



CITY OF GIBSON | 101 E 8TH STREET, PO BOX 545, GIBSON CITY, IL 60936

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MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Monday August 24th @ 7:00 pm

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Dickey in City Hall Council Chambers.

Roll Call:

Ward #1	Susie Tongate:	P	Sarah Sarantakos:	P
Ward #2	Randy Wyant:	P	Ray Hanks:	P
Ward #3	Scott Davis:	P	Terry Roesch:	P
Ward #4	Denis Fisher:	P	Laura Miller:	P

- The Pledge was led by Alderman Tongate.

Stormwater & Flood Issues - August 24, 2026

Overview

The Gibson City Council meeting (August 2026) covered multiple critical issues. The council approved minutes, general fund bills totaling \$375,371.40, TIF2 bills of \$496,242.17, TIF3 bills of \$16,442.81, TIF4 bills of \$22,133.42, and Downtown TIF bills of \$4,565.79. A \$38,000–\$40,000 sewer plant valve replacement was authorized as an emergency purchase. The council approved a new pavilion building permit and tabled the GGAEA \$5,000 contribution resolution pending further discussion between city representatives and GGAEA leadership. A comprehensive stormwater update was presented by engineer Will Gray and Drummer Drainage District Superintendent Bruce Killian. The council approved the Scout Cabin renovation using \$40,000 from the Presbyterian Church. A liquor ordinance amendment (Ordinance 2026-O16) adding a special events license was approved.

Visitors

Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

The council approved the minutes of the Monday, August 10, 2026 council meeting. Motion was made by Alderman Roesh and seconded by Alderman Hankes. A roll call vote was conducted with all present aldermen voting in favor. 8/0

Visitor Recognition – Knights of Columbus Fundraiser Request

Brad Pickens appeared on behalf of the Knights of Columbus to request permission to conduct their annual Tootsie Roll Drive fundraiser on September 18–19, 2026. Locations include the corner of 8th and Sangamon on Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and the corner of Route 9 and Route 47 on Saturday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The council verbally approved the request. The mayor directed Pickens to contact Superintendent Martin in advance if small barricades are needed.

Visitor Recognition – Traffic Safety Concern at West 9th and Pine

Resident Rick Thompson, 428 W. 9th Street, raised concerns about vehicles failing to stop at the stop signs at West 9th and Pine Street. He reported his wife was nearly struck by a truck that stopped in the middle of the crosswalk. He requested increased police patrols at the intersection during days and evenings. The mayor confirmed it is a two-way stop on 9th Street. Sergeant Rosenbaum from GCPD was present and indicated that he would send an email to the officers for extra patrol in this area.

Visitor Recognition – Stormwater Backflow and Flooding Concern (West Park Area)

Rick Thompson also raised concerns about manholes on the north side of West Park along 10th Street gushing water back up during the recent flood. He asked whether a damper or check valve could prevent Drummer Creek from back-flowing into the city's storm sewer system. Superintendent Bobera explained all storm sewers are gravity-fed open systems, making back-flow prevention difficult. He noted a check valve exists at the Drummer Township Cemetery outlet and that a new check valve would need to be placed on the 60-inch pipe exiting near Falcon Point subdivision. Barbera also mentioned that homeowners can install similar check valve products on their own basement drain lines.

Visitor Recognition – GCMS Superintendent Appreciation and GGAEA Introduction

Jeremy Darnell, superintendent of GCMS schools and resident of Railside subdivision, took a moment to recognize and thank Assistant City Superintendent, Rich Nolte, for his responsiveness in getting school crosswalks painted despite construction complications. He relayed his appreciation for the project being done in time for the first day of school. He also spoke in support of the city joining the Greater Gibson City Economic Association (GGAEA), noting GCMS is already a member. He referenced the city's own strategic plan language about

economic development and encouraged the council to join both financially and communicatively, emphasizing the need to pool limited resources in a small rural community.

Visitor Recognition – Flooding at 7th and Guthrie Area

David Walton who has attended approximately 25 meetings raised ongoing flooding concerns at his property. Will Gray and Wastewater Superintendent Bobera conveyed that the work being done is for the good of all residents. Plans include grading the north-side ditch to redirect water flow, grading the southwest corner of the bus garage to direct water into the culvert, and digging the 7th Street culvert as deep and far west as possible. Barbera noted fiber optic lines complicate some digging. The mayor redirected the conversation to the upcoming stormwater agenda item.

