

## 11-25-2025 Common Council Meeting

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### Keywords

Zoning Ordinance Amendments Electronic Messaging Signs Data Center Standards Wessel Building lease Bid and procurement procedures Email/domain issues Uniform patches White County Dispatch Park mower funding

### Meeting Information

Date: 2025-11-25 6:01pm  
Location: [Town Hall 205 E Walnut Street Chalmers, IN 47929]  
In Attendance for the town: Clerk Treasurer Renee Collier, Council President Pam Brown, Council Vice President Amy LaOrange, Council Member Lee Trippett, Council Member Joshua Rinehart, Town Marshal Jim Bolen, Street and Utility Superintendent Doug Reed. Absent: Council Member Fred Schrader. Residents in Attendance: David Kurth, Ashley White, and Peter Opdenkelder. Guest Present: Brianna Rasmussen representing White County Area Plan.

### Meeting Summary

- Town Council Opening and Housekeeping
  - Meeting called to order by Council President Pam Brown at 6:01pm; Pledge of Allegiance conducted.
  - Agenda check: no changes requested.
  - Housekeeping: 2-minute speaking limit; live recording; those who do not wish to be recorded asked to sit in the back to avoid obstructing cameras.
- Amendment A85 to White County Ordinance Zoning Ordinance Chapter 10 Sign Standards (Electronic Messaging Signs)
  - Petition properly advertised; heard by Area Planning Commission on November 10, 2025; recommended 11-0.
  - Issue: Prior rules required signs to be parallel to roads; conflicts at corners with multiple roads.
  - Update: For signs within 100 feet of residential property or residential use, the sign face must run parallel to the road;

orientation requirement may be waived by affected residential property owners.

- Rationale: Reduce recurring variances (e.g., Wocca Methodist Church, Monticello Library, Monticello Church).
- Council action: Town of Chalmers Ordinance 2025-17 passed with the motion to approve given by Council Vice President Amy LaOrange seconded by Council Member Joshua Rinehart; vote recorded 4-0; motion carries.
- Amendment A86 to White County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 3 Specific Use Requirements and Performance Standards (Data Centers)
  - Petition properly advertised; heard November 10, 2025; recommended 11-0.
  - Scope: Updates standards for data center development.
  - Key changes:
    - Increased side/rear setbacks; height scaling where structures over 40 feet gain an additional foot per 40 feet.
    - Minimum setbacks: 250 feet to property line or 500 feet to outermost point of dwelling, whichever is more restrictive.
    - Screening, fencing, berms, and lighting requirements.
    - Enhanced screening on public roads and adjacent residential uses.
    - Sound study required.
    - Exterior service structures must be enclosed within a building or walled courtyard.
    - Generators must meet EPA Tier 4 emission standards; applies to all generators.
    - Educational/safety training requirements; property value guarantees with template; third-party studies required via EDA.
  - Process clarification: EDA-related studies must be third-party and submitted before any approvals within the EDA group.
  - Council action: Town of Chalmers Ordinance 2025-18 was voted on and approved. Motion to approve was given by Council Vice President Amy LaOrange and seconded by Council Member Joshua Rinehart; vote of 3-1; motion carries.
- Maintenance Report- Street and Utility Superintendent Doug Read
  - "Selenium maintenance portions of the inspection at the Waste Water Treatment plant" (WWTP) rated marginal; comments noted; response not required.
  - Primary issue: algae due to dry conditions; all other areas satisfactory.
- Infrastructure at WWTP Creek Edge and Fence Alignment

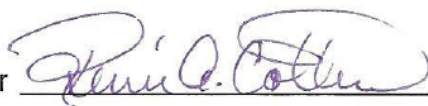
- Gate and fence near a creek are leaning and deteriorating as loads exit; bank stability and water issues observed.
  - Suggestion to add rip-rap for stabilization.
  - Dirk Garriott and Matt Carman at IMPA contacted about meters that are not reporting. Matt is new and is working on getting issues taken care of.
- Wessel Building Lease and Conflict-of-Interest
  - Lease review deferred to December 9th meeting so everyone has time to review the second page that was missing from the original draft; proposed \$100/month plus utilities.
  - Council Member Lee Trippett voiced his opinion of Council President Pam Brown being allowed to vote on anything to do with Leep Construction LLC. and Chalmers House due to it being a Conflict-of-Interest as Council President Pam Brown is employed by Scott and Christine Lowry. Council President Pam Brown stated that she will abstain from voting due to employment relationship.
  - Conclusion: Revisit and re-vote December 9.
- Claims and Expenditures- Clerk Treasurer Renee Collier
  - Claims totaling \$49,862.53 dated 11/25/25 approved; motion carried by a vote of 4-0. Motion to approve was given by Council Vice President Amy LaOrange and seconded by Council Member Joshua Rinehart.
  - Brookston rec board pays utilities, maintains field, carries insurance for their area, and closes bathrooms in winter. Information provided to Park Board for guidance on next years contract with the rec league.
- Bids, Roof/Gutters, and Procurement Compliance
  - Debate over bids for Wessel building roof/gutters; questions on quantity and documentation.
  - Bid requirements clarified:
    - Under \$20,000: formal bid not required; informal quotes must be retained with contacts.
    - Maintenance emergencies may not require three quotes; larger projects require sealed bids.
  - Conclusion: Will re-vote on Wessel building roof and contract December 9; Council President Pam Brown to abstain; Clerk will require bid documentation for the files.
- Council Minutes Approval

