



City of Carmel

CARMEL COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2026 - 6:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS/CITY HALL/ONE CIVIC SQUARE

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Matthew Snyder; Council Members: Shannon Minnaar, Anita Joshi, Adam Aasen, Ryan Locke, Rich Taylor, Jeff Worrell, Teresa Ayers, Tony Green, and Deputy Clerk Jessica Komp were present.

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved 9-0.

INVOCATION

Carmel Police Department Chaplain George Davis delivered the invocation.

RECOGNITION OF CITY EMPLOYEES AND OUTSTANDING CITIZENS

Carmel Police Chief Drake Sterling introduced two new Carmel Police Department officers. Zachary Graham comes to CPD from the Wabash County Sheriff's office. Radhika Choudhry comes to CPD from the IU Indianapolis Police Department. Mayor Sue Finkam swore in both new Carmel Police officers.

Council President Snyder then introduced and congratulated the new Chief Executive Officer of the Carmel Christkindlmarkt, Jason Adamowicz. Mr. Adamowicz thanked the Council for this welcome, and for this opportunity to serve, and stated that he is honored to be a part of the Carmel Christkindlmarkt team.

COUNCIL AND MAYORAL COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS

Navtegh Singh, a 5th grader at Prairie Trace Elementary, was Mayor Finkam's "Deputy Mayor" for this meeting. Last week, the city announced it will remove the planter boxes along Range Line Road, and turn the nearby sidewalk into a ten-foot wide path for both bikers and cyclists. This will make the area safer, provide more parking, and help with stormwater. Construction begins after July 4th and should finish by November. There is a special traveling exhibit at the Carmel Clay History Museum which highlights the art, history and traditions of our sister cities in Latvia and Germany. The city launched a new volunteer platform which residents can access through the city's website. Carmel Utilities is inviting residents to join the 2026 Spring Carmel Citizens Utility Academy. This seven-week program gives a behind-the-scenes look at the important utility services that keep our community running. Learn more at carmelutilities.com. Finally, the Carmel Arts and Design District has been nominated in USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards for Best Arts District in the Nation. Voting finished today and winners will be announced Wednesday, February 25th.

RECOGNITION OF PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Prior to hearing from our citizens, Council President Snyder made a statement about a much discussed recent headline in Carmel, the leasing of local office space by the U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE). President Snyder stated that the only confirmed information we have at this time is that ICE will be leasing office space in Carmel from a private property owner, and that this space will be used for administrative purposes. We have been advised that this location will not be used for an enforcement or detention facility. President Snyder stated that the municipality of Carmel does not possess the power to dictate to whom a private property can or cannot be leased, nor should it. President Snyder also stated that his duty is to represent all citizens of Carmel, regardless of their political convictions or stance on this topic. While he will not broadly condemn an entire federal agency charged with enforcing laws and protecting citizens, his focus remains singular, and that is on the people of Carmel. He stated that any fear felt by our residents deserves to be acknowledged. He emphasized his utmost confidence in the Carmel Police Department to serve and protect all Carmelites. Public safety remains in their steady and capable hands. He believes community is strengthened when citizens with opposing views choose civility over contempt, dignity over division, and respect over ridicule. He asked those about to speak to keep all of this in mind and assured the room that the Council is here to listen.

Sallie Peeler shared her concern with Council about ICE leasing office space in Carmel. Ms. Peeler stated that our city can choose not to use local police, public funds, or city property to support immigration enforcement, and can decline voluntary agreements such as 287(g) partnerships. She stated that the presence of an ICE facility creates fear, even for people who have done nothing wrong. She is not asking the city to interfere with federal law, she is asking the city to protect its residents by being transparent and by setting firm non-cooperation boundaries and refusing to commit local resources to federal immigration enforcement.

Mark Roger spoke to Council about safety, transparency and trust. He stated that the Council can set clear policies on when and how our police cooperate with federal agencies. We can increase transparency and public reporting, by requiring CPD to report on any request for police assistance from federal agencies. He stated that public trust is the most valuable asset the police department has. When residents don't know who is approaching them, trust erodes. He stated that the problem with ICE isn't what they are doing, but the manner in which they are doing it – masked and without proper identification.