Visitor Recognition – Flooding at 15th and State Street

Justin Kean, 125 W. 15th Street, asked for drainage improvements at the corner of 15th and State Street. He described a river between his house and a neighbor's during the storm. The mayor invited him to stay for the stormwater overview on the agenda.

Committee Report – Sewer Plant Valve Replacement

Wastewater Superintendent Bobera informed the council of a broken valve at the sewer plant. The valve is used to switch from gravity-feeding sewage into Drummer Creek (normal operation) to force-pumping when the creek rises. The valve broke during the previous storm. Barbera obtained estimates and plans to replace it with an upgraded valve that will integrate into the future automated plant system. Cost is approximately \$38,000, with a not-to-exceed figure of \$40,000, funded from TIF3. The valve is a custom order with an approximately 28-week lead time. The council gave unanimous thumbs-up approval (one abstention due to property ownership in TIF3).

Committee Report – North Park Restroom Update

A council member reported that the new restroom at North Park has been installed but not yet connected. The mayor noted the contractor indicated approximately four more weeks until completion, pending parts and pieces.

Committee Report – Election Information

City Clerk, Carla McGrew, announced that candidate petitions for the upcoming election will be available for pickup starting Tuesday, August 25, 2026, at the Gibson City Police Department. The filing week is November 16–23, 2026. Seats open for re-election are Wards 1, 2, 3, and 4, held by Aldermen Sarantakos, Hanks, Davis, and Fisher respectively.

Approval of Bills

The council approved five sets of bills via roll call votes:

- General Fund: \$375,371.40 (motion by Alderman Hanks, second by Alderman Miller) 8/0
- TIF2: \$496,242.17 (motion by Alderman Miller, second by Alderman Sarantakos) 8/0
- TIF3: \$16,442.81 (motion by Alderman Roesh, second by Alderman Hanks; Aldermen Davis and Miller abstained due to property ownership in TIF3) 6/2
- TIF4: \$22,133.42 (motion by Alderman Wyatt, second by Alderman Sarantakos) 8/0
- Downtown TIF: \$4,565.79 (motion by Alderman Miller, second by Alderman Tongate; Alderman Fisher abstained) 7/1

New Pavilion Building Permit Approval

Superintendent Martin reviewed the building permit application for a new pavilion on city property. The plans met all ordinance requirements. Martin requested that gutters be directed toward the nearest storm drain and that the concrete pad be flush with the asphalt rather than having a lip. The applicant agreed and also plans to install concrete bollards to protect vehicles. The council approved the permit (motion by Alderman Hanks, second by Alderman Wyatt) via roll call with all ayes. 8/0

GGAEA Contribution/Membership Resolution (Resolution 2026-R-4)

GGAEA Executive Director Matthew Burns presented the case for the city to join the Greater Gibson City Economic Association at the \$5,000 "Destination Builder" level, covering membership through 2031. The organization is structured as a 501(c)(6) nonprofit owned by its members. Key benefits include: access to proprietary data platforms, grant writing through CFPS Grant Writing (Stockton, IL), economic impact reporting, and representation with state-level officials and investors. Full membership allows a board seat and voting rights; associate membership does not. The CEO of the local hospital (Rob Schmidt) emphasized that a \$400 million state grant opportunity for sidewalks, facades, and streetscapes was missed because the city was not a member, and that C6 organizations cannot write grants for non-members without conflict of interest. GCMS Superintendent Darnell and board member David Hagen also spoke in support. The mayor expressed concern about intermingling city taxpayer funds with a private organization and preferred an associate or partner relationship. After extended discussion, the original motion was withdrawn. The council agreed to table the resolution and schedule a meeting between the mayor, Alderman Miller, and GGAEA leadership (including Tom Bennett, Dr. Hagen, and Rob Schmidt) to review bylaws and craft a mutually acceptable resolution for a future meeting.

