

Law Department

Geoffrey Spiess, City Attorney

John P. Gourley, Corporation Counsel

The Law Department provides legal assistance and counsel to 22 City departments, as well as the Board of Public Works and Safety, the Redevelopment and Community Development Commission, the Board of Parks and Recreation, the Mishawaka Common

Law Department led collective bargaining negotiations for new contracts with five of the City's employee labor unions

Council, and Mishawaka Utilities and its divisions: Electric, Water and Wastewater Treatment.

In 2012, the Law Department led collective bargaining negotiations for new contracts with five of the City's employee labor unions, and negotiated a new wage agreement with a sixth. The resulting contracts in the Fire, Sewer, and Dispatch departments represent significant changes to be implemented in those departments in 2013.

In addition, the Law Department advised the Board of Public Works on the renewal of the City's solid waste removal contract, and is leading negotiations for an extension of animal control services. The collective bargaining agreement with the union for Mishawaka Utilities employees will be negotiated in 2013.

Among the ongoing duties of the Law Department are compliance with the Indiana Access to Public Records Act (APRA) and various new statutes that were enacted in 2012, including an updated law against nepotism in municipal government. The Law Department advises the Mishawaka Police Department on matters ranging from employment law to the disposition of seized property. Law Department staff participated in code enforcement and animal control hearings, as well as appeals of unemployment insurance decisions.

The Law Department continues to work with outside counsel to prepare and conduct litigation the City is involved in, and works with department managers and supervisors to minimize the City's exposure to costly lawsuits.