

Town of Orland

9535 W. State Road 120, Orland, Indiana- Community Center Bldg.

July 13, 2026 Town Council Meeting

6:30pm

1. Opening prayer recited before meeting start.

2. Pledge of Allegiance recited.

3. Council President Robin Sears called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

Roll call: Council President, Robin Sears was present, Council Vice President Chris Sanders was present and Councilman Zeb Schuette was absent. The Clerk-Treasurer, April Sanders was present to record the meeting. Town Attorney Kevin Bruns was absent.

Marshal Brad Kline was present along with Deputy Jackson Spires being present. Maintenance Superintendent Phil Slisher was present.

In the audience, Amelia DeTro was present representing the Orland American Legion Post 423, Millgrove Township Trustee, Charlie Clark was present and Chris Emerick was present.

Town residents Kevin Kellett and Jacob Springer were also present.

4. Clerks Report - *The Clerk-Treasurer submitted financial statements for Council review. Employee time sheets were provided electronically and, when possible, signed during payroll verification prior to Council meetings.*

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes- Town council reviewed the June 8, 2026 meeting minutes. Council Vice President Sanders made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 08, 2026 as presented, Council President Sears seconded the motion, motion carried.

B. Claims –Town Council reviewed the claims as presented. Council Vice President Sanders made a motion to accept the claims from the dates of June 9, 2026 through July 13, 2026 as presented, Council President Sears seconded the motion, motion carried.

C. Approval of Employee Time Sheets and Payroll – Council Vice President Sanders made a motion to approve all employee time sheets and payroll for Pays #13 and #14 of 2026. Council President Sears seconded the motion, motion carried.

D. Approval of June 2026 Bank Reconciliation- Clerk-Treasurer provided the June 2026 bank reconciliation reports. Council Vice President Sanders made a motion to approve the June 2026 Bank Reconciliation as presented, Council President Sears seconded the motion, motion carried. Council President signed off on the reconciliation log.

E. Reminder for Rescheduled Council Meeting - Clerk-Treasurer Sanders reminded council that the August regular meeting has be rescheduled from August 10th to August 17th due to a scheduled surgery.

F. Interlocal Agreement-Baker Tilly Strategic LIT Services- Clerk-Treasurer Sanders informed the Council that she and Council President Sears recently attended a meeting hosted by the City of Angola with representatives from several Steuben County municipalities, Steuben County officials, AIM, and Baker Tilly to discuss future Local Income Tax (LIT) planning and Senate Enrolled Act 1.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders reported that the participating communities discussed entering into an interlocal agreement to jointly retain Baker Tilly to provide strategic consulting services regarding future Local Income Tax distribution options and negotiations with Steuben County. She explained that by participating as a group, municipalities would receive independent financial analysis and guidance when evaluating future LIT proposals.

Based upon the proposed cost allocation, the Town of Orland's estimated share of the agreement would be \$220.65, calculated using population. Clerk-Treasurer Sanders advised that she had previously forwarded the proposed agreement to Council members for review and recommended that the Town Attorney review the agreement prior to execution.

Council discussed the proposed agreement and acknowledged that the final cost would depend upon how many governmental units ultimately elected to participate. Council expressed interest in participating if the agreement remained financially reasonable but preferred to wait until participation by the other communities was confirmed before taking formal action.

No formal action was taken.

G. Tarps for Park Pavilions- Clerk Treasurer Sanders also relayed a request from John Coney and his family, who annually reserve the entire Town Park for a family gathering, to partner with the Town in purchasing heavy-duty tarps for Pavilions No. 2 and No. 3. The family proposed purchasing one tarp if the Town would purchase a matching tarp, with both tarps being donated to the Town for future public use. The tarps, estimated at approximately \$355 each, would provide temporary protection from rain and wind during park events and would remain the property of the Town when not in use. Council discussed the potential benefit of providing additional shelter for park patrons during inclement weather, as well as concerns expressed by Council Vice President Sanders regarding the installation method and whether permanent mounting hardware could create a safety hazard if left in place. It was noted that the family had already reserved the entire park for their annual event next year and understood the tarps would not be available for this year's gathering. Council expressed general interest in the proposal and agreed additional information regarding the mounting system should be obtained before considering the request further. **No formal action was taken.**

5. Reports-

A. *Street/Water/Park Department* – Maintenance Superintendent Phil Slisher provided updates regarding multiple ongoing projects.