Joey Basu, lifelong Carmel resident, spoke next. Upon hearing of ICE leasing office space in Carmel, he reached out to his public officials to ask what protections will exist for residents of Carmel in the event that their constitutional rights are violated. Although their responses were prompt and empathetic, they were also somewhat vague. The Mayor assured him that Carmel will remain a welcoming city. Police Chief Sterling assured him that CPD absolutely does not stand for unconstitutional behavior, but even he admitted that there are more questions than answers in terms of how SB 76 affects their duty to intervene. Mr. Basu is concerned that what is starting as an administrative office may become something else in the future. It is alleged that ICE unlawfully detained over 170 U.S. citizens just last year. He shared that his sister, also born in Carmel, now lives in Chicago and carries her passport with her everywhere she goes because of ICE's presence there. Mr. Basu does not want that to happen here in Carmel. He

urges this Council to establish clear policies ensuring CPD will intervene if any resident's constitutional rights are violated, regardless of what SB 76 states.

Maaïke Alejandra Mora spoke to Council about ICE establishing an office in Carmel. She believes the presence of ICE in Carmel sends a message to immigrant families of fear and uncertainty. She asked how people who look like her and her family can feel safe and confident in our city, knowing that they could experience horrors like those in Minneapolis because of ICE's false identifications of citizens' legal status. She stated that safety isn't just low crime rates or well-maintained streets. Safety is emotional security. Having an ICE office in a community changes the atmosphere, making some residents feel they must shrink themselves to avoid attention. She asked Council to make it clear that Carmel values all of its residents.

Kay Gaither stated that we learned on Friday, February 13th that ICE is seeking a lease for office space in Carmel. Over the weekend, we learned that Hamilton County Sheriff Quakenbush has a mandate to assist ICE. He has also stated that there are laws he just doesn't agree with, and chooses not to enforce. Ms. Gaither stated that the actions of ICE officers have steadily grown less lawful, and more violent. In Minneapolis, two U.S. citizens lost their lives to this violence. Both Councilors Snyder and Joshi quickly came out with statements after the news of the ICE lease, but at this time, four of the Councilors and the Mayor have not made a statement.

William Clontz spoke to Council about snow removal on sidewalks. Mr. Clontz walks to work, and during the recent snowstorm, there were sidewalks near South Guilford and City Center Drive that were impassable for pedestrians. Mr. Clontz made a 3-1-1 request, which received a prompt response, but no action was taken. Although the streets were cleared well, adequate ice and snow removal on the sidewalks did not happen.

Mayor Finkam shared that she has been listening to our community over the last week and has heard strong and sincere views from many perspectives about an immigration office opening here in Carmel. For some the news brings concern and uncertainty, while for others, it brings reassurance and a sense of safety. Both of these views are rooted in deeply held values, and both deserve to be respected. Leadership must be grounded in facts, so here are the facts we know today. Last week the city was informed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that the agency has leased privately owned office space as overflow for administrative personnel from its Indianapolis office. The City of Carmel does not have the legal authority to restrict, prevent, or approve that action. The number one thing we value in our community is safety. The cornerstone of that safety is the Carmel Police Department. Mayor Finkam expressed her unwavering confidence in CPD. She stated that we will follow the law, and as with all federal agencies, we will maintain open and professional lines of communication. That is our responsibility, that is our commitment, and that is the promise the Mayor makes to every citizen of Carmel. Carmel embraces and celebrates our residents, from those who were born here, to those who have come here from over 90 countries, speaking over 110 languages. Carmel is a city united by the character, compassion and strength of all those who call it home, with a culture of respect, even when we disagree. Mayor Finkam is deeply honored to serve as Carmel's mayor, and she welcomes and encourages continued civic engagement and respectful dialogue.

