

ORDINANCE NO. 5-7-2026-15

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, INDIANA AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE TOWN CODE OF BRISTOL TO ADD NEW SECTIONS 2-81 AND 2-112 ADDRESSING PROCEDURES GOVERNING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS AT BRISTOL TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

WHEREAS, the Town of Bristol, Indiana (the “Town”) is a duly formed municipal corporation within the State of Indiana governed by its duly elected Town Council (the “Council”); and

WHEREAS, the Council desires to provide for policies and procedures to increase efficiency of the Council in its public hearings in accordance with Indiana law; and

WHEREAS, Indiana Code § 5-14-1.5-3.3 permits the Council to adopt reasonable rules and policies governing the conduct of its meetings, to include, among other things, reasonable restrictions on the time allotted for attendees to speak on a topic, reasonable steps to maintain order during a meeting with respect to attendees and the elected officials of the governing body, and a procedure for the presiding member of the governing body to issue warnings to attendees who disrupt a meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Town Council of the Town of Bristol, Indiana, meeting in regular session, as follows:

Section 1. The foregoing Recitals are incorporated herein by this reference.

Section 2. Chapter 2, Article IV of the Town Code of Bristol (the “Code”) is hereby amended to include a new Section 2-81 to read in its entirety as follows:

“Sec. 2-81. – Presiding Officer.

The presiding officer of the town council, which is the president, or the vice-president or other designated councilmember, when the president is not available, shall take the chair precisely at the hour fixed for the opening of the meeting and shall call the council to order if a quorum is present.”

Section 3. Chapter 2, Article IV of the Town Code of Bristol (the “Code”) is hereby amended to include a new Section 2-112 to read in its entirety as follows:

“Sec. 2-112. – Public Comment Periods.

(a) Public hearings required by law on any proposed ordinances and resolutions of the town council shall be conducted as follows:

(1) The council president shall briefly explain the procedures which will be followed for all public hearings on ordinances and

resolutions at the first regular council meeting of each year. At each regular and special meeting of the council thereafter, the presiding officer shall announce that the procedures governing public hearings are available to the public in council chambers.

(2) The following procedures apply to public hearings:

a. The presiding officer may read each proposed ordinance or resolution by title only;

b. The town attorney may give the council an overview and summary of the proposed ordinance or resolution;

c. Reports from the area plan commission shall be given, when applicable;

d. A formal presentation on the proposed ordinance or resolution shall be made unless waived in writing by the petitioner on behalf of such proposed ordinance or resolution, which is not subject to a time limitation. Councilmembers shall have the right to ask preliminary questions to the presenter(s) immediately following the close of the formal presentation on the proposed ordinance or resolution. Members of the public supporting the proposed ordinance or resolution shall have the opportunity to address the council. Each member of the public speaking in favor of a proposed ordinance or resolution shall be limited to three (3) minutes for his or her presentation.

e. If there is a formal presentation against the proposed ordinance or resolution under consideration, the person or agent speaking on behalf of such a remonstrance group shall not be subject to time limitation. Thereafter, each member of the public speaking in opposition shall be limited to three (3) minutes for his or her presentation.

f. Each member of the public, whether speaking in support of or against the proposed ordinance or resolution, shall be required to state his or her name and residential address; or in the case of a proposal made on behalf of an entity other than a natural person or on behalf of a group of individuals, that person and/or their agent shall state his or her name and business address for the record prior to making remarks. In some instances, each member of the public may also be required to sign a sheet at the public podium which calls for the listing of his or her name and residential address prior to speaking.

g. The remonstrance period following any formal presentation against the proposed ordinance or resolution under consideration, if any, shall not exceed the time used by members of the public who spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance or resolution or shall be limited to forty-five (45) minutes, whichever is greater.

h. Speakers during a public hearing must only address the proposed ordinance or resolution and not topics unrelated to the issue that is the subject of the public hearing. The presiding officer shall have authority to determine whether comments are relevant or unduly repetitious and may direct a speaker to conclude remarks that do not comply.

i. The presiding officer may, in his or her discretion, allow a rebuttal period not to exceed five (5) minutes for the person or persons who made the formal presentation on the proposed ordinance or resolution under consideration, after which the public portion of the hearing is closed.

j. Following the public portion, the council portion then takes place where members of the council debate, ask questions and make motion(s) on the proposed ordinance or resolution under consideration. Each proposed ordinance or resolution must have a motion addressing the disposition of the proposed ordinance or resolution for final action.

