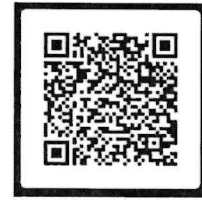


MINUTES  
MUNCIE COMMON COUNCIL  
300 NORTH HIGH STREET  
MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305



**APRIL 6, 2026**

**REGULAR MEETING:** 7:00 P.M., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor City Hall Auditorium.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Councilperson Basham.

**INVOCATION:** Moment of silence.

**CITIZEN RECOGNITION:** Councilperson Gullion began her recognition referencing election year with primaries being on May 5<sup>th</sup> and the general election on November 6<sup>th</sup>. In the spirit of tonight's citizen award winner, remember that we have until 11:50 p.m. to register to vote. You can go to [indianavoters.in.gov](http://indianavoters.in.gov) to do so. Even if you're certain that you've registered, make sure to verify tonight to make sure you've not been removed. Tonight, Gullion is honoring The League of Women Voters of Muncie-Delaware County. The League is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. They empower voters and defend democracy through advocacy, education, and litigation at the local, state, and even national levels. They accept any gender, not just women. That change happened in which is why they are now branded as LWV. They never support or oppose political parties or candidates. Instead, they take positions on issues that affect voters – positions that may align with a party or candidate at times, and diverge at others. Their focus is always on policies and measures that serve the public interest. The National League was founded in Chicago in February of 1920, just six months before the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was ratified and women won the vote. The amendment had to be ratified by the states and the League mobilized to help make that happen, which it did on August 26<sup>th</sup> that same year. Muncie began a branch in 1957 and was officially chartered in May 1958. The League of Women Voters has two separate and distinct roles:

- Voters Service/Citizen Education: To present unbiased nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process, and issues.
- Action/Advocacy: Nonpartisan, but, after study, they use their positions to advocate for or against particular policies in the public interest. To conduct their voter service and citizen education activities, they use funds from the League of Women Voters of Indiana, which is a 501(c)(3) corporation, a nonprofit educational organization.

The League of Women Voters of Muncie-Delaware County, a membership organization, conducts action and advocacy and is a nonprofit 501(c)(4) corporation. Their principle goals are to: build citizen participation in the democratic process, study key community issues at all governmental levels in an unbiased manner, and enable people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management. The Muncie-Delaware County's League's is also proud to say that their very own spokesperson, Linda Hanson, is also the current Indiana State League's president. Thank you to our local league for all they do to engage and education voters in our city. Linda accepted the award, noting that the League is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to providing information to all voters. She emphasized that the group has consistently worked for voters' rights to ensure every citizen has a voice in the democratic process. Hanson expressed excitement about their current efforts to educate the public on Muncie's new voting centers, which were established in September 2025. She has maps and informational materials for attendees to take, which would help them find their closest voting center in

case of an emergency on election day. She concluded by stating she was very pleased to accept the award and thanked the Council for the recognition. Next month will be Councilperson Dishman presenting.

<b>ROLL CALL:</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Dale Basham (At-Large 1)	X	
Ro Selvey (At-Large 2)	X	
William McIntosh (At-Large 3)	X	
Jeffrey Green (District #1)	X	
Nora Powell (District #2)	X	
Brandon Garrett (District #3)	X	
Sara Gullion (District #4)	X	
Jerry Dishman (District #5)	X	
Harold Mason (District #6)	X	

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Garrett to Adopt the Minutes from the March 2, 2026 Regular Meeting. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas. MINUTES APPROVED.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**MUNCIE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL:** President Green offered congratulations to the Muncie Central Drumline for placing second in the recent state competition.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

**BEECH GROVE CEMETERY BOARD (4):** President Green noted there were two vacant positions to be filled. He initially stated that the Council needed to pass a specific ordinance (referring to Ordinance 7-26) before they could proceed with the two appointments. After the Council passed Ordinance 7-26, President Green returned to the matter and announced that the Council had been asked to postpone the appointments until the following month. The two primary reasons provided for the postponement consisted that the board currently has enough members to function at the moment. The delay was intended to provide the Council with additional time to find and vet individuals who were genuinely interested in serving. The Council reached a consensus to wait until the next monthly meeting to address these vacancies.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY INTRODUCED:**

ORD. 7-26 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE AMENDING CHAPTER 93 OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE CODE OF ORDINANCES.

A motion was made by Powell and seconded by Garrett to Adopt. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. ADOPTED.

While the ordinance passed to facilitate the Beech Grove Cemetery Board appointments, the Council ultimately decided to postpone these specific appointments (2) until the following month to allow more time to identify interested candidates.

