

PERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
February 27, 2025

The Perry County Council met on the above date at 5:00 p.m. as was duly advertised. Council members in attendance were Kelli Harding (Kelli), David Etienne (DE), Stan Goffinet (SG), Paul Brockman (PB), Gale Garner (GG), Cory Filley (CF) and Brad Harth (BH). Auditor Kristinia Hammack and Sheriff Alan Malone were also present. There was no *Attorney* or *News Representative* present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kelli welcomed Brad Harth to the board, who is taking over District 3 with the vacancy of Keith Huck.

AGENDA

DE made the motion to accept as modified, seconded by GG. Motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a) None

CHARLIE BAUMEISTER, CLERK

- a) 2nd Deputy Full-time resignation/vacancy

Baumeister stated he was at last month's Council meeting advising that he had an employee to resign, and wanted to open up the position. A couple days afterwards, a second employee resigned. Baumeister stated that when he was interviewing, in the back of his mind he was looking for two positions to fill. One position has been hired, and during the interview process, the part-time employee in his office stated she would like to work fulltime.

Baumeister is seeking permission to fill the second position.

Kelli asked Baumeister that he has already filled the first position, and that person is starting to train? Baumeister responded that she started on Monday. He further stated that his office was down to one fulltime and one part-time employee. He is now back up to two fulltime and one part-time. He is wanting to replace the opening for the fulltime. Kelli stated that this would bring the office up to three fulltime plus he is fulltime, which would be four fulltime.

SG stated that there are changes coming down from the State, with the possibility that the County may not get as much property tax income, and he does not know how this will affect the County. Baumeister stated that since positions were budgeted for 2025, he is asking that the year be finished out with three fulltime and one part-time. Baumeister further stated that the part-time person is paid out of the Perpetual fund for one-half the salary and the General fund for the rest.

Kelli asked if the fulltime could be paid out of the Perpetual fund, stating if the Council approves the fulltime and not the part-time, could the part-time pay go towards freeing up some more money in the budget? Baumeister stated his office needs the manpower in his office due to the workload.

Kelli stated she is okay with filling the fulltime position but would like to put a hold on the part-time position due to the uncertainty with Senate Bill 1 and the potential of hundreds of thousands to dollars. Kelli would prefer to do this with attrition when someone leaves instead of having to cut someone after the fact. Baumeister stated that this could actually cause his Chief Deputy to quit, and if she leaves, there will be no experience in his office. Kelli stated that if the full-time is approved, that will give the office three full-time plus Baumeister, which will be four fulltime. Baumeister stated he is still learning.

Kelli stated that she personally is only interested in filling the fulltime position, and DE stated that the County should know something the end of April as to what the State plans to do. Baumeister stated he can understand that if cuts are made next year, he could lose the part-time, but he needs this position this year, and the money is already appropriated. DE stated that the Council is asking Baumeister to wait until April, with Kelli stating the end of April to see what the County's reductions will be. Baumeister responded that the Council is not giving him an answer one way or another, and at the end of April if the State makes the cuts, will the Council say no, they are not going to approve the part-time? He does not

feel this is fair to his department. BH asked Baumeister if it is fair to give him a part-time position and turn around and not? Baumeister stated he feels that if the person is told this in the interviews, that the position is depending on what funding is for next year. Baumeister stated he is not worried about next year; he is worried about now. He is afraid of losing more people in his office.

Kelli asked how many people are training, three out of the four? Baumeister responded that the new person is training, as well as the part-time person is also training on new things that were not a part of her part-time position. In addition, he is still learning, and one person is trying to train everyone.

SG asked Baumeister if he is pulling from other counties, and job shadowing them? Baumeister stated he would be traveling to Crawford County the next day to do this.

Baumeister requested the fulltime and the part-time position.

CF made a motion to approve the fulltime position, seconded by DE. Motion carried 7-0.

b) 2nd Deputy part-time vacancy

Baumeister stated that he is moving the part-time employee to fulltime, and he is requesting to advertise for the part-time position.

Kelli stated she is not interest in doing that, with GG stating to go ahead and advertise for the part-time. Kelli asked if GG was making a motion to allow Baumeister to fill that position? GG stated that if Baumeister can start to advertise, but not start until after the County gets some information from the State. Kelli stated that when you advertise, it is like you are hiring for that position. SG stated that when you advertise, someone is going to be actually applying for that position. Kelli stated she would like to wait until the end of April to see where the County is going to be in finances. She further stated she would much rather do it this way rather than have to cut somebody that is already working.

GG stated that if the position was advertised, and let individuals know that nothing is concrete until after April, at least the advertising will be done and maybe have a person in line, but not starting. BH stated he feels Baumeister will have a very hard time with this. Baumeister stated he is not saying he would even be able to replace that person within six weeks, but he would like the opportunity to open it up where he can take applications and look at them, interview, and tell these individuals what the County is waiting on. Kelli stated she feels it is disingenuous, as if this is opened up, the County is telling people there is going to be a position, and that is giving them false hope.

Baumeister stated that if the part-time does not get approved, he will probably be back next month asking for a fulltime position. Kelli stated she is very concerned with the County's financial situation, with needing somewhere to