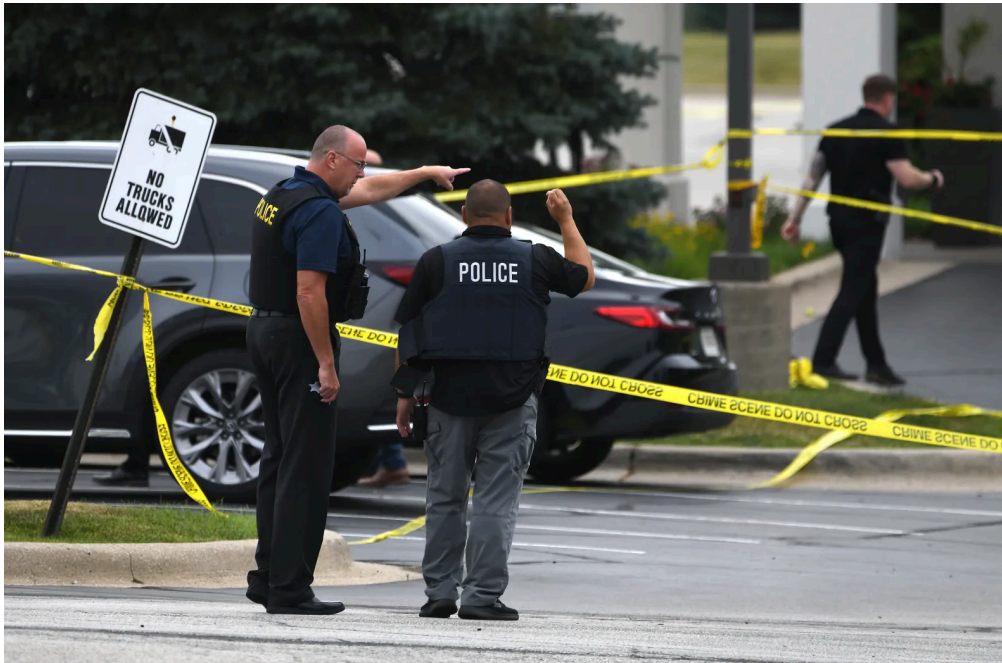


POST-TRIBUNE

# Commissioner Jim Biggs doesn't show at council meeting as controversy continues over dispatch



Chesterton Police Chief Tim Richardson, left, chats with another officer at the scene of a shooting on Gateway Boulevard near Ind. 49 and the Indiana Toll Road exit following a shooting in Chesterton, Indiana, Wednesday, June 18, 2025. (Andy Lavalley/for the Post-Tribune)



By **JIM WOODS** | For the Post-Tribune and **SHELLEY JONES** | For the Post-Tribune

PUBLISHED: July 15, 2025 at 12:16 PM CDT

---

Porter County Commissioner Jim Biggs was placed on the agenda to speak at Monday's Chesterton Town Council meeting, but didn't show to the disappointment of council members.

Chesterton town council members said that Biggs twice was publicly invited in particular to discuss his statements about the Chesterton/Porter joint dispatch center after the [June 18](#) officer-involved shooting in front of the Hilton Inn on Gateway Boulevard. Joseph P. Gerber, 45, died from a self-inflicted wound after exchanging several gunshots with two Chesterton police officers, wounding one of them.

But Biggs said in a statement issued to the Post-Tribune that he "was never formally invited through email, phone call, or written letter to attend this meeting."



Chesterton Town Council Vice President Erin Collins and President Sharon Darnell talk with Porter County Board of Commissioners President Jim Biggs following a news conference Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at the Porter County Administration Building regarding a June 18 police shooting in Chesterton. (Shelley Jones/for Post-Tribune)

“Furthermore, no town official has approached me with an invitation to attend this meeting. It was only through a newspaper article, and a Facebook post did I learn that I had been added to the agenda. Lastly, it does our public and the concern for officer safety an injustice to attend and be subjected to more petty personal attacks in order to deflect from the real issue at hand,” Biggs said.