**NEW ORDINANCES:****ORD. 8-26 AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING THE USE OF DOCUMENTS RECEIVED FROM PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.**

The ordinance is intended to prevent commercial entities from selling public information received from the City of Muncie through records requests. Council Attorney Jagen Arnold noted that the ordinance largely mimics existing Indiana state statute and administrative code, which generally prevents the sale of public data for commercial gain. The primary legal issue identified was a specific clause in Section 1 of the ordinance stating that violators "shall not be provided any such data for a period of up to ten (10) years." Arnold pointed out the fact this 10-year ban is not present in the Indiana state code or administrative laws and warned that because the restriction is not grounded in state law, it could be viewed as "arbitrary." Furthermore, he cautioned the Council that when dealing with public records and access to information, such restrictions could trigger First Amendment issues.

Following the legal advice, Councilperson Basham, the sponsoring member of the ordinance, moved to withdraw Ordinance 8-26 and stated the withdrawal was necessary to allow time to resolve the legal concerns to the satisfaction of the legal department (Mr. Arnold). WITHDRAWN.

**RESOLUTIONS:****RES. 5-26 A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE, INDIANA, UPDATING APPOINTMENTS TO THE MUNCIE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.**

A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Basham to Adopt.

Gretchen Cheesman (Human Rights Commission Member) and Shaquille Berry (Executive Director) explained that an audit of previous Council minutes revealed that the Muncie Human Rights Commission (MHRC) appointment schedule had become inconsistent with the city code. The Commission discovered they had four terms expiring in 2026, four in 2027, and only one in 2028. Their goal is to return to the statutory three-year term cycle, which mandates two Mayoral appointments and one Council appointment per year. Specific changes consist of Linda Muckway's term (a Council appointment) being revised to run from January 1, 2025, through May 31, 2028. The vacant seat previously held by Steven Knipp was redesignated from a Council appointment to a Mayoral appointment for the term June 1, 2025, through May 31, 2028. Cheesman along with the Council Secretary highlighted that the cleanup effort was aided by a summer intern (Moriah Morgan) in the Mayor's office who verified certificates and paperwork for all city boards and commissions. To prevent future confusion, the City Clerk's office and the Mayor's office now maintain a shared digital spreadsheet to track all appointments in real-time. Council members expressed appreciation for this work, noting that keeping track of various board terms had historically been difficult. Several terms would now expire on May 31st, including those of Andre Mitchell (Council appointment), Leah Britten, and Melvin Kelly (Mayoral appointments) so the Council would have one appointment to make in May to replace Mr. Mitchell.

Wayne Scaife argued that it is inappropriate for a Department Head (referring to Gretchen Cheesman, the Community Development Director) to serve on the board because the Commission frequently handles complaints involving the City. He expressed doubt that a Department Head appointed by the Mayor would maintain the confidentiality of discussions, particularly those held in an executive session. He does not believe such an appointee would refrain from going back and discussing those matters with the Mayor and mentioned his firsthand observation of how the previous Human Rights Commission Director was treated, noting she was removed at the last minute and that he felt the situation was unfair. He concluded by insisting that the practice of the Community Development Director serving on this board needs to be looked into because he believes the arrangement is fundamentally wrong.

Cheesman responded that if a complainant were ever filed against her or her department, she would be required to recuse herself and not participate in the matter. She clarified that complainants do not speak directly to board members. Instead, they work with the Executive Director (Berry), who conducts an independent investigation and then reports the findings back to the board.

Councilperson Powell asked if Cheesman, in her capacity as a board member, would still have access to the minutes of a discussion involving a complaint, even if the complaint was filed against Cheesman herself or her department. Cheesman replied yes. Powell immediately expressed concern that her access to these records might be an impediment to City employees who need to discuss their concerns openly and questioned whether a City of Muncie employee might be hesitant to discuss issues or speak freely about a violation of their rights if they knew another Department Head had access to the conversation. Powell emphasized she was focusing on the employees feelings rather than Cheesman's personal action, asking if this dynamic would ultimately become an obstacle for employees seeking to protect their human rights. Cheesman reiterated that she would not be a participant in those specific cases and that the investigation would remain an independent process. She also made note that the City Attorney attends all Human Rights Commission meetings and would point out any conflicts of interest, ensuring she recuses herself when necessary.

Councilperson Selvey, drawing on her own experience serving on the Human Rights Commission, noted they used to utilize different committees to handle investigations. The purpose of using the small committees was to ensure that not everybody is involved in every investigation or privy to every detail discussed. She recommended the new Executive Director return to this practice and explicitly believed it is best to not involve the entire board in every case, as this structure helps protect the integrity of the process when potential conflicts exist (like a Department Head serving on the board). Questions called. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. ADOPTED.

RES. 6-26 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MAYOR DAN RIDENOUR TO APPLY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT & HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM GRANT FUNDS FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD).

