

PERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
May 25, 2023

The Perry County Council met on the above date at 5:00 p.m. as was duly advertised. Council members in attendance were President David Etienne (DE), Earla Williams (EW), Paul Malone (PM), Stan Goffinet (SG), and Kelli Harding (Kelli). Sheriff Alan Malone, and Auditor Kristinia Hammack. County Council Attorney was in the audience. There was no News *Representative* present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

PM made the motion to accept as amended, seconded by SG. Motion carried 5-0.

MINUTES

a) 04.27.2023

SG wanted it to be noted that he voted against applying for the COPS Grant due to lack of knowledge of where it would be funded from.

b) 05.15.2023

Kelli made the motion to approve, seconded by EW. Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a) Beth Hauser from the audience wanted to bring to the County Council's attention the clarity of the livestream. The council advised they would look into it.
- b) Gary Gruebel Human Resource Director at Waupaca Foundry, asked the County Council the status of the PCDC Contract. Mr. Gruebel voiced his concerns that there is no plan for economic growth in Perry County. He stated there are grants and funding opportunities an Economic Development Corporation such as PCDC, has access to that businesses do not. He thanked Councilman Paul Malone for bringing to the table the topic of unpaid invoices from the PCDC, as they are still working for Perry County without a contract. Council member Kelli Harding spoke that it was her understanding that the committee was formed (which was made up of Commissioner President Randy Cole, County Council President David Etienne, Re-Development Committee President Jon Scheer, PCDC Chairman David Goffinet, and PCDC Director Erin Emerson) was waiting on financial information from PCDC. Kelli also stated that she had emailed to the committee some of her suggestions and input of what she would like to see in the contract. DE stated the "contract committee" met one time and at the end of that meeting it was left that PCDC would be providing financial information and he has not seen anything yet. Gary Gruebel informed he was told the same thing at the last Commissioners Meeting, so he then contacted the PCDC and they stated they sent the information on May 5, 2023. Gary Gruebel stated he had also spoke with Jon Scheer and that he said he had been out of town. Gary followed with that is ok, people have lives, but we need to be moving forward with this contract and that is what he is asking. SG stated that he feels it is necessary for transparency of how county tax dollars are being spent. Gary Gruebel agreed, but stated a timeline of when a contract is going to be complete is the key factor. DE stated that what the "contract committee" asked for from the PCDC was their annual operating expenses, not money they pay out for projects. Gary Gruebel stated that a good contract is one that is good for both parties involved. He hopes that is the goal, and one is not trying to put the screws to one or the other.

KRISTINIA HAMMACK, AUDITOR

- a) Auditor Hammack shared in regards to EFT payments that the Auditors Office has been taking baby steps to get acclimated and ensure all the T's are getting crossed and I's are getting dotted. We started with our LIT fund's recipients, and appreciate them working with us. We are set up to roll out the 6/5 Claim Docket EFT. I commend my staff, as this has been a lot of work setting the foundation for this, but in the long run is more cost efficient for the county and of course more time efficient.

- We in the Auditors Office are running 2 claim dockets a month. Our “regular claim docket” the first of the month. Then we have our “advance claim docket,” which is all the invoices that are due prior to the first for the month meeting date. Running this advance claim docket avoids late fees and interest charges.
- b) Auditor Hammack shared in regards to Remote Claims that the Auditors office is going to begin the roll out of selected departments starting to enter claims electronically. Currently all the departments hand write or type their claim forms, attach their supporting documents, and hand deliver to the Auditors Office for them to enter. As we did with EFT, we are going to take baby steps on this. I know with change comes concern so I wanted to mention some positives of transitioning to digital/electronic claims.
 - a. When a department receives an invoice they can enter it at their desk, scan and attach supporting paperwork such as invoice or receipts, keep paper copies for their records if they so choose.
 - i. This is more time efficient for them.
 - ii. This is more time efficient for us in the Auditors Office. Currently right now each department brings all claims over once a month. We will Audit claims as they are received.
 - b. June and July Auditors Office is working with LOW to grant access to departments.
 - i. Courthouse Offices in August
 - ii. Sheriff Offices in September
 - iii. North and South Annex Offices in October
 - iv. Prosecutor and HWY Dept. in November
 - c) Auditor Hammack shared some benefits to the county in implementing remote claims.
 - a. Looking up claims will be easy. Attachments will be just like an attachment to an email. You will not have to look through paper files.
 - i. Also, papers will not get lost.
 - ii. Accountability
 - b. Transitioning to Digital/Electronic Claims and going “paperless” in the Auditors Office, we will see a significant decrease in our SBOA Audit expenses. The more they can do off-site the better.
 1. This is the same if we transition to a Time and Attendance Software from the current paper pencil timecards.
 - d) Auditor Hammack provided the Council Members with the 2023 Budget Calendar for 2024 budget preparation, for them to mark their calendars for these meeting dates.

