

Benton Township Board
Unionville Senior Center
7616 East State Road 45 Unionville, IN 47468

Meeting Minutes for March 11, 2026

Attendees:

Michelle Bright - Benton Township Trustee
Joe Husk - Board Chair
Sean McInerney- Board Member
Jake Dodds - Board Secretary
Ashley Kehrberg - Danny Smith Park Representative

This meeting was broadcast live on the Benton Township Youtube page.

Meeting called to order at 6:33pm

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the February 11th, 2026 Benton Township Board meeting was made (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Aye, Husk - Aye, McInerney - Aye. The Motion was approved unanimously.

Financial Report

The board received copies and Trustee Bright read aloud for review, the Financial Report for February 2026. (A summary of these reports is attached to this document.)

The board had no questions regarding the Financial Report. A Motion was made to approve the financial report (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Aye, Husk - Aye, McInerney - Aye. The Motion was approved unanimously.

Trustee's Report

Trustee Bright read aloud for review, the Trustee's Report for February of 2026.

- Work has begun, but is slow going on the free township website provided by the State.

- The trustee was contacted by a person who has a relative buried in Stepp Cemetery. The person was concerned about the distance from the parking area to the grave site. Trustee Bright offered up any available information and offered to send photographs, but has not heard back from the citizen.
- Work is being done on the senior center building after water damaged the building from the snow storm in February. Work is scheduled to begin the week of Monday March 16.
- Regarding Danny Smith Park, Ashley Kehrberg is in attendance to discuss the past years improvements at Danny Smith Park, and any potential upcoming projects for 2026.
- Trustee Bright has a meeting with the President of the Unionville Senior Center, Mike Tarter to discuss possible improvements to the building as allocated in our capital improvements plan.
- The Monroe Fire District after consultation with their medical director has decided not to purchase the CPR devices originally quoted and is instead searching for alternative equipment to better fit their needs at this time.
- There were no requests for assistance in February 2026.
- The next meeting will be Wednesday April 8, 2026 at the Unionville Senior Center located at 7616 East State Road 45 Unionville, IN 47468 at 6:30pm EST.

The board had no questions regarding the Trustees' Report and Township Assistance Report. A motion was made to approve the Trustees' and Township Assistance reports (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Aye, Husk - Aye, McInerney - Aye. The Motion was approved unanimously.

New Board Business

- **Danny Smith Park Presentation**
 - Completed Projects
 - All field lights upgraded to LED
 - Field 2 light pole replacement and tree work
 - Batting cage lighting with Electrical work in the garage area with a completion date of March 2026.
 - HVAC improvements in the concession stand

- Current Planned Projects
 - Field 2 leveling work needed for player safety and water drainage.
 - Erosion control and regrading on the road to the parking area on Field 1. The project is pending and a contractor is being contacted.

- Future Projects
 - Removal of slide at the playground. The playground slide is an older style slide and could be considered dangerous given its speed and angle on the hill.
 - Mulching the playground area. Mulch must be 8” high for safety reasons

Enrollment is down for the 2026 season, but the park has been able to grant all requested scholarships.

Old Board Business

- **North Tunnel Road Property**

John Bethel has completed the work and is in the process of writing the report. In summary, they agree with the auditor’s office that the legal description was the mistake in this getting “lost” in GIS. The parcel has been assigned a number. The trustee has updated the residents regarding these updates.

The township manual does not have a requirement for handling the sale of property under \$50,000.00. The board feels the next best step would be to wait for the official title report and then to have the property officially appraised before deciding how to continue.

- **Township Consolidation Discussion**

SB 270 was signed by the governor. The bill will use compiled data to assign points to each township government that will determine whether the township would need to be consolidated. The Trustee provided a rundown of the points system for the board.

1. Two (2) points if a township government did not provide township assistance in calendar years 2023 and 2024 as provided in the annual reports submitted under IC 12-20-28-3 to the state board of accounts.
2. One (1) point if a township government does not actively manage fire protection or emergency medical services within the township on January 1, 2025. (more in bill....)

