COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Spring 2026
Issue 8

TOWN MANAGER UPDATES

Construction Season Is Here: As work gets underway, you'll start seeing Reith Riley crews around town. They'll be reaching out directly to property owners in the construction zone. You'll always be able to get to your home or business—there may just be short moments when access is limited right in front of a property while crews are working. If you have questions, you can call your Reith Riley contact or reach out to Town Hall and ask for Mike or Jill. For quick updates, the Our Town Bristol app and the Town's Facebook page are the best places to check.

Annexation: The rest of the story, how do Bristol residents benefit?

Commercial Growth Supports Essential Services
Every annexation in recent years has been tied to commercial development and that commercial tax base is doing a lot of heavy lifting for our community:

- $900,000 each year covers all fire and paramedic services
- $1.5 million in 2026 will be applied to a Bristol Business Route project
- $1.4 million is funding the new Street Department building
- $698,000 covers the Town Hall construction loan payment

None of this funding comes from residential property taxes.

Water & Sewer Improvements Stay Affordable
The Town's aging water and sewer infrastructure required upgrades; these are funded through rates designed so commercial users carry a larger share of the cost. Without that support, residential rates would be much higher.

Public Safety Depends on It
Without a strong commercial tax base, the Town couldn't maintain current fire and paramedic services. And with recent Legislative changes reducing residential property taxes and local income tax revenue for the Town, commercial taxes will likely need to help support police services, too.

Why Bristol Is Growing
Bristol has become a prime spot for commercial expansion because it's an area in Elkhart County that offers this combination:

- Water and sewer access
- A Toll Road interchange
- Two State Roads
- 1,500 acres of available undeveloped land
- access to rail

Elkhart County's history indicates development is destined to happen on this land with or without annexation. The difference is whether the Town can use that growth to help fund police, fire, paramedic services, and other infrastructure. Landowners have the right to seek annexation, request rezoning, and sell their property, and Elkhart County has continually supported farmland transitioning to commercial use, especially land adjacent to municipalities.

Looking Ahead
Commercial growth—and the tax revenue that comes with it—is paving the way for a vibrant downtown, reliable fire, police, and paramedic services and funding infrastructure improvements. All of which is critical to support current and future residential growth.

It's all part of building a thriving, sustainable future for Bristol.

Schedule for Town Council & Park Board Meetings

Town Council Meetings:
Held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 PM at the Town Hall.

Park Board Meetings:
Scheduled for the 1st Tuesday of every month at 6 PM, also at the Town Hall.

Support Bristol: Summer Events 2026

Despite the upcoming road construction on Main Street, Downtown Bristol is open for business and ready to welcome you! We are hosting two major event series this year to bring our community together, increase foot traffic for our Vistula Street and downtown shops, and provide free entertainment for all ages.

Bristol's Farmers' Market

Join us for a season of supporting local growers and artisans! This is a perfect opportunity to grab fresh goods and specialty items while visiting our downtown businesses.

We are still taking applications for vendors. Please contact the Town Hall at (574) 848-7007 to obtain an application or email bristolevents@bristol.in.gov.

- Dates: May 7 – September 24, 2026
- Frequency: Every other Thursday
- Time: 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- Place: 301 S Division Street (Across from Bailey's Auto Part Store)
- Vendor Categories: Local produce, farmers, baked goods, local artisans, craft vendors, flowers, plants, and non-profit groups.

Note: *All vendors are local, originating from within 100 miles.*

Experience three incredible nights of fun, community, and entertainment in the heart of Downtown Bristol! Admission is FREE, and no tickets are required. Each evening runs from 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM. Mark your calendar for the 3rd Friday in June, July, and August!!

Start Your Evening with Dinner: We encourage all to dine at one of our Downtown Bristol restaurants before the show. There will be no food trucks, just great local businesses waiting to serve you!

The 2026 Lineup:

- **Friday, June 19:** Opening Night featuring the live band "Off Topic" from 6:00–9:00 PM.
- **Friday, July 17**: A night of comedy and music!
  - 6:00 PM: Comedy Opener Kristin Baker and Corey Mann will take the stage.
  - 7:00 PM: Live Performance by Julia James
- **Friday, August 21:** Closing the summer with a live performance by Abbie Thomas from 7:00–9:00 PM.