STEVE HOWELL, HWY DEPT. SUPERINTENDENT

- a) Additional Appropriations
 - Community Crossing Grant: 9141.44501.00000.0534 \$607,000.00
 - MVH Fund: 1176.23300.00000.0531 \$57,000.00

SG made the motion to approve, seconded by PM. Motion carried 5-0.

- a) Steve Howell stated that the change to the interest being receipted into the General Fund causes the Highway Dept. to lose about \$14,000 a year. He also mentioned that Cumulative Bridge Fund being cut back in 2007. He stated his job is to speak up for the cuts to the Highway Department. DE asked what do you use these funds for? Steve Howell replied it just goes into our fund. DE asked how the Hwy Dept. budgets for a new piece of equipment? Steve Howell answered money is budgeted annually. Kelli asked if there is a replacement schedule Steve Howell answered no. Kelli, mentioned the possibility of the county interest dollars being set aside for county equipment, like the building maintenance fund with EDIT dollars. PM asked Steve Howell, so you count on this interest money, for your budget? Steve Howell answered yes. Auditor Hammack corrected that the interest money was just being deposited into the funds cash balance. Auditor Hammack explained a fund has a cash balance and an appropriated/budgets balance. For Example: a fund might have a cash balance of \$800,000, and an appropriated (budgeted) balance of \$400,000. So, with these funds that are receiving interest it is allowing them to build up a cash balance where additional appropriations are easier for them because they have the cash built up. SG stated he has researched and a majority of the Indiana counties interest goes into an interest account within the county general fund. Kelli thanked Steve Howell for all he does, the Highway Department operations and budget is very efficient.

COUNCIL

- a) DE stated the next item on the agenda was the PCCVB 2023 Budget. We have this on the agenda as we have requested a copy of their 2023 budget, state statute requires that an entity receiving tax dollar provide a copy of their budget. Kelli stated that she contacted the State Board of Accounts to verify with them receiving innkeepers tax, and Kelli stated she spoke with Lori Rodgers and was informed of this code:

IC 6-9-18-6

(c) All expenses of the commission shall be paid from the fund established under section 4(a) of this chapter or from money transferred from that fund to the commission's treasurer under section 4(b) of this chapter. **The commission shall annually prepare a budget, taking into consideration the recommendations made by a corporation qualified under subsection (a)(6) and submit it to the county fiscal body for its review and approval.** Except for payments made under an agreement that is authorized in a resolution adopted by the county fiscal body under section 6.5 of this chapter, an expenditure may not be made under this chapter unless it is in accordance with an appropriation made by the county fiscal body in the manner provided by law.

As added by Acts 1982, P.L.1, SEC.21. Amended by P.L.55-1984, SEC.7; P.L.67-1997, SEC.21; P.L.122-2021, SEC

Kelli stated that she understood that Auditor Hammack has asked PCCVB Director for a copy of the budget. Auditor Hammack advised that she has asked in person and via email, the response given is she would have to get with the board on submitting a budget dye to them being a non-profit organization. Auditor Hammack suggested that she send a formal request with a deadline copying all the County Council members on the email. Beth Hauser from the audience spoke of her understanding of the way the PCCVB Commission Board and Private Non-Profit Entity is set up, as she was on the board for 2 years. DE stated that the County Council is who put this tax in to play. Kelli agreed and stated it was begun in the year 1995 at the max of 5%. Beth Hauser stated that she feels if the PCCVB was going to be listed on the agenda and discussed she felt they should have been invited to attend. Kelli stated the agenda item was for the County Council to discuss that they had not received a copy of the PCCVB Budget, and how to proceed. Kelli also stated that she wants to be in state compliance and based on Indiana Code we should have a copy of the PCCVB budget. DE stated this was a discussion in regards to not receiving the budget and to confirm it had been requested. Beth followed with in the 2 years she was on the PCCVB Board it never was requested to provide a budget to the County Council. SG stated that we are just trying to do what is right and do our duties correctly.