A motion was made by Garrett and seconded by Basham to Adopt.

Gretchen Cheesman, Community Development Director, explained this resolution is an annual requirement. The final federal allocations were received just this morning which necessitated immediate amendments to the figures listed in the original draft. The HOME allocation should be revised from \$508,762.11 to \$471,998.35 (a 7% reduction of approximately \$36,763.76). The CDBG allocation should be revised from \$1,242,123 to \$1,229,825 (a 1% reduction of approximately \$12,298).

A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Gullion to Amend the amounts of the CDBG and HOME funds. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas. AMENDED. Following a request from Councilperson McIntosh on how the funds will be spent, Cheesman provided a summary of the allocations according to federal caps and local priorities:

HOME Grant Allocation:

- Administration: Capped at 10%.
- Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO): \$10,000 for operating funds and \$76,315 reserved for specific projects.
- Homebuyer Assistant: \$45,000 for down payment and closing cost assistance (working with PathStone).
- Development: \$138,060 for single-family homebuyer development and \$155,623 for rental development.

## CDBG Grant Allocation:

- Administration: Capped at 20% (\$245,500).
- Public Services: Capped at 15% (\$184,000). Cheesman specified that per the City's action plan, these funds are maximized to support four agencies serving the homeless: A Better Way, Muncie Mission, YWCA, and Christian Ministries.
- Blight Clearance: \$225,000 for tearing down blighted houses.
- Homeowner Rehabilitation: \$225,000 for low-income homeowners, focusing on HVAC and accessibility improvements.
- Infrastructure: \$350,325 for projects including parks, paving, and sidewalks.

Cheesman concluded by stating their action plan is currently on the Community Development website and is out for public comment until April 20<sup>th</sup> with a public hearing for 10:00 a.m. on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Councilperson Selvey complimented Cheesman's department for maintaining a strong budget despite federal cuts.

Councilperson Mason expressed concern that by focusing exclusively on agencies that serve the homeless, the City was cutting out a lot of agencies that need assistance. He argued against funding the same agencies year after year, though Cheesman noted he could submit a public comment on the action plan regarding this concern. She reminded him that their 5-year action plan is concentrated on agencies that serve the homeless.

Councilperson Gullion asked for the easiest way for citizens to find the action plan to provide feedback. Cheesman directed them to the Community Development page on the City of Muncie website.

Councilperson Selvey asked about the deadline for agencies to apply for the following year (2027), which Cheesman noted would likely be in December or early January for the public hearing informing all the entities of the different activities they can fund. Typically, the legal notice that is advertised informs when applications are due and how to apply.

Councilperson Garrett asked about ensuring that any rehabilitation work, such as HVAC or plumbing, is performed by licensed and vetted contractors. Cheesman agreed and mentioned they work with HomeSavers on the HVAC projects. She added that roof projects are run directly through the Community Development office through a contract employee specifically to handle the technical aspects of these projects. This contract employee is responsible for writing the specifications (specs) for the work, conducting inspections to ensure the work is done correctly, and managing quotes received from contractors. Once these steps are completed, the office formally runs those contracts through the Board of Works.

Rick Yencer argued that the budget recently rolled out by the President would kill community development grants throughout this country. He cautioned the Council that the CDBG program might be completely eliminated if the current administration has its way. He claimed that the federal government, and by extension local Council, does not care about the poor or the people, citing a lack of funding for citizens in the most recent reconciliation bill. Yencer questioned the status of a couple million dollars in housing money intended for the homeless from a few years prior. He specifically asked what happened to the funds meant to renovate the old Harrison School and other related projects that he had not seen progress on. He pointed out that despite these programs, there is still a significant population in the community that remains homeless and in need of help. Yencer criticized the current development trends in Muncie, asserting that the amount of affordable market housing being built is outweighing the actual affordable housing that is desperately needed. Cheesman responded to his specific inquiry about the Harrison School project, stating it is a permanent supportive housing project funded with tax credits and each unit has a Section 8 voucher attached. It is scheduled for a real estate closing (hopefully) at the end of the month so it is getting close. Questions called. A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Selvey to Adopt as Amended. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. ADOPTED AS AMENDED.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Richard Yencer addressed the Council on several social, technological, and economic issues. He asked the Council to remember a disabled veteran who was recently killed by police in his home during a welfare check. It's an incident that would burn in his memory and he compared it to other police shootings he has seen over the last half-century. He expressed concern regarding how law enforcement is conducted and called for more oversight in the community. Yencer noted that while investigating drone licensing, he found that cameras for traffic monitoring are all over, claiming to have discovered that the City has new software capable of accessing citizens' financial information and other personal data. He urged the Council to exercise more oversight regarding which outside entities are allowed in to the City and how they are using surveillance equipment and data against people. Yencer acknowledged that the Common Council does not directly handle property assessments or taxation, as those are county functions, however, noted significant public concern regarding higher taxes resulting from reassessments. He criticized the Council for focusing on spending money to run the government rather than creating a better economic environment. He concluded by telling the Council to "do your job" by bringing people and new jobs to Muncie.

