

## The role of City Clerk is often misunderstood.

In fact, municipal Clerks are central to the effective operation of local government and among the oldest of public offices. Often referred to as the “front door” or “hub” of City government, the Clerk’s office serves as the direct link between the public and its government, as well as between the City Council and City Administration. The City Clerk’s Office is one of the most frequently visited offices in City government. Though specific duties vary significantly across cities and towns, the central function has always been to support the public good through transparency, record keeping and checked government. Generally, the Clerk is the manager of City legislative processes, relationships and open government, all necessary for ensuring that elected officials carry out their duties.

### If you are a resident of South Bend, my office:

- Protects the integrity and ensures the accuracy of public records through thorough oversight
- Keeps an accurate record of Council documents and minutes on file for public review
- Provides a place where you can pay parking, snow, and other Code ticket penalties
- Posts news of Council meetings and effective ordinances through e-mail, newspaper, and notices on the Council website
- Announces an “Amnesty” day each year when late fees will be waived if you come in and pay your old parking tickets
- Accepts applications for Special Events lawn parking permits (e.g. Notre Dame games)
- Issues and processes licenses for Scrap Metal
- Publishes details of City ordinances through the Clerk’s Column of the water bills newsletter for tall grass, Smoke Free Air, and Landlord Registration
- Administers oaths and swears in your police and fire service officers and elected officials

### If you are a South Bend business, my office:

- Offers education and assistance in navigating Council legislative procedures (e.g. tax abatements, rezonings, special exceptions, public vacations, annexations and other Council business) that promote economic development and job creation
- Notifies individual businesses of public meetings at least 48 hours in advance, so they have time to prepare for public hearing procedures

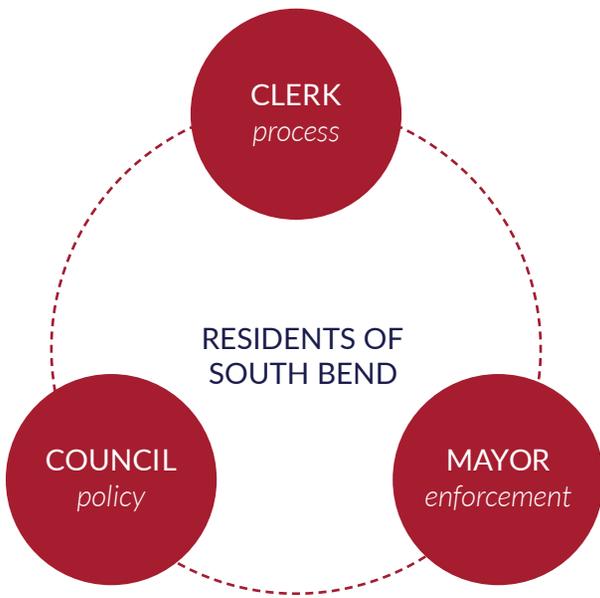
## So, what exactly does South Bend City Clerk’s Office do for you?

### If you are a member of the South Bend Common Council, my office:

- Ensures an accurate, impartial record of Council meeting proceedings in an effort to promote government transparency
- Provides an accurate and detailed record of events that can save taxpayers thousands of dollars in the event of potential litigation
- Supports your administrative needs by making sure all proposed bills meet the necessary legal requirements to be enacted as a law

### If you are a member of our South Bend City Administration, my office:

- Collaborates with City managers and directors to cut back on governmental red-tape and fast-track City processes and Council business
- Serves as the hub for all the City’s 30+ Boards and Commissions, swearing in appointees and keeping track of membership and term expirations
- Certifies City miscellaneous documentation such as bonds, fire pension ballots, budget incumbencies and executive orders



Clearly, the Clerk's Office requires both broad and specific knowledge of municipal government processes and law. While the Council enacts policy and the Mayor's administration enforces it, the Clerk remains neutral and impartial in overseeing the entire legislative process. This system ensures proper checks and balances throughout our municipal government.

As City Clerk, I was elected on a platform of supporting several long-term goals. These include innovations in technology, improved transparency and raising public awareness and engagement. In this year alone, my office has worked diligently to create the structural and operational changes required to overhaul outdated processes and procedures. We've also digitized original bound record books which include records from the time of our City's incorporation in 1865. Looking forward, we anticipate revamping the Council and Clerk websites to become even more user-friendly in tandem with the launch of a new City-wide website. We will soon have the capability to live-stream Council meetings on YouTube and Facebook. We are also planning to open a public City Legislative Resource Center in the Clerk's Office, implement a parking app and extend our Amnesty Program to address a range of resident concerns.

In sum, the City Clerk's office is vital to a well-functioning community and I am proud of our work. By sharing the specifics of what we do, I hope to encourage citizens, businesses and local officials to actively avail themselves of the many services we offer.



**OFFICE OF THE CLERK**  
SERVICE | INTEGRITY | OPENNESS

KAREEMAH FOWLER, CITY CLERK



We impartially ensure the integrity and accuracy of of the City data, and liaise between the Common Council, City administration, business community and South Bend residents fostering relationships and common ground.