Councilor Joshi thanked Mayor Finkam for her comments. She stated that she can't ignore the impact of the fear and uncertainty expressed by children tonight. She stated that protecting children's emotional and physical safety should be the center point of how we lead. Residents have the right to seek transparency and accountability from any entity that operates within our city. The limits of our authority on this matter have been clearly stated, but this does not limit our collective civic responsibility to push back against any abuses of constitutional protections that all our residents have and deserve.

Councilor Worrell stated that he wanted to hear from the community tonight and is grateful for the comments he has heard. It is clear that the news of this facility has caused fear and genuine anxiety in our community, and for that, he feels very bad. He believes there are things we can do at the local level to respond to the people that are speaking to us about these fears. First, Councilor Worrell wants to assure the people living here, working here, and even traveling through our city, that he has the utmost confidence in the Carmel Police Department to keep them safe. He asks the Mayor and Chief Sterling to continue to guarantee that safety. Secondly, he believes that we have a role to play in delivering information with transparency. He would like to create a pipeline of factual information to the public, and asks Mayor Finkam to lead us in that effort. He then thanked everyone who came here to speak tonight and expressed his commitment to not saying or doing anything that would contribute to division in our community.

Councilor Locke assured the room that the Council is taking in every comment and every question to ensure they are making the best decisions they possibly can. Having an ICE office in Carmel is uncharted territory, but we have the ability to make good local decisions to ensure that our citizens feel safe and secure.

Councilor Aasen stated that he echoes the statements of his fellow councilors and thanked the citizens who spoke tonight for their feedback. He asked residents to please reach out to him if he can be of help in any way.

CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Minutes

1. January 22, 2026 Special Claims Meeting
2. February 2, 2026 Regular Meeting

Councilor Green moved to approve the minutes. Councilor Joshi seconded. Councilor Minnaar noted that her name had been misspelled in the claims meeting minutes, which was corrected. There was no further discussion. Council President Snyder called for the vote. Minutes were approved, 9-0.

b. Claims

1. Payroll - \$\$4,738,528.50 and CPD Vacation/Sick Buy Back/Uniform Allowance - \$391,292.94

2. General Claims - \$3,235,061.41 and Purchase Card - \$31,880.21
3. Retirement - \$173,471.43
4. Wire Transfers - \$4,269,618.28

Councilor Green moved to approve the claims. Councilor Taylor seconded. There was no discussion. Council President Snyder called for the vote. Claims were approved, 9-0.

ACTION ON MAYORAL VETOES

There were none.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Joshi shared that the last Land Use and Special Studies Committee meeting primarily focused on the US 31 sub corridor, and that discussion will continue this Wednesday, February 18th at 5:30 p.m. at the Carmel Clay Public Library.

Councilor Taylor reported that the Finance, Utilities and Rules Committee met last Wednesday, and began to review the Disability Committee ordinance. They also received a presentation about the ERP system, and the committee voted unanimously to recommend support of the next Phase of the ERP system to Council.

OTHER REPORTS – (at the first meeting of the month specified below):

Bob Swanay, Director of Carmel Clay Public Library, gave their annual report. The Carmel library was started by the Wednesday Library Club back in 1904. This women's social group started having book discussions, then they pooled their money, started loaning books out, and started a library by setting up a table and telephone booth downtown. In 1910 they pursued a Carnegie grant to establish a real library building. The state of Indiana seeded more libraries though Carnegie grants than any other state - 164 buildings in total, including ours. In 1914 the doors of the Carmel library opened, which still stands today, as Woody's Library Restaurant. The second library building was dedicated and opened on October 1, 1972, at 515 East Main Street. The first high school collection was unveiled in 1983. The dedication and grand opening of the renovated and expanded library, with the name change to "Carmel Clay Library" happened on July 29, 1986. The first library website was launched on June 3, 1996, with computers installed for patron use that fall. The current library site was dedicated on May 2, 1999. Circulation first exceeded 1 million items in 1999. The conversion to RFID technology happened in 2010 and the digital media lab was launched in 2016. Planning for the new vision of the library began in 2017, and was completed in 2018. The Joyce Winner branch was opened in West Carmel on January 6, 2020. During its renovation, the main library operated out of the former Marsh grocery store location at Merchants Square. This was from September 2020 to September 2022. On October 1, 2022, the new CCPL opened to the public. The working budget for CCPL is \$10 million. Salaries and benefits comprise 55% of the budget. Collection materials are another 20%, which is above the state minimum of 7%. Door counts/visits totaled 572,253 in 2026. The library offers services and programs for everyone, from babies through senior citizens. The library offers meeting room for the community. Last year there were 104 business reservations and 408 nonprofit reservations, with room reservation revenue totaling \$12,693.00. In 2025, total circulation was over 2.1 million items, and 8,294 new library cards were registered. The library's holds pickup locker has been extremely popular, and was also

