

City of Tipton Board of Public Works and Safety meeting held on January 28, 2026, at Tipton City Hall, Council Chambers, Tipton.

Members: Mayor Schmicker, Clerk-Treasurer Clark, and Councilman Kring. BOW Member Ehman was not present

Others: Matt Quigley, Joe Bitner, Jeff Stout, and Collin Huffines.

Mayor Schmicker opened the January 28, 2026, BOW meeting.

Minutes: Councilman Kring made a motion to approve the January 12, 2026, BOW minutes, seconded by Mayor Schmicker, with all in favor.

Amend Agenda: Nothing to report.

Old Business: Nothing to report.

New Business: Nothing to report

Fire: Chief Bitner stated they should have the running numbers for December and the 2025 annual report. The annual run total was 1450, which is standard. There have been quite a few structure fires in the city. Cicero Township and Hobbs have us on automatic dispatch. Towards the end of the year, Kempton did as well. He explained that automatic is when we are paged at the same time as other departments, and mutual aid is when another department is paged and requests additional help after they arrive. Councilman Kring asked whether there is any funding available when they are dispatched to Kempton. Chief Bitner answered no. Councilman Kring asked Chief Bitner if he thought that the township would be open to fire territory. Chief Bitner said, "Probably," and allegedly Cicero Township is open to considering it. He believed the Mayor was to be in talks with Amber from Cicero Township. He believes Chuck Bell from Madison Township is open, and he isn't sure who Jefferson Township's trustee is, but he knows their fire chief would probably be open to it. Chief Bitner stated that SB1 imposes caps on new fire territories and on the amount they can charge for the fire LIT tax.

Councilman Kring stated that if a township doesn't provide fire service, or in a city not over a certain population, or your city constitutes more than half of the county's population, you must go. Chief Bitner said it is worth looking into. If it is done properly and fire LIT is implemented, we could easily staff a second, if not a third, station all the way east to the county line.

The fire department is in its hiring process. It was advertised from October to December 5th. There were 12 applications, 10 RSVP'd, 7 showed up, 5 passed the written exam, and 3 passed the physical. The semi-annual gas detector calibration was done. Chief Bitner attended the District 6 Chiefs' meeting in Muncie. There are larger departments dealing with the same issues we face, including turnover rates and funding. Brice Delph completed his first year and is now a second-class firefighter. The biweekly building progress meeting is scheduled for 10 am. We have a couple of questions regarding the renovations on the fire side. The Board of Works interviews scheduled for Monday have

been canceled and need to be rescheduled. There are two openings. Lucas Jones's last day with us is February 7th. Chief Bitner stated that he believes the two candidates they have will be strong. There were three candidates, but after calling their references and previous employers, we eliminated one. Both candidates have the required certifications, and no additional training is required. Councilman Kring asked if Brice had previous fire experience before coming here. Chief Bitner stated he worked for Cicero Township, and he had all the required certifications. Seth Hougese and Josh Vinson were EMTs and had to be sent to Muncie's academy. Ross Schulenburg started his EMT training when he began, and we put him through firefighter 1 & 2. Councilman Kring asked about firefighters living locally. Lucas Jones lived in Howard County. Mayor Schmicker asked if the interviews could wait until the next Board of Works meeting or be done now. Chief Bitner prefers it to be done as soon as possible. Mayor Schmicker stated they would schedule a special session next week. Chief Bitner said that after that, he will have to schedule public safety medical for them. Councilman Kring asked if either one of them is currently part-time for us. Chief Bitner said no; one candidate is a full-time/part-time employee for South Mason Fire Territory. The other candidate is a volunteer for Michigan Township in Clinton County. Councilman Kring asked about their commute. One is from Anderson and the other from Michigantown. Mayor Schmicker set the Board of Works interviews for February 4th at 9 am, with a special meeting to follow at 10 am. Clerk-Treasurer Clark stated the paper would not need to be notified; only 48 hours' notice is required for the executive session. Chief Bitner states Tyler Davis will hopefully be back on March 10th, Set is gone, and Lucas's last day is the 7th. Jordan Crane plans to host a fire officer strategy and tactics class this spring. There were 2,752 documented training hours in 2025, which is 95 hours from last year. Jordan held a class informing them that they need to document all their training. Two guys went to the fire academy five days a week for two months. The emergency equipment for the new truck has been straightened out.