Mr. Slisher reported that the Town's GMC dump truck was recently repaired after a malfunctioning micro switch in the steering column prevented the vehicle from recognizing that it was in the "Park" position. While the truck was at the dealership, technicians also diagnosed a faulty shift shaft within the transmission after an engine warning light appeared. Because the local dealership lacks the specialized equipment required to complete the repair, the truck will be transported to either Shaheen Chevrolet in Lansing or Kelley Chevrolet in Fort Wayne upon Mr. Slisher's return from vacation. The repair will be completed under the manufacturer's warranty.

Mr. Slisher also reported that Clear Lake Electric has completed additional repairs to the downtown street lighting system. Technicians located arcing electrical wiring within the utility pole located in front of the Methodist Church, repaired the damaged wiring, and, at the time of the meeting, all affected streetlights were functioning properly. Council expressed hope that the recurring electrical issue had finally been resolved.

Mr. Slisher further reported that DNS Services completed replacement of the deteriorated steel siding on the west wall of the Police Department/Maintenance garage. Council complimented the finished project and agreed the improvements significantly enhanced the appearance of the building.

Sidewalk Repair

Mr. Slisher informed the Council of a severely damaged section of sidewalk on Parker Street consisting of approximately four sidewalk panels. The sidewalk has settled significantly, creating an elevation difference estimated between eight inches and one foot, presenting a potential tripping hazard.

Although the sidewalk appears to have failed near an existing water service, Mr. Slisher advised that the service line is actually located on the opposite side of the residence, indicating another cause may be responsible for the settlement. Because the repair will require removal and replacement of multiple concrete panels, Mr. Slisher recommended contracting the work to a qualified concrete contractor rather than completing the project in-house.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders advised the Council that approximately \$5,000 remains budgeted for sidewalk repairs.

Council discussed the repair and agreed the location should be addressed due to the safety concern.

No formal action was taken at this time.

Zero-Turn Mower Air-Ride Seat Request

Mr. Slisher requested authorization to purchase an aftermarket air-ride suspension seat for the Town's Hustler zero-turn mower.

He explained that extended mowing operations have become increasingly difficult due to the rigid factory seat and the physical strain associated with operating the equipment over uneven terrain. After researching available products, he identified a dedicated air-ride suspension system specifically designed for the Town's mower at a cost of approximately **\$1,342**.

Although additional research would continue before ordering, Mr. Slisher indicated this appeared to be the only model specifically engineered for the Hustler mower and requested permission to proceed prior to leaving on vacation so the equipment could be installed upon his return.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders advised the Council that the purchase was included within the department's approved budget. She further noted that the Council could waive its three-quote purchasing policy if it determined only one practical product was available.

Following discussion, Council agreed the purchase was appropriate and authorized Mr. Slisher to continue researching the equipment and proceed with the purchase, not to exceed \$1,500, if no comparable alternatives were identified.

Council Action

Council authorized the Maintenance Superintendent to purchase an aftermarket air-ride suspension seat for the Town's Hustler zero-turn mower, not to exceed \$1,500, and waived the requirement to obtain three quotations due to the specialized nature of the equipment.

Park Improvements

Mr. Slisher reported that replacement flags had already been ordered for the downtown flagpoles. A new flagpole for the football field had also been received and would be installed following his vacation.

Council discussed several additional park-related projects in preparation for the upcoming Vermont Settlement Days festival, including pavilion reservation signage, locks for park facilities, and general maintenance items.

Discussion also centered on recent requests by the Orland Tigers Youth League to obtain outside funding for improvements to Town-owned park facilities, including baseball bases and flagpoles.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders reminded the Council that, while the Town greatly appreciates the Youth League's willingness to invest in the park, any proposed improvements to Town property should first be discussed with the Town Council and Maintenance Department before outside funding is requested or purchases are made. She explained that coordination

helps prevent duplicate purchases, conflicts with projects already underway, and unnecessary complications with vendors or reimbursements.

Council agreed that improved communication between the Town and the Youth League is necessary before future improvements are undertaken and indicated that a conversation with League representatives should occur to reinforce that expectation.

B. Police Department – Town Marshal Brad Kline presented the monthly Marshal's Report.

Marshal Kline reported that preparations for the upcoming Vermont Settlement Festival had been completed. The Marshal's Office recently met with Fire Chief Jimmie Friend and Orland Area Chamber President Kris Wheaton and finalized plans for parade traffic control and public safety operations throughout the festival weekend.