Stay tuned for location details, which will be posted soon on our Facebook page, along with alerts sent through our Town app.

Come for the show, stay for the community, and help our local businesses thrive throughout the construction season!

Clerk-Treasurer Cathy Antonelli

With warmer weather on the way, many of us are starting to think about outdoor activities and water use. Although summer is still a little way off, I wanted to take a moment to share some helpful information about utility billing so you're aware of how it works before the next newsletter arrives in July.

How Sewer Charges Are Calculated

Utility bills are based on metered water usage, but not all water used - like filling pools or watering lawns - enters the sewer system.

During the warmer months, **June through September**, you may see a ***"Summer Sprinkling Credit"*** on your bill. To avoid charging sewer fees for outdoor water use, sewer rates during these months are based on your **average water usage from December through March**, which reflects typical indoor use.

If you have questions or would like to review the full ordinance regarding the sprinkling rates, please contact Town Hall. We're open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and we are always happy to serve the Bristol community.

Park Board

Park Board Members

Mikel Ropp, President
Scott Dreamer, Vice President
Linda Powell, Member
Austin Burton, Member
Rosemary McDaniel, Secretary

Bristol Parks are getting better every year! We'll also see a return of the exercise program from Goshen Health. By scanning a QR code on signs located near the benches, you can access 11 free exercise videos, in either English or Spanish, that can be done using a simple park bench. Visit any of our 3 main parks and use this tool to stay in shape. The Cummins Park splash pad will open on or around Memorial Day, depending on the weather.

Want to know more about our parks or get involved? Come to one of our Park Board meetings, held on the first Tuesday of every month at 6 pm in the town hall. Or watch the meetings live or streamed later, from the town website. Want to get a better idea of how our parks function? Check out the first 15 minutes or so, as we're doing brief informational sessions at the beginning of most meetings. In February, we covered the budget with Budget 101, and on April 7th, we'll be looking at the different groups the Park Board works with to plan events and grow our parks with Organizations 101. Check it out.

MARSHAL STEVE PRIEM

Training is critical for law enforcement officers to ensure safety, enhance decision-making under high-stress conditions, and foster positive community relationships. Regular training keeps officers updated on evolving laws, reduces liability risks, and improves technical, mental, and ethical competencies, ultimately saving lives and building public trust. The Bristol Police Department has participated in many trainings with in the last few months including department training and individual officer training. These include Firearms Training, Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), Drug Interdiction, Instructor Development, Reid Interview School and STOPS (Strategies & Tactics of Patrol Stops). By sending our officers to these training courses, our department is able to provide the community with the highest level of police services.

In January 2026 the Bristol Police Department was awarded a grant through the Elkhart County Drug Free Partnership. The department received $8,400 to use towards new body cameras for our officers. These cameras are a critical tool by increasing police accountability, enhancing transparency, and building public trust by providing an objective, audio-video record of interactions. We want to thank Elkhart County Drug Free Partnership for their support to our department.

If there are any questions or comments, please feel free to contact us at our non-emergency business number (574) 848-4464. Or you can email us at bristolpd@bristolpolice.org . You may also stop in and see us at 303 E. Vistula Street in Bristol. If Emergency Services are needed, please dial 911. If non-emergency Police services are required, you may call the Public Safety Emergency Center's nonemergency number at (574) 533-4151

FIRE CHIEF NIK KANTZ

Spring… the time of year when the weather begins to warm, the grass greens up, and thunderstorms begin to roll in. Thankfully, not all thunderstorms are severe, but some are. The National Weather Service will issue a severe thunderstorm, tornado, or flash flood watch ahead of any potential warnings. But some of you may be wondering: What makes a thunderstorm severe? And what is the difference between a watch and a warning?

