issues, there may be limited office hours.
- Bills for Approval:
    - $12,976.20 – Lori made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of $12,976.20, Nikki seconded the motion, all in favor, none opposed.
- Account Adjustments:
    - Account #2269002 Debit of $81.65 due to final billing system error. John made a motion to approve the adjustment in the amount of $81.65 to account 2269002, Nikki seconded the motion, all in favor, none opposed.

New Business:

- Jordan presented revisions to a couple of the sections with in our utility billing procedures to keep the Town in line with the recently updated Indiana Code 8-1-0.5-3-8 and 39-9-3-32. It covers who is responsible for bills and remedies when they do not pay. Lori motioned passing ordinance No. 3 -2017, implementing Indiana Code 8-1-0.5-3-8 and 39-9-3-32, Nikki seconded, all were in favor, none opposed.

Public Comments:

- A resident raised concerns regarding meter readings and billing discrepancies, timing of meter reads versus online system readings. The resident had been at a

previous meeting concerning 600 gallons that he felt he did not use during the new meters being installed. John clarified with Jeff that the old meter had 600 gallons on it when they installed it during the middle of the billing cycle so, the 600 gallons went over to the new meter.

- The same resident questioned the timing of meter read versus the EYEon water online system reading. During the discussion, it was determined that the resident's meter was showing back flow. The Council acknowledged passible issues with the new meter/billing system and will contact the company for further review.
- Another resident brought the issue of backflow showing up on the meters. Jeff explained that they are in the process of identifying all the meters that are showing back flow. Backflow could not be identified until the town received the new meters. The town is in the process of getting backflow preventers put on all of those. The resident asked who is going to pay for the backflow preventers, Jeff explained that the homeowner will be responsible per the town's ordinance.

John motioned to adjourn the meeting, Nikki seconded it, all were in favor, one opposed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tracie Hensley