Stormwater Overview – Engineering Update (Donahue & Associates)

Engineer Will Gray of Donahue & Associates presented the city's active stormwater mitigation efforts. The primary project underway is the design of a new 48-inch diameter sewer and a 2-million-gallon storage tank at the wastewater plant. The tank will store excess stormwater and

slowly bleed it back into the system after rain events, reducing direct discharge to Drummer Creek. The new sewer will run from Drummer Township Cemetery down West Street and Route 47 to the plant. This is a \$30–32 million project currently under active design, with construction expected to begin within two years. Gray also noted the city is exploring a new detention basin on the southeast side of town and a potential new outlet on the northwest side to address the chronic flooding near 15th and State Street. He acknowledged the area around 15th and State is "ground zero" for flooding, exacerbated by the railroad tracks to the west which block drainage. He noted that adding a sewer under the tracks is costly and complex. Gray confirmed that the Railside subdivision improvements have shown measurable benefit during the recent storm.

Stormwater Overview – City Operations Update (Superintendent Bobera)

Superintendent Bobera detailed ongoing in-house stormwater work: cutting culverts, addressing curb inlet issues, ditch maintenance, and gravel management at the bus garage (gravel was being flushed into storm sewers). His crew worked through the storm non-stop. Mayor Dickey noted that he wanted to extend his appreciation to the Street and Alley crew during the storm. They too worked through both nights and days placing barricades to keep the residents safe. The sewer plant's current storm capacity is approximately 50,000 gallons, which is outdated. The 7th and Guthrie ditch project is currently underway, involving culvert replacement and ditch grading across multiple blocks to benefit multiple residents.. The mayor also proposed a homeowner assistance program to install sump pumps in approximately 50 homes per year, along with educational outreach on standpipes, hydraulic cement, and flex seal to prevent basement flooding. He directed Alderman Wyatt to call a committee meeting to develop this program.

Stormwater Overview – Drummer Drainage District Update (Bruce Killian)

Bruce Killian, superintendent of the Drummer Drainage District, introduced trustees Doug Bennett and Henry Dentals. The district covers approximately 12,600 acres (20 square miles) with 12–13 miles of open ditch. He clarified the district's legal limitations: it cannot construct new ditches, alter or enlarge existing ditches, add surface water inlets, or annex new acreage without a court order. Killian differentiated the 2021 flood (localized, ~16 square miles, unmanageable rain) from the August 2026 event (widespread, ~800 square miles, 9–12 inches of rain across multiple counties and drainage districts). The 2026 event affected the Mackinaw, Brokaw, Cooler, Wall Township, Big Four, and Hillsbury Slough drainage districts simultaneously, all draining to the Sangamon River. Since 2021, the district completed brush management (spring 2022, December 2023, January 2024, December 2024, February 2025, May 2026), ditch cleaning (fall 2022, fall 2024, November–December 2025), licensed nuisance trapping for beaver dams, dozer work (March 2026), and mechanical/spray maintenance. A legal dispute with a resident in 2023 halted work for months and diverted funds to attorneys and surveyors. New district maps were received August 12, 2026—two days before the major storm. The maps revealed a 2.5–3 mile inaccessible ditch stretch in Ford/Champaign County to be surveyed by drone, and areas south and west of Gibson City not in the drainage district that the district plans to pursue for annexation. Killian also raised the possibility of pursuing grant funding for drainage infrastructure and retention improvements.

Scout Cabin Renovation Approval

The council formally approved allowing the First Presbyterian Church to fund renovation of the Scout Cabin on city property using a \$40,000 donation. The project was already approved in principle at the August 4, 2026 Parks, Building and Technology committee meeting and confirmed by council thumbs-up two weeks prior. Superintendent Martin had already placed orders and contacted contractors. Alderman Sarantakos, seconded by Alderman Roesh, and approved by roll call. 8/0

Liquor Ordinance Amendment – Special Events License (Ordinance 2026-O16)

City Attorney Mark Miller presented amendments to Chapter 21 of the city's liquor ordinance. The amendment creates a special events license at \$150/day for events on city property. It also requires event organizers to list the city as an additional insured on their liability policy, ensuring the organizer's insurance pays first in the event of an incident. The amendment was prompted by the GGAEA's interest in establishing a social district, which led the city to identify gaps in its existing ordinance. Motion was made by Alderman Hankus, seconded by Alderman Rush, and approved by roll call (Alderman Miller abstained).

Executive Session

The council entered executive session.(5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11))

Vote was taken to enter into regular session. 8/0

Motion to adjourn made by Alderman Davis, second by Alderman Roesch.