<u>As defined by the National Weather Service:</u>

- A thunderstorm is Severe when winds exceed 58mph and/or hail of 1-inch in diameter or larger.
- A Severe Thunderstorm, Tornado, or Flash Flood Watch means that severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, or flash flooding are possible in and near the watch area. It does not mean that they will occur, but that they are possible.
- Severe Thunderstorm, Tornado, or Flash Flood Warning means that severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, or flash flooding are actively occurring or are imminent in the warning areas.

<u>What to Do During Severe Weather (Source: National Weather Service):</u>

- Stay Weather Ready: Continue to listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio Station to stay updated about severe thunderstorm watches and warnings. Follow all directions given.
- At Your Home: Go to your secure location if you hear a severe thunderstorm warning. Damaging winds or large hail may be approaching. Take your pets with you if time allows.
- At Your Workplace or School: Stay away from windows. Damaging winds or large hail may be approaching. Do not seek shelter in cafeterias, gymnasiums, or auditoriums.
- Outside: Go inside a sturdy building immediately. Sheds and storage facilities are not safe. Taking shelter under a tree can be deadly. The tree may fall on you. Standing under a tree also puts you at greater risk of being struck by lightning.
- In a Vehicle: Being in a vehicle during severe thunderstorms is usually safer than being outside; however, if there is sufficient time, drive to the closest secure shelter.

<u>Other Recommendations from the Bristol Fire Department:</u>

- Download a weather app on your cell phone and allow for severe weather push notifications
- Fully charge your cell phones before severe weather arrives
- Stay away from downed trees and power lines, and never drive across flooded roadways
- Cellphone service may be interrupted – Stay put and wait for first responders to get to you
- Do not panic! Clear minds lead to clearer thinking and making better decisions.

Should anyone have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the Bristol Fire Department by phone at: (574) 848-4155, or visit the station at: 405 E. Elkhart St., Bristol, IN, 46507. Business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

However, our station is always manned 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

Bristol Town Hall
PO Box 122
Bristol, IN 46507

Town Hall Office Hours:
303 E Vistula Street
Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

The Bristol Town Hall will be closed on the following holidays:

- Monday, May 25th Memorial Day

Looking for Assistance?

The Bristol Food Pantry is open every Thursday during the following hours: 9:00–11:00 AM, 1:00–3:00 PM & 6:30–8:00 PM. Also open on the third Saturday of each month!

The HUB is here to lend a hand when you need it most—whether it's support, resources, or even help with food.

If you or someone you know could use a little extra help, give us a call at 574-390-0976. We're here to walk alongside you—because everyone deserves a helping hand sometimes.

ATTENTION

Upcoming Town Dates & Notices

- First week of April: Cemetery clean-up
- Second week of April: Spring leaf pick-up (brush will not be collected this week)
- Third week of April: Brush clean-up begins and will continue every third Thursday of the month
- May 1 & 2: Spring Town Clean-Up Weekend (Friday and Saturday). Take your unwanted items to 820 Bloomingdale Street - No electronics.

Stay up to date through our Town app or Facebook page.

Spring Weather & Storm Debris

With spring weather approaching, storms may cause fallen branches and debris. The Town provides collection service for tree storm damage — this is separate from the scheduled brush clean-up. **Please note:** Storm damage collection is for downed trees and branches caused by storms only — not general yard debris, routine trimming, or brush. Please do not place non-storm materials out for this service. If you have storm-damaged trees, place brush by the road following the brush clean-up guidelines - found on the website.

Pickleball Court Lighting

Pickleball court lights will be turned back on as weather conditions allow. The goal is to have them operational by April 1st. The pickleball nets are officially UP and ready in Cummins Park!

Additional Guidelines

Detailed guidelines for cemetery clean-up, leaf and brush collection, and the Town Clean-Up Weekend can be found on the Town's website.

Town Council

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Cathy Antonelli - Clerk Treasurer
Mike Yoder - Town Manager
Jill Swartz - Assistant Town Manager & Deputy Clerk Treasurer
Tim McCandless - WWTP Dept.
Eric Funkhouser - Street Dept.

574-848-7007 | 303 E. Vistula St. Bristol, IN 46507 | www.bristol.in.gov

Town meetings are available for live viewing on YouTube. You can find the link on our website.