Building renovations: All windows on the fire side have been replaced. The police side will start when it warms up. The front entry way will start on February 2nd. Mayor Schmicker stated the windows in the apparatus bay look good. The windows are properly sealed and insulated. Chief Bitner stated that the HVAC work was completed. The company needs to return and run some tests and balance adjustments. Paint is on the walls, grout on the tiles, and epoxy on the floors is coming along.

Community engagement: Local 1979 donated to my closet program at the school, with proceeds from the golf tournament held with the police department.

Police: Chief Stout stated they have the monthly and end of year reports. There were right at 6,000 calls for the year, and 2,154 traffic stops. Typically, there are about 5,000 calls per year. The two officers and the academy are doing well in week four. They completed the first part of the criminal law test, scoring 97 and 94. In December, Tis the Season went well. The shop-with-a-cop event was a great success. There were 9-10 families that were shopped for. The end-of-year awards party was held at the American Legion. Office Ludvigsen received the traffic stop award, and Tryce Huffman received the arrest award. Captain of the jail, Ray Sheppard, launched a wellness program. He wants to get a liaison from each department within the county. If a major or critical incident occurs, support will be available at no cost. The foundation has contributed a \$9,000 grant to

kick this off. This will also be open to first responders' families, not just employees. Chief Stout would like Captain Sheppard to come in and give more information on it. The police department is fully staffed. The new hires at the academy will graduate on April 24th. The budget report was unavailable for the meeting, but will be sent. Blain at Inter Outfitters told Chief Stout that he should have all their vehicles ready by mid-February. Chief Stout turned quotes in to Ford and Academy to get a new price for the totaled vehicle. Ford responded the same day, but Academy still hasn't responded after sending twice last week. Mayor Schmicker stated the question to insurance is that six Durangos have been ordered. To unify the fleet, can we submit a Durango? Chief Stout stated he believes the Durangos run \$43,000, and the Fords are \$40-41,000. Councilman Kring asked what was being provided in the fleet. Mayor Schmicker stated they could do anything: Tahoe, Explore, or Durango. Chief Stout stated the guys really like the Durangos. Mayor Schmicker asked if he should reach out to Academy. Chief Stout said he would stop by there today. Office Maddox attended training in Florida. Officers covered school events, and Chief Stout stated he worked a Saturday night game. Chief Stout stated that Tyler had shown him some floor design ideas and discussed preparing a quote. The hallway will have epoxy flooring because it is more durable. The color will be a blue flake in the hallway. The bathroom is black with a white flake. Mayor Schmicker asked whether the quote existed to determine the funding source. A discussion was held regarding the cracked floor and its repair.

Mayor Schmicker offered kudos to the fire department for the automatic dispatch and mutual aid calls they have had. He commended them for their work in the weather conditions. Also, to the police patrol that was visible during the weather. Kudos to the street department as well. Chief Stout said the street department did great, and the streets looked better on Monday when he came in than he had seen in two years. Councilman Kring stated there was nowhere to put the snow.

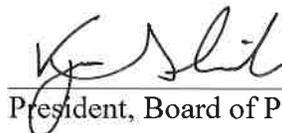
Mayor's Report: In the final details of the baseball project. We won't have the guaranteed maximum price ready for the next presentation at the council meeting, but we're just dealing with formalities. Will have BW present to the Board of Works and Council. RDC tried to secure a prospect out in the industrial park. Working with Acheva Incorporated to secure them. Working through the planning department transition. From a code enforcement perspective, many productive conversations are happening with Paige, satisfying those responsibilities. We have received positive feedback from local contractors on the forms. The Planning Commission will get the UDO presented in a public hearing at the beginning of February, and then a favorable recommendation will be sent to the council for a first reading.

Adjournment: With no further business, Councilman Kring called for adjournment, seconded by Mayor Schmicker, with all in favor.

Submitted by Tamera Clark, Clerk-Treasurer.



Tamera Clark, Clerk-Treasurer



President, Board of Public Works and Safety