Wayne Scaife provided a detailed critique regarding Resolution 15-25, which concerns the development of a new community center to replace the one that was demolished 17 years prior. He questioned the extent of Mayor Ridenour's control over the project based on the language of the resolution. He noted that the resolution establishes a board of seven members and argued that the Mayor is simply one member like any other, without the power to "make all the calls." Scaife specifically asserted that the Mayor has no authority to call meetings, cancel meetings, or remove anyone from the board according to the resolution. He expressed frustration that a meeting had reportedly been canceled by the Mayor. Scaife highlighted the 17-year delay in replacing the original community center (the "Multi") that was torn down with the promise of a new facility. He tracked the delay across three mayoral administrations: four years under Mayor McShirley, eight years under Mayor Tyler, and five years under current Mayor Ridenour. He reminded the Council that the original building served as the "black YMCA" during the 1960s when Black citizens were not allowed in the downtown YMCA, emphasizing its deep historical significance to the community. Scaife voiced significant doubt that the project would be completed as promised. He stated he has "no faith in this whatsoever" and believes the community has been "hoodwinked" and "bamboozled." He expressed concern that his public criticism might provoke the Mayor to withdraw the \$500,000 allocated for the center and insisted if the building is ever finished, it must maintain the cultural integrity of the original center and not be taken over by other neighborhood associations.

Following his remarks, Councilperson Powell requested that Council Attorney Jagen Arnold review Resolution 15-25 and provide a written legal opinion regarding the authority of the committee members. Attorney Arnold recalled looking at that resolution previously and doesn't think it speaks at all to who is in charge of the commission or should be calling meetings. In that aspect, it may be beneficial to add that language.

Councilperson Selvey explicitly guaranteed Scaife that every member of the City Council is in full support of the community center. She reiterated this by stating she believed she could speak on everybody's behalf in affirming their collective commitment. She admitted the project is overdue and stated firmly that the delay should not be allowed to reach 18 or more 19 years. She vowed to do her part to ensure the project reaches completion and specifically addressed Scaife's concern regarding the cultural integrity of the center, promising to work to ensure that the integrity of the original center is kept when it is eventually given back to the people. Mr. Scaife clarified that his criticisms were directed at the person


(the Mayor) rather than the Council itself, Selvey repeated that the Council remains in support of the initiative.


Councilperson Mason believes that the board established by the resolution should not be taking definitive actions until they have formally organized and chose officers, such as a chairperson and vice chairperson, etc. He emphasized that once the body is organized with official officers, they would have a specific individual designated to call the shots rather than the Mayor acting independently. Mason explicitly stated that it was totally wrong for the Mayor to come in and remove people from the board. He elaborated on his criticism, referencing a situation where a member was reportedly removed because the Mayor "didn't felt like they were... done right." Mason specifically pointed out the unfairness of this action, noting that the individual in question had actually voted for the person out of his community to be on that board.

Kristopher Bilbrey provided a critique of Council procedures, individual member conduct, and community issues. He began by complaining that the microphones were once again failing, preventing the public at home from hearing the proceedings. He offered to donate a microphone to the City to resolve the recurring problem. Then, he directly rebutted Selvey's earlier guarantee of Council support for the new community center. He pointed out that while she might speak for her fellow councilmembers, she "doesn't speak for the mayor," who he identified as the primary source of the conflict regarding the project. Bilbrey accused Councilmember Basham of refusing to respond to his emails for four years, arguing that Council members who sponsor or write ordinances have a responsibility to communicate with the public and answer questions. Following Basham's remark that the ordinance in question (Ordinance 8-26) had been withdrawn, Bilbrey continued to press him on why he was "incapable" of responding to constituents. Bilbrey twice told Basham to "do your damn job or step down," which prompted a warning from President Green to watch his language. In his concluding remarks, Bilbrey urged the Council to investigate the current status of the crisis center, asking them to find out what's going on. He expressed that it was gross for councilmembers to continue taking a City paycheck while allegedly failing to communicate with the public.

#### **ADJOURNED:**

The next regular City Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 4, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. A motion was made by Mason and seconded by Garrett to Adjourn. A vote by acclamation showed 9 yeas. ADJOURNED.

  
 Jeffrey Green, President of the  
 Muncie Common Council

  
 Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk  
 of the Muncie Common Council

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 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/City-of-Muncie/100069317225158/>  
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