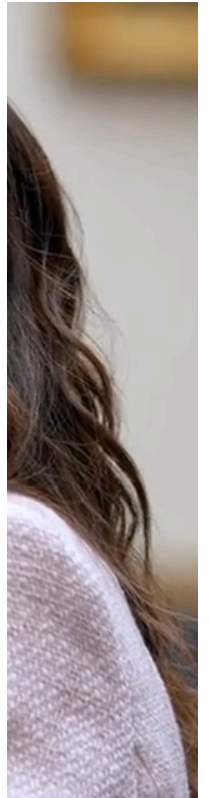
Council President Sharon Darnell, D-4th, said that she and Councilwoman Erin Collins, D-2nd, had attended a news conference Biggs held on July 1 and spoke to him afterward. She said that Biggs stated his most pointed issue was to be able to discuss “freely and openly” the county E911 center and the Chesterton/Porter joint dispatch.

“I am not a person who likes to meet anywhere but in a public forum,” Darnell said. “Maybe we’ll figure something else out, but that’s the only way we’re going to figure this whole thing out. We’re not going to do it in a closed room.”

Collins said that Biggs was invited twice by the council to appear.

“I think it was an opportunity for Commissioner Biggs to address the very people that he was elected to represent and serve. His absence tonight is a disservice to them and to the spirit of transparency and accountability in local government,” Collins said.

[Kristi Noem defends Homeland Security Department in post-sho](#) [Watch More](#)



---

Biggs lives in Chesterton and is the commissioner who represents northern Porter County. He is the president of that board.

"They must take place in public. Not behind closed doors, not through political press conferences and certainly not by exploiting a tragedy to advance a narrative." Collins said.

Collins said the council stands firm in its call for the resignation of Debby Gunn as the E-911 administrator "for repeated unprofessional conduct and false and misleading public statements."

Gunn contended there was a nearly five-minute delay in the request for an ambulance to the officer, an allegation that was staunchly denied by the town of Chesterton.

On the morning of the shooting, Biggs contacted the Post-Tribune and noted that it was time for the Chesterton/Porter dispatch to join the county's E-911 system and that an increase in the county law enforcement tax was needed to cover it.

Councilman James Ton, R-1st, said that Chesterton adheres to the standards of the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission and should a meeting occur, the town is committed to "civility and transparency".

"I haven't witnessed this in some discussions of this in the past," Ton said.

Biggs, in his statement to the Post-Tribune Monday, said as a resident, some might have the same questions about why Chesterton and Porter would continue to want to have a separate dispatch center.

The commissioner listed several questions which included: why in a police emergency is a caller required to speak to two different dispatchers in two location; if the E911 center handles all medical and fire calls, aren't they good enough to handle police calls; if the E911 center is good enough to dispatch police for every other municipality, why isn't it good enough for Chesterton and Porter; and do the residents receive any money outside of Chesterton and Porter taxpayers' dollars to fund the separate dispatch center.

"If the residents of Chesterton and Porter have more questions concerning this issue, I, as their commissioner, would be happy to facilitate a forum of non-biased public safety officials to provide answers," Biggs said. "It is true that Chesterton and Porter are under no obligation to consolidate now or ever. This is also true from the county's perspective. As things now stand, this

---

Chesterton Police Chief Tim Richardson said he did receive an email from Gunn two days ago, asking if he and Porter Police Chief Dan Dickey would want to sit down with her to speak about how to make the operation between the two dispatch centers more efficient.

Richardson said that if the meeting occurs, he wants to have his council liaison, who is Ton, attend.

Jennifer Klug, a Porter resident, said that she believes the towns should keep their joint dispatch center.

"I don't appreciate Mr. Biggs or Ms. Gunn saying some of the things they did in public. I think that it's not only unprofessional, but I think in a situation like that, people have to stand together and work on something," Klug said.

*Jim Woods and Shelley Jones are freelance reporters for the Post-Tribune.*

## MORE FROM OUR NEWSROOM

---



### **South Carolina honors native son the Rev. Jesse Jackson**

Monday, March 2