(b) Public comment periods other than public hearings on proposed ordinances or resolutions, including any “privilege of the floor” period, shall be conducted as follows:

(1) Each speaker shall be allowed three (3) minutes to speak on a topic of the speaker’s choice.

(2) Such public comment period shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes.

(c) The following shall be applicable to public hearings on proposed ordinances or resolutions and all other public comment periods:

(1) All speakers shall refrain from comment or behavior that involves:

a. Disorderly speech or action; name-calling or personal attacks; obscene or indecent remarks; and derogatory comments on personalities;

b. The private activities, lifestyles, or beliefs of others, including town employees and elected officials, that are unrelated to the business of the council or the town;

c. Advertising or promoting the sale of products, services, or private enterprise where the presiding officer determines the primary purpose of the remarks is commercial rather than informational;

d. Promoting any contest or lottery; or

e. Promoting candidates for public office or upcoming ballot measures.

(2) Speakers and members of the public are not permitted to join in debate or discussion with speakers, members of the council, other town elected or appointed officials, or with other members of the public present at any meeting, e.g., no “back and forth.” The council may, but is not obligated to, provide responses to questions or comments presented by speakers.

(3) Periods for public comment may be extended by motion approved by the council before or during the comment period.

(4) An attendee shall be permitted to speak only once during a public comment period, unless approved by the presiding officer, and may not “donate” their speaking time to another person.

(5) Notwithstanding the foregoing, the presiding officer, subject to objection by a majority of the council, may reasonably adjust individual speaking times or aggregate public comment limits to ensure the efficient and orderly conduct of the meeting.

(d) Any person who violates this Sec. 2-112 will be declared out of order by the presiding officer and will receive a warning. If an attendee receives three (3) warnings, the presiding officer may, upon issuing the third warning, may direct: (1) the attendee to leave the meeting; and (2) a law enforcement officer to remove the attendee from the meeting, if the attendee refuses to leave when directed by the presiding officer. A law enforcement officer shall be permitted to immediately remove an attendee from a meeting if: (1) removal of the attendee is necessary to maintain order or ensure the safety of another person; (2) the attendee commits a criminal offense; or (3) the attendee violates this Sec. 2-112.

(e) The council may adopt further rules and regulations regarding the conduct of attendees at public hearings by resolution.

(f) The council may waive or modify any procedural requirement of this section by majority vote when necessary to address unusual circumstances, including public emergencies, technology limitations, or joint meetings.

(g) At all times the presiding officer or presiding officer shall have authority to maintain order and regulate the conduct of meetings.”

Section 4. The council hereby finds that the foregoing is fair and reasonable to promote the efficient conduct of public business by the council.

Section 5. If any section, paragraph, or provision of this Ordinance is held to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, then the invalidity or unenforceability of such section, paragraph, or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance.

Section 6. To the extent this Ordinance conflicts with any prior ordinance, resolution, rule, or policy of the town, this Ordinance shall supersede and control, and all such conflicting provisions are hereby repealed to the extent of the conflict.

Section 7. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its adoption.

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ADOPTED THIS 7th DAY OF MAY, 2026.

TOWN COUNCIL OF THE
TOWN OF BRISTOL, INDIANA

Jeff Beachy, President

Cathy Burke

Gregg Tuholski

Doug DeSmith

[Vacant]

ATTEST:

Cathy Antonelli, Clerk-Treasurer