



CITY OF WARSAW

Jeff R. Grose

Mayor

"Neighbors Serving Neighbors while Cultivating Community"

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...from the Mayor

Fall 2025

Our city motto encourages my office to make the City of Warsaw a great place to *Live, Work, and Play*. Former Mayor Jeffrey Plank once commented decades ago while visiting my senior government class that thriving communities like ours have elected officials focusing on economic development with the "...vision of Jules Verne and the spirit of Mayberry." I believe our efforts and accomplishments this year are moving Warsaw and Kosciusko County in that direction. And when I say "our" it is important to remember that countless stakeholders, organizations, boards, elected officials, business leaders, and neighbors have played such an important part in these efforts.

Earlier this month, the Common Council unanimously approved another 2025 budget reduction. Working closely with our department heads, we have reduced the total 2025 budget by \$1,554,225. This reduction supports our continued approach of providing excellent services and programs for "living, working, and playing" in our area while also holding fast to our conservative values during these trying economic times. Our leaders in Indianapolis are attempting to do the same.

When Governor Braun and state lawmakers promised property tax relief during the 2024 campaign, they responded to legitimate concerns from Hoosiers across Indiana. Like so many others, I understand the appeal of property tax relief. Rising assessed values and increasing property tax bills create real hardship for families, seniors on fixed incomes, and small business owners. The promise was simple: reduce municipal revenue – "*do more with less*" – from property taxes to provide relief to all taxpayers. However, the reality is far more complex. Senate Enrolled Act 1 doesn't eliminate the tax burden – state and local leaders are learning it shifts costs to other taxpayers while forcing cuts to essential services that make our cities, towns, and schools safe, accessible, and thriving.

Last April, Michael J. Hicks, a George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics and Director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University, wrote, "SB 1 means that every county, city, school and library district in Indiana will now have the chance to debate the value and cost of local public services. We will get to hear about the importance of schools, libraries and police to families, and how much these services cost. Some communities will choose wisely...crafting places that people wish to build their lives in. Other places will choose poorly. Then, we'll all get to see the results."

As Mayor of Warsaw, I have a responsibility to show residents the overall impact and likely results during this process. In our city, for example, the police, fire, and street departments together make up well over half of our total city employees and almost 2/3 of our total city budget – with almost half of the revenue funding these three departments coming specifically from the property tax. That means it will be difficult to shield those services from projected reductions under SEA 1 if fully implemented in its current form. Major cuts to infrastructure and emergency services will be unavoidable unless – with some experts telling us, "even if" – we consider raising local income taxes (LIT), increasing user fees, and/or implementing other state sanctioned local taxes.

Good schools, timely emergency response, parks with safe recreation facilities, sound infrastructure, and accessible public buildings are an important part of the foundation making Warsaw a great place to *Live, Work and Play*. As local public institutions move into the 2026 budget year and prepare for the 2027 budget cycle, please continue to learn more about SEA 1 and strongly encourage every state and local leader like me to honestly debate and then choose wisely for Warsaw and our surrounding area...crafting a place where people with the imagination of Jules Verne and the spirit of Andy Griffith wish to continue building their lives in while also cultivating community for everyone.

This column "*...from the Mayor*" will provide brief updates, the sharing of opinions, establishing vision, identifying priorities, and offering potential solutions for residents in our community. You may contact my office via email at jgrose@warsaw.in.gov or by phone at (574) 372-9595.

Your Neighbor,

Jeff R. Grose
Mayor of Warsaw