

JANUARY 7, 2026

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Those present:

Jim Smith	Adam Penrod	Ryan Shock	Maddie Shultz
Laura Rager	Carrie Mugford	Shannon Carter	Miriah Tobias
Allen Miracle	Matt Mize	Dave McVicker	Amy Lybarger
Gary Montel	Nate Birch	Cam Kissinger	Josh Leffel
Chalmer Tobias	Craig Walters	Jennifer Hotchkiss	

Those absent: None. A quorum was attained.

The January meeting of the North Manchester Town Council was held at the Public Safety Building, 709 W. Main Street, North Manchester, Indiana, on January 7, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., pursuant to notice duly given in accordance with the rules of the Council. The meeting was called to order by Clerk-Treasurer Carrie Mugford.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Clerk-Treasurer Carrie Mugford opened the floor for officer nominations. Motion to nominate Chalmer Tobias for council president: Smith/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously. Motion to nominate Laura Rager for council vice-president: Tobias/Smith. Motion passes unanimously. Mugford announced that officers for 2026 will be Chalmer Tobias and Laura Rager. Tobias presided over the remainder of the meeting.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 12/03/25 and 12/17/25 meetings were presented for approval. Motion to approve the minutes as presented: Rager/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS

Josh Leffel, 1412 E 900 N, addressed the council to express opposition to the Carbon Capture Sequestration (CCS) project proposed by POET Biorefining and VAULT 44.01. Leffel stated that his children have significant medical needs confining them to wheelchairs and that his family was just recently able to move into their dream specialized home near the proposed site. Leffel cited safety risks associated with CO2 capture and stated that he does not want our community to be “guinea pigs” for this venture.

Amy Lybarger, 4511 E 1300 N, also spoke in opposition of the CCS project. Lybarger stated that she is a retired USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service district conservationist for Whitley County with a background in agronomy and soil science and natural sciences from Purdue University. Lybarger presented talking points regarding the Mount Simon sandstone layer’s inability to safely contain compressed CO2. Lybarger cited concerns regarding water contamination in aquifers, increased seismic activity, liability after the 12 year project concludes, and soil contamination. Lybarger noted that area farmers are already utilizing proven carbon sequestration techniques on the soil surface without relying on these unproven ideas. Lybarger distributed example letters of opposition to the council and encourage everyone to speak out about the proposed project.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Request to Purchase a New Service Truck for the Fire Department – Town Manager Penrod stated that Fire Chief Cam Kissinger indicated at budget time last year that it is time to replace the 2011 Tahoe used as the chief's vehicle. The Tahoe was purchased used in 2019 from another department. Kissinger explained that the Tahoe has recurring body rust and ongoing mechanical issues. Kissinger requested permission to purchase a 2026 Chevy Silverado 1500 Custom Trail Boss from Shepherd's Family Auto. Kissinger stated that the Trail Boss has a heavier suspension and is better suited for the equipment that will be added to the truck. The department intends to install a truck cap and bed slide to store gear outside the cab, which is adhering to "clean cab" protocols to reduce cancer risks to firefighters. The truck purchase will be through Shepherd's, with accessories installed by Renz Repair and Ziebart of Warsaw, and striping and lettering done at MFY. Kissinger estimates upfitting the vehicle will cost around \$17,000. The quote from Shepherd's for the truck is \$52,648. Clerk-Treasurer Mugford noted that funds were encumbered from the 2025 budget into the 2026 budget for this purchase. Additional money needed can come from the fire department budget. Motion to approve the purchase of the truck and related accessories as presented by Kissinger: Miracle/Rager. Motion passes unanimously.

DEPARTMENTAL & COMMISSION REPORTS

Police Dept. – Report in Packet. Police Chief Nate Birch reported that December was a slower month due to weather. The department has investigated tips regarding illegal activity, resulting in search warrant execution where narcotics and firearms were seized. Officer Wilson recently completed proactive policing training.

Fire Dept. – Report in Packet. Fire Chief Cam Kissinger reported that the department finished 2025 with 964 responses. On December 18 the department responded to a structure fire on Singer Road. The fire was quickly knocked down. Kissinger thanked surrounding departments and mutual aid partners for assisting on scene.

Building Commissioner – Report in Packet. Penrod acknowledged this is Dave McVicker's final report before retirement. Penrod and the council thanked Dave for his service to the town.

Plan Commission – McVicker stated that there is a special exception meeting scheduled for January 26.

Board of Zoning Appeals – McVicker stated that there is a special exception meeting scheduled for January 26.

Traffic Commission –

Parks & Recreation – Report in packet. Park and Recreation Director Jennifer Hotchkiss reported that the facility is busy with swim seasons for the high school and university right now. New fitness equipment is being installed as part of the annual equipment replacement program.

Town Life Center – Park and Recreation Director Jennifer Hotchkiss reported that the lights in the TLC gym are being replaced with LED lights.

Tree Advisory –

Grow Wabash County –

Redevelopment Commission – Did not meet.

MEDCOR –

Solid Waste –

Storm Water Board –

Public Works – Street Superintendent Craig Walters reported that crews will be done with leaf pickup by the end of the week, but will follow up with Christmas tree curbside pickup. Wastewater Superintendent Shannon Carter had nothing to add to his report. Water Superintendent Ryan Shock reported that the new water meters are continuing to provide valuable data.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Adam Penrod formally announced Dave McVicker's retirement as building commissioner on January 30 after 5 years of service. A hiring committee selected Blake Hearn as the new building commissioner and code enforcement officer. Hearn will start January 16 and train with McVicker for two weeks.

Community Crossing Match Grant bid opening is scheduled for January 26. This year's bid is for 4 different streets and the first section of the Manchester Mile project.

CLERK-TREASURER'S REPORT

1. Financial Reports – Approved subject to audit.
2. Claims - The Town claim docket totaling \$240,010.88 and the Public Works docket totaling \$343,211.14 were submitted for payment. Motion to pay our obligations: Smith/Miracle. Motion passes unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

None.

The next regularly scheduled town council meeting will be February 4, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.

TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN OF N. MANCHESTER

Chalmer Tobias, President

Laura Rager, Vice-President

Allen Miracle

Gary Montel

Jim Smith

ATTEST

Carrie Mugford, Clerk-Treasurer