added to the West Branch in 2025. 9,604 items were checked out of the holds pickup lockers last year. The Digital Media Lab continues to be in high demand, and the staff is there to help anyone who wishes to use it. The gadget collection almost doubled in demand from 2024-2025. Board games are also extremely popular. There was a 10% increase in circulation from 2024 in e-books, audiobooks and digital magazines. The library offers a multitude of programs for youth and teens. The Carmel High School Chess Club co-runs the Gambit 425 program, which invites all skill levels of chess players from grade 4 and up to play. The library also has studio space which has served as the Teen Artist-in-Residence space. Since November 2022, there have been 35 artists from grades 6 through 12. Residencies are 4 months long and consist of 3-4 artists. Completion of this program culminates in a 1-month solo exhibition of residency work on the library's Teen Art Wall. The library also serves as an election site. The CCPL foundation works to fundraise for the library for both special projects, as well as to build an endowment for the financial security and long-term excellence of the library. The Library After Dark fundraising event will take place on March 21st, and tickets are on sale now. The Guided Leaf book & author event will take place in October. All of the library staff and volunteers are dedicated to providing world-class library services to residents of our community.

Councilor Minnaar encouraged anyone who would like to convert their VHS tapes to a digital format to check out the library's gadget collection. Councilor Worrell thanked Liz Hamilton, the Library Foundation Director, for hosting the first National Civility Summit. There were participants from 17 different states, and they were overwhelmingly blown away by not only the facility, but by the library staff. Bob Swanay also thanked Ms. Hamilton for her service as Director of the Library Board, as she is retiring this year. Council President Snyder asked Mr. Swanay about the library's hours, and why 8:00 p.m. was chosen as the closing time. Mr. Swanay responded that the library used to be open until 9:00 p.m., but it was largely empty for the last hour. Since changing to an 8:00 p.m. closing time, this seems to be the best fit for the demand. He did state that the library could revisit this in the future if the demand for later hours changes.

The Finance Department's quarterly budget update was next presented by Zac Jackson, CFO and Controller, and Kirsten Haney, Assistant Director for Budget Management. Mr. Jackson stated that the Finance Department is leading several initiatives focused on improving stewardship of taxpayer resources. Those are accountability, planning, process improvement, and cost savings initiatives. As an update on Q4 2025, both Auto Excise Tax and Food & Beverage tax came in under forecast, but that is due to the State changing the law back in July to not allow those items to go into the general fund anymore. So we did receive those dollars, they were just deposited in another fund. Supplemental Medicaid reimbursements and interest/investment earnings came in above target. Last year our departments underspent their appropriations by over \$7 million. The General Fund balance stayed consistent from 2024 to 2025, as did the Rainy Day Fund. Mr. Jackson confirmed that the city did get reimbursed for the bridge repair at 106th and Keystone, \$1,075,000.00 went back into the General Fund. Last year the city contracted with Waypoint Strategies for a facilities assessment. We have 56 buildings/structures. To begin, Waypoint has assessed 15 of our buildings, while also coordinating with other contractors who've performed assessments of utilities and