3. One (1) point for each year that a township government did not file an annual finance report with the state board of accounts in 2023 or 2024.
4. One (1) point for each year a township government did not file all required monthly upload reports as required by directive of the state board of accounts in 2024 or 2025.
5. One (1) point if the township's annual appropriations and annual tax levy for 2023 were continued for the 2024 budget year under IC 6-1.1-17-3(d) or IC 6-1.1-17-5(f)
6. One (1) point if the township's annual appropriations and annual tax levy for 2024 were continued for the 2025 budget year under IC 6-1.1-17-3(d) or IC 6-1.1-17-5(f)
7. One (1) point if the sum of township assistance applications received by the township government in 2023 and 2024 is less than twenty-four (24) township assistance applications as provided in the annual reports submitted under IC 12-20-28-3 to the state board of accounts.
8. One (1) point for a township government that has a certified budget of less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for calendar year 2025.
9. A maximum of one (1) point if:
 - a. A township did not have a candidate on the election ballot for the office of township trustee in either the 2018 or 2022 general election; or
 - b. A vacancy on July 1, 2026, in the position of township trustee has been vacant for at least thirty (30) calendar days.
10. A maximum of one (1) point if:
 - a. A township did not have a candidate on the election ballot for all offices of the township board in either the 2018 or 2022 general election; or
 - b. on July 1, 2026, there is at least one (1) vacancy on the township board

The Timeline for collected data, scoring townships, decisions on consolidation and appeal would be as follows;

December 31, 2026: The bill requires the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) not later than December 31, 2026, to compile data on each township (excluding townships in Marion County) and assign points based upon the township government's performance.

March 31, 2027: Deadline for townships to petition the DLGF to reconsider their point totals, based on IC 10-14-3-1, which is an occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural phenomenon or human act.

Townships required to merge based on their point total determination would merge with at least one other township within their county under the provisions within current law to merge townships. The county executive, with township input, would determine which townships would merge with each other.

June 30, 2027: Not later than June 30, 2027, the department shall issue a written determination on all petitions received by the department. The department's determination on a petition is final and conclusive and may not be appealed.

August 1, 2027: Deadline for the county executive body to conduct a public meeting of all township trustees within the county to discuss the merger.

October 1, 2027: Deadline for the county executive to adopt a resolution that names the township governments that will merge.

February 28, 2028: Townships involved in mergers would have to submit to the DLGF no later than February 28, 2028, the adopting resolutions, the estimated budget, and the proposed tax levy of the new township government for the 2029 budget year. The DLGF would then take that information submitted by the participating townships to certify the new township's budget, tax rate, and levy.

December 31, 2028: Term of office ends.

Townships required to merge based on point totals would merge with at least one other township in their county under the current law. Townships who choose to consolidate voluntarily would curtail going to the commissioners where it's possible the decision wouldn't be made by the township.

The Trustee provided the board with lots of information and the board is continuing to discuss pros and cons for voluntary consolidation or remaining independent.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this meeting.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting (McInerney) and seconded (Dodds). A roll call vote was held and the results were as follows. Dodds - Aye, Husk - Aye, McInerney - Aye. The Motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35pm.

FINANCIAL REPORT

JANUARY 2026	2026 Budget	Month to date Expense	Year to date Expense	Remaining Approved Budget	Cash Balance	Deposits	Local Income	Trust
							Tax	Indiana
Township Roads and Infrastructure	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Rainy Day Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	43,254.85	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 94.81
Township Fund	\$ 115,000.00	\$ 3,312.89	\$ 3,312.89	\$ 111,687.11	105,679.40	\$ -	\$ 1,382.83	\$ 339.32
Welfare Admin/Direct Asst	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 324.40	\$ 324.40	\$ 19,675.60	122,813.43	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Recreation Fund	\$ 6,500.00	344.82	344.82	\$ 6,155.18	13,149.92	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17.73
COVID Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 450.22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Township Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Volunteer Fire Dept Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 3,378.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS					\$ 288,726.52	\$ -	\$ 1,382.83	\$ 701.86

JANUARY 2026	2026 Budget	Month to date Expense	Year to date Expense	Remaining Approved Budget	Cash Balance	Deposits	Local Income	Trust
							Tax	Indiana
Township Roads and Infrastructure	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Rainy Day Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	43,340.32	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 85.47
Township Fund	\$ 115,000.00	3,268.03	6,545.92	\$ 108,454.08	104,160.13	\$ -	\$ 1,382.83	\$ 305.87
Welfare Admin/Direct Asst	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ 324.40	\$ 19,675.60	123,038.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 225.37
Recreation Fund	\$ 6,500.00	330.71	710.53	\$ 5,789.47	12,800.19	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15.98
COVID Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 450.22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Township Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Volunteer Fire Dept Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 3,378.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS					\$ 287,168.36	\$ -	\$ 1,382.83	\$ 632.69

2026 Additional Appropriations

None to date

2026 Transfer to Rainy Day (10% of Jan 1 budget)

None to date