- b) DE stated the next time on the agenda is longevity pay incentive. Auditor Hammack spoke that she attended the 2022 County Council Budget Workshop last year when she was shadowing Pam Goffinet, and it was mentioned and from what she gathered this was not the first time the Council had mentioned needing to look at the possibility of adding longevity pay. First and foremost, see if the county can afford it. So, she is reminding the council that this is something that needs to be figured prior to the Budget Workshop scheduled in September. Auditor Hammack informed the County Council that she had reached out to other counties in Indiana to see what longevity pay schedules they offered, and I sent them to all of you to review. She then added that she spoke with Council President David Etienne and suggested we start at the beginning. We can always add more in the future, but it is not taken so kindly to us having to take money away. So, she recommended considering the additional \$100 annually after 2 years of service, then an additional \$50 for each year after 2 years, topping out at \$1000 at 20 years of service. EW asked Auditor Hammack what the counties turnover rate is, Auditor Hammack replied she did not have numbers. She followed with it is a common practice to entice employees who in a since are committed. Is it truly fair that an employee that has been employed for 15 years to make the same rate of pay as an employee who just started, but in the end, it is the County Councils decision if they want to look into the financial burden of if longevity pay. SG stated when he saw this item on the agenda, he researched it because he was not familiar with it, and understands it to be in a since a bonus. SG also stated he did not know if the county could afford it. EW responded but can we afford to orient/train new employees, turn over is costly as well. DE stated that this is not implementing it this is deciding if you want to look at the financial expense to consider this at budget time. Auditor Hammack stated again that the

reason she was bringing this to them now is because it was discussed in September of 2022 Budget Workshop and you can not wait until the Budget Workshop, the calculations and work needs to be done prior. All County Council Members agreed they would like to see the numbers starting at the figures for \$100 annually after 2 years of service, then an additional \$50 for each year after 2 years, topping out at \$1000 at 20 years of service. Auditor Hammack said she would get that together.

- c) DE stated the next item on the agenda is the PCDC invoices. PM stated that he wanted to discuss the reason these invoices have not been paid. Back earlier in the year it was stated the reason these were not paid is because there was not a contract in play. Since then, I have checked with legal and we can pay these invoices even though we do not currently have a signed contract with PCDC. PM stated that the PCDC has now provided services here in the months of January, February, March, April, and May and have not been paid. PM stated that the fact that they have continued work with no pay speaks volumes for the commitment they have to Perry County.

PM made a motion to pay all PCDC 2023 invoices.

Kelli stated that she has not seen any invoices. Auditor Hammack stated they are sent monthly to the Auditor via email. Kelli stated she is not comfortable paying the invoices without a contract. PM replied with they have earned it. Kelli asked for examples of what they have done. Beth Hauser from the audience asked would you work for 6 months without being paid? Rod Acchiardo who is the County Council Attorney spoke from the audience stating that PM did not ask him for legal advice you must have spoken to someone else. Rod Acchiardo stated his input on the matter is you are presuming you are going to continue the contract. DE stated the invoices that the PCDC have submitted are based on the contract amount from last year. Kelli asked PM what attorney he spoke with, and PM replied Rod Acchiardo. Rod stated I told you that a contract is not required for payment, but in this situation, I do not feel it is in the best interest of the county because you are presuming there will be a contract. Kelli stated she wants to be on the record that if a contract is agreed upon, she has no issues in paying the contract. PM stated the ready grants are ongoing and they are working on those. Also, we (Kelli) get reports of what is going on with us being on the PCDC Board. Kelli replied she is not satisfied with those reports. EW stated to attorney Rod Acchiardo, thanking him for explaining things. Beth Hauser from the audience spoke stating that basically economic development is stopped. Kelli replied, if the committee members have not been given the information requested to move forward with a contract, there is a disconnect. Kelli followed with I am not sure where the disconnect is, but County Council President David Etienne and Commissioner President Randy Cole are stating they have not received the information. Gary Gruebel stated his contacts to get information. He started with attending the last Commissioners meeting where he was informed, they were waiting on information from the PCDC. He then spoke with the PCDC and they informed him that they submitted the information on May 5, 2023. Gary stated he then contacted Jon Scheer and he said he is working on it. Gary spoke that we are a unique county, I am not originally from here but I am proud to be here. He followed with economic development is a must in this county. Waupaca has plans, but we need this county to grow, we need housing, we need restaurants and attractions to draw people in. Gary Gruebel stated all he is trying to do is make sure the steps are being taken for us to move forward. DE stated the contract committee has a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 31, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m. CST.

Kelli made a motion to adjourn, seconded by SG. Motion carried 5-0.

Kristinia Hammack announced that the next meeting of the County Council will be held on Thursday, June 23, 2023, at 5pm CST.

Minutes approved this 25th day of May 2023

President, Perry County Council

*Minutes prepared by:
Kristinia L. Hammack, Perry County Auditor*