performance services. Audra Blasdel of Waypoint Strategies was there to discuss the assessments. She explained the scoring process used to prioritize the renewal and replacement needs of each structure, and to determine a comprehensive funding plan. Waypoint will also be generating a report with primary recommendations that will help build out a capital investment plan over the next several years. Next, Ms. Blasdel gave an energy center update. The objectives of this assessment were to address plant capacity and resiliency, to increase energy efficiency, and to develop a strategic investment plan for long-term maintenance. Waypoint has contracted with Heapy, an independent engineering firm, to conduct feasibility engineering. Next, Mr. Jackson discussed Project Cornerstone, which is the name given to our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project. Currently, the city is considering different ERP options to implement, which would update our financial and administrative systems. An ERP would improve efficiency, reduce risk, and provide better reporting for decision-makers by integrating processes into a single platform. The anticipated cost of implementation is expected to be ~\$1M and could be spread over the life of the system. Annual licensing fees are expected to be \$330k annually, being partially offset by the cancelling of existing software licenses. The success of the ERP will be measured by reduced manual work, potential elimination of duplicate systems, improved financial tracking, transparency, and reporting capabilities. Stage 1 of Project Cornerstone would continue with hiring a project manager and selecting an ERP vendor and implementation partner by June 2026. Stage 2 would include phased module implementation, with the goal of an overall Financials conversion by January 1, 2028.

Councilor Aasen stated that although he had some initial skepticism, he has been won over by the thoroughness with which the need for an ERP has been presented. Councilor Locke asked for a breakdown of which modules the city is considering implementing. Mr. Jackson stated that we would probably need 3 or 4 modules, and may consider a few more, but would not need the entire host of modules. He also stated that we may use an RFP to find our vendor and implementation partners, or we may take advantage of available pricing that's already been publicly bid. Our IT department has been heavily involved in this project from the beginning and has prior experience with ERP implementation. Councilor Worrell shared that he, too, had been initially skeptical, but he has since learned of the value of an ERP, and he now fully supports moving forward. Mayor Finkam stated that an ERP is essential and will greatly reduce risk.

On a separate note, Mayor Finkam then shared that we had just received word that two Beech Grove police officers had been shot tonight, and she asked that we keep them in our prayers.

Councilor Worrell moved to acknowledge support of moving forward with Phase 1 of Project Cornerstone. Councilor Green seconded. There was no further discussion. Council President Snyder called for the vote. Support of Project Cornerstone Phase 1 was acknowledged, 8-0. (Councilor Locke abstained.)

OLD BUSINESS

Eighteenth Reading of Ordinance D-2772-25; An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Adopting a New Article 8 Under Chapter 2 of the Carmel City Code;

Sponsor(s): Councilor(s) Aasen, Ayers, Minnaar, Snyder and Worrell. **Remains in the Finance, Utilities and Rules Committee.**

Eighth Reading of Ordinance D-2795-25; An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Establishing Public Areas of City Hall; Sponsor: Councilor Snyder. **Remains in the Land Use and Special Studies Committee.**

Resolution CC-11-17-25-03; A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Approving an Amendment to the Carmel Comprehensive Plan to Incorporate a new Subarea Plan for the US-31 Corridor; Sponsor: Councilor Minnaar. **Remains in the Land Use and Special Studies Committee.**

Resolution CC-12-01-25-04; A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Approving an Amendment to the Carmel Comprehensive Plan to Incorporate a New Subarea Plan for the Home Place Area; Sponsor: Councilor Minnaar. **Remains in the Land Use and Special Studies Committee.**

PUBLIC HEARINGS

First Reading of Ordinance Z-703-26; An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Establishing The Illinois Street Townhomes Planned Unit Development District; Sponsor: Councilor Aasen. Councilor Aasen moved to introduce the item into business. Councilor Taylor seconded. Councilor Aasen presented the item to Council. He shared that this item comes out of the Plan Commission with a 6-3 negative recommendation. These negative votes were based on wanting higher quality building materials, and also feeling that this isn't the right location for townhomes. Jon Dobosiewicz, Land Use Professional with Nelson & Frankenburger, represented this petitioner, Pulte Homes of Indiana. Pulte is seeking approval of this PUD for a community of 27 for-sale townhomes, located on a parcel of land between US 31 and N. Illinois Street. This PUD would provide a transition between the commercial space to the east, and the single-family homes to the west. Townhomes would be 3-story in height, and priced in the mid \$500's, with masonry in the exterior design. The concept plan provides significant open space on the south end of the development, with tree preservation as a primary component. Councilor Minnaar shared that rental restrictions were agreed to. Council President Snyder commented that Pulte has been a good partner to Carmel thus far. He then opened the public hearing at 8:19 p.m. Ron Houck spoke to Council on behalf of the Springmill Place HOA. He voiced their support for the Illinois Street Townhomes PUD, as a residential development will have minimal impact in terms of lighting or signage. Being adjacent to Forte and Franciscan, townhomes are much preferable to another commercial development. Council President Snyder closed the public hearing at 8:21 p.m. **Ordinance Z-703-26** was sent to the Land Use and Special Studies Committee.

First Reading of Ordinance Z-704-26; An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Amending the Green House Cottages of Carmel Planned Unit Development District (Z-594-14); Sponsors: Councilors Aasen and Minnaar. Councilor Taylor moved to introduce the item into business. Councilor Green seconded. Councilor Minnaar presented the item to Council. Kyle Resetarits of Dentons Bingham Greenebaum represented the petitioner,

MBR of Carmel Health, better known as The Restoracy of Carmel. Ordinance Z-704-26 would amend certain provisions of the original Green House Cottages of Carmel PUD (Z-594-14). The proposed two new cottages would each bring 12 new skilled nursing beds to the facility, which helps to support the initiative of aging in place. Hamilton County has an annual shortage of 189 skilled nursing facility beds. While these additional 24 beds will not solve that problem, they are part of the solution. There is a 30-foot wooded buffer to the north of the new cottages, and this would be preserved. Council President Snyder opened up the public hearing at 8:31 p.m. Seeing no one who wished to speak, President Snyder closed the public hearing at 8:32 p.m. Councilor Ayers asked when the 90-day clock started for this ordinance. Mike Hollibaugh, Director of Community Services, stated that the clock started the day it was certified, meaning the deadline will be April 22, 2026. Councilor Green asked about any remonstrations against this development. Mr. Resetarits stated they did hold a public hearing for the neighbors. There were two residents who attended the meeting. One of those neighbors did speak in opposition at the initial Plan Commission public hearing. This brought about some revisions in the proposal, including additional tree buffering and visual buffering with a fence. **Ordinance Z-704-26** was sent to the Land Use and Special Studies Committee.

First Reading of Ordinance Z-705-26; An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Establishing the Restoracy of Carmel Planned Unit Development District; Sponsors: Councilors Aasen and Minnaar. Councilor Taylor moved to introduce the item into business. Councilor Green seconded. Councilor Minnaar presented the item to Council. This ordinance accompanies Z-704-26, by establishing the Restoracy of Carmel PUD. As this was already explained by Mr. Resetarits, Council President Snyder opened up the public hearing at 8:36 p.m. Seeing no one who wished to speak, he closed the public hearing at 8:36 p.m. **Ordinance Z-705-26** was also sent to the Land Use and Special Studies Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

First Reading of Ordinance D-2811-26; An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Amending Chapter 8, Article 5, Section 8-47 of the Carmel City Code; Sponsors: Councilors Taylor and Worrell. Councilor Taylor moved to introduce the item into business. Councilor Green seconded. Councilor Taylor presented the item to Council. There was no discussion of this ordinance. Council President Snyder sent **Ordinance D-2811-26** to the Finance, Utilities and Rules Committee.

AGENDA ADD-ON ITEMS

There were none.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

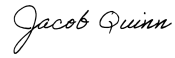
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Ayers congratulated the Carmel High School Girls' Swim Team for winning the State Championship, for the 40th year running.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Snyder adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jacob Quinn, Clerk

Approved,



Matthew Snyder, Council President

ATTEST:

Jacob Quinn, Clerk