- Common Council minutes for October 28, 2025 approved by a vote of 3–1; motion to approve Council Vice President; second given by Council Member Josh Rinehart.
- Appropriations, Subscriptions, and Fees
  - Appropriation and fund reports provided (run date shows 12/31/2025 but actual through 11/24/2025).
  - Rural Water Impact/webpage pricing: ADA annual educational \$75; month-to-month \$51 (no increase); annual \$560 (up from ~450).
  - End-of-year appropriations likely not needed if staying within categories.
- ACH, Banking, and CDs
  - ACH fee structure discussed (\$7 per file) and batching payments.
  - IMPA changed banks; currently paid by check; ACH considered.
  - CD placement: Flagstar Bank at 4% for six months considered best; confirm terms and requirements.
- Legal Services and Delinquent Accounts
  - Robert Little Law Office annual services \$5,000; check to be prepared for December 9th meeting.
  - Delinquent accounts: four accounts 30 days past due (late fees) totaling \$52.40 as part of total late balances; 37 accounts late overall; TRECs collections noted.
- CAPS Corrective Action Plans
  - Corrections due December 10 (not December 31); plans to be scanned and shared when scanner cooperates.
- Office Pest Issue
  - Mouse observed; secure food in totes and set traps.
- Email/Domain and IN.gov Issues
  - Ongoing email/domain problems with HostGator and IN.gov addresses.
  - Plan to abandon current domain emails; new emails expected by Monday.
  - Temporary use of personal emails; notice to be sent from old account to switch to new domain.
  - Conclusion: Set up new domain emails; update contact lists and confirm receipt.
- AIM Training and Book Updates
  - AIM webinar on Senate Enrolled Act 1: member \$100; non-member \$150; recording \$50.


- Decision to pay for one live registration and share recording if available.
  - AIM book updates (red last year; blue this year). Clerk will print 40-page updates with instructions; glue-in method suggested.
- Salary Ordinance and Year-End Deadlines
  - Salary ordinance targeted for last meeting of the year; deadlines acknowledged.
- SOP Updates and Uniforms- Town Marshal Jim Bolen
  - SOPs under development (~60% complete) with weekly Tuesday reviews.
  - New arm patches planned; sample pending; no orders placed yet.
- Uniform Identification Patches
  - Ordering uniform identification patches; sample to be reviewed before payment.
  - Proposed order: 100 patches; estimated ~\$400; ensure arm fit before finalizing.
  - Patches required by the state on packs and vests; two per side for visibility; initial personal use ~30 patches.
  - Vendor to keep ~20 in stock locally; sample being shipped; design preference simple over prior large/gaudy versions.
  - Conclusion: Proceed after approving sample and size; finalize 100-unit order this year.
- Public Safety Alert: Large White Wolf-like Animal
  - Report of a large, solid white, wolf-style, skittish animal; nearly caused traffic incident.
  - Advice: Do not approach; call White County Dispatch non-emergency at 574-583-7103.
  - Consider consulting conservation officer and issuing a public alert.
- Staffing: Replacement of Code Enforcement Officer
  - Consider using reserve officers focused strictly on "ordinary" duties, avoiding traffic stops; night coverage noted.
  - Plan to present role definition to board before May.
  - Conclusion: Draft role definition and bring to board for approval.
- Payroll Timing Anomaly in 2026
  - 2026 will have 27 paydays; per-pay amounts will be lower due to extra cycle.
  - Conclusion: Communicate to prevent confusion.
- Equipment and Funding: Park Mower


- Trustee contribution reduced from \$8,000 to \$6,000 due to constraints (can support Parks & Recreation but not municipal entities directly).
- Mower primarily for the park; housed/serviced by town; trustee board approved \$6,000.
- John Deere selected for municipal discount and extended 4-year warranty (others offered 2-year).
- Conclusion: Proceed with John Deere mower supported by \$6,000 trustee contribution; confirm warranty details.
- Announcements: Meetings and Community Events
  - Executive meeting: December 2 at 5:15 p.m. (council only; no public forum). Subject to be discussed Employee Performance.
  - Town council meeting: Tuesday, December 9 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall; livestream on YouTube.
  - Community event: "Season of Giving" on Saturday, December 13, 1–4 p.m. at the Chalmers Legion (meal provided; Santa 1–3 p.m.; BYO camera; toy and food drive with Brookston Food Pantry; Clerk Treasurer will put a decorated box in the town hall for non-perishable food items and toys.
  - Adjournment: Motion carried 4–0; Motion to adjourn was given by Council Vice President Amy LaOrange and seconded by Council Member Joshua Rinehart. Meeting adjourned at 7:09.

Common Council Meeting Minutes for **November 25, 2025**

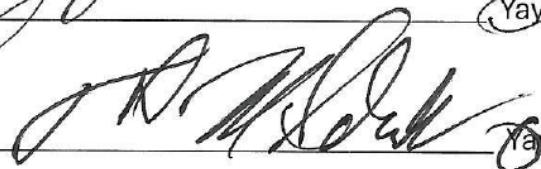
Clerk Treasurer 

Council President  ☒ Yay or ☐ Nay ☐ Abstain

Council Vice President  ☒ Yay or ☐ Nay ☐ Abstain

Council Member  ☒ Yay or ☐ Nay ☐ Abstain

Council Member  ☒ Yay or ☐ Nay ☐ Abstain

Council Member  ☒ Yay or ☐ Nay ☐ Abstain

Signed this 9<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2025