Marshal Kline advised that:

- Traffic control assignments have been established for the parade.
- Public safety plans have been coordinated for activities within the Town Park.
- The Fremont Police Department has agreed to assist with traffic control during the festival.
- Fremont Police will also provide a K-9 demonstration during the festival, with Deputy Marshal Jackson Spire participating.
- The Marshal's Office has coordinated security arrangements for the American Legion Block Party.
- Deputy Marshal Jackson Spire will provide private security for the Friday evening concert while Marshal Kline remains available to assist with increased traffic and public safety throughout the community.

Marshal Kline further reported that nuisance enforcement efforts would begin shortly. Notices regarding properties with grass and weeds exceeding ordinance limits would be mailed to affected property owners in the coming days.

Council thanked the Marshal's Office for its preparation and coordination efforts leading up to the Town's summer events.

Deputy Marshal Jackson Spires presented a proposal to replace the department's current duty weapons and backup firearms.

Deputy Marshal Spires explained that the department's current Glock 17 duty weapons are not compatible with modern red-dot optics, which have become standard equipment among surrounding law enforcement agencies and improve officer accuracy during high-stress situations.

He presented two equipment options and recommended Option One, which included:

- Glock Model 45 duty pistols equipped with factory-installed Aimpoint Acro optics;
- Glock 43X backup firearms;
- New duty holsters;
- Trade-in of the department's existing Glock 17 duty weapons and Glock 26 backup firearms.

Deputy Marshal Spires advised that Kesler's Police Supply had offered trade-in allowances totaling:

- **\$1,590** for the existing duty weapons; and
- **\$1,650** for the backup firearms.

The complete cost of Option One, including replacement firearms, optics, backup weapons, holsters, and trade-in credits, totaled \$5,326.65.

Marshal Kline recommended approval of Option One, noting that it represented the best overall value while maintaining compatibility with equipment used by neighboring agencies. He further explained that standardizing equipment across departments improves officer familiarity and efficiency during mutual aid responses.

Council discussed the proposal, including:

- advantages of red-dot optics;
- replacement of backup firearms;
- availability of replacement holsters;
- trade-in values;
- ammunition compatibility; and
- overall project cost.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders reminded the Council that any motion approving the purchase should also include authorization to trade in the department's existing firearms.

Council Action

Council Vice President Chris Sanders made a motion to approve Option One as presented, including:

- purchase of Glock Model 45 duty weapons with Aimpoint optics;
- purchase of Glock 43X backup firearms;
- purchase of replacement holsters; and
- authorization to trade in the department's existing duty weapons and backup firearms toward the purchase price.

Council President Robin Sears seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Following approval of the equipment purchase, Council briefly discussed long-term planning for replacement of the department's patrol vehicle.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders reported that the Town remains within its three-year replacement funding plan established in 2024. She advised that while approximately \$60,000 had originally been budgeted, current vehicle pricing may require increasing the 2027 budget allocation closer to \$80,000 to account for inflation and equipment installation costs.

Marshal Kline estimated that a replacement Ford Police Interceptor Utility would likely cost between \$48,000 and \$52,000, with an additional \$15,000 required for outfitting and emergency equipment.

Council discussed monitoring vehicle pricing during the upcoming budget process and the possibility of purchasing a replacement vehicle early if funding allows in order to avoid continued price increases.

No formal action was taken.

6. Old Business-

A. Vermont Settlement Updates- Council Vice President Sanders publicly thanked Miller Poultry for its generous donation of twelve (12) blue trash receptacles for use throughout the Town Park. Council expressed its appreciation for Miller Poultry's continued support of the Town and its willingness to invest in community improvements.

7. New Business –

A. Charles Clark, Millgrove Township Trustee on HB 1048- Millgrove Township Trustee Charles Clark appeared before the Council to discuss implementation of House Bill 1048, which became effective July 1, 2026.

Mr. Clark explained that the legislation requires participating governmental units to provide volunteer firefighters with an annual allowance of up to \$500 per firefighter, consisting of:

- \$250 clothing allowance
- \$250 automobile allowance

Mr. Clark outlined several potential methods for allocating the cost among the governmental units contracting with the fire department, including:

- Population
- Assessed valuation
- Percentage of each entity's fire protection contract
- Call volume

He explained that his preliminary recommendation was to allocate costs based upon each entity's percentage of the annual fire protection contract because it would be the simplest method to calculate annually.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders advised that she had researched the legislation independently and offered additional considerations for the Council. She expressed concerns regarding using contract percentages because future changes to another entity's contract could unintentionally shift additional financial responsibility to the Town of Orland.

She advised the Council that she believed allocation based upon either:

- population, or
- annual fire run volume

would provide a more equitable and predictable funding method.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders further recommended that the Town issue payments directly to the firefighters, as required by statute, rather than routing funds through another governmental unit, providing a clearer audit trail for State Board of Accounts purposes.

Council members discussed budgeting considerations, possible use of Redevelopment Commission funds for the initial year, coordination with the remaining contracting units, statutory compliance, and future budgeting requirements.

Mr. Clark emphasized that his primary objective was ensuring that every eligible firefighter receives the full statutory benefit before the end of the calendar year.

Following discussion, Council agreed additional review was warranted. Council President Sears stated that the town would continue evaluating the available allocation methods, consult with the Town Attorney, and revisit the matter at a future meeting before final implementation.

No formal action was taken.

B. Amend and Reinstate Ordinance 2026-004 Fireworks- Clerk-Treasurer Sanders explained that although the Noise Ordinance already authorized special event permits, the Town's recently adopted Fireworks Ordinance did not yet provide the Council authority to issue fireworks permits for special events.

To correct this oversight, Clerk-Treasurer Sanders presented an Amended and Restated Ordinance No. 2026-004, which would authorize the Council to issue fireworks permits through an approved application process.

Following discussion, the Council approved the amended ordinance.

Council Action

Council Vice President Chris Sanders made a motion to amend and restate Ordinance No. 2026-004 regulating the days and hours when consumer fireworks may be used, ignited, or discharged. Council President Robin Sears seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Council Vice President Sanders then made a motion to waive the second reading and adopt the amended ordinance on the night of introduction. Council President Sears seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

C. Amelia DeTro, Orland American Legion Special Event Noise Permit Requests- Amelia DeTro appeared before the Council on behalf of American Legion Post 423 requesting approval of a Special Event Noise Permit for the Legion's annual Block Party and a Special Event Fireworks Permit for Family Day activities.

Mrs. DeTro advised the Council that:

- The Friday evening kickoff event would be limited to individuals 21 years of age and older.
- Activities would include a mechanical bull, outdoor live band, and private security.

- Private security would be provided by Deputy Marshal Jackson Spire from 6:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.
- Saturday's Family Day would include a co-ed softball tournament, food vendors, inflatables, children's activities, live music throughout the day, and a fireworks display after sunset.
- Fireworks would be discharged from the west side of the baseball field with spectator safety zones established by barricades and roped-off areas.
- The Orland Fire Department would remain on-site during the fireworks display.
- Liability waivers would be required for all event participants involved in applicable activities.

Mrs. DeTro also provided the Council with site maps identifying the proposed fireworks launch area and spectator locations together with copies of liability waiver forms for the event.

Special Event Noise Permit

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders explained that the Town's recently amended Noise Ordinance authorizes the Town Council to approve special event noise permits. She advised that the American Legion had submitted all required documentation and satisfied the application requirements.

Council Action

Council Vice President Sanders made a motion to approve the Town of Orland Special Event Noise Permit Application submitted by American Legion Post 423 for the July 31, 2026 Block Party. Council President Robin Sears seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Special Event Fireworks Permit

Following adoption of the amended ordinance, Clerk-Treasurer Sanders presented the American Legion's completed Special Event Fireworks Permit Application, noting that all required supporting documentation, including site maps and event information, had been submitted.

Council Action

Council Vice President Sanders made a motion to approve the American Legion Post 423 Special Event Fireworks Permit Application. Council President Robin Sears seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer Sanders advised that the official permit would be completed and issued following the meeting.

Public Comments/Questions concerning ADA or other items of Business –

No additional public comment.

Council signed all necessary documents, payroll records, ordinance signatures, bank reconciliation logs, and check register reports before closing the meeting.

With no other comments or items of business, the motion to adjourn was made by Council Vice President Sanders, seconding the motion was Council President Sears, motion carried, meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Robin Sears – Council President

Chris Sanders – Council Vice President

Zeb Schuette- Councilman

Attest:_____
April Sanders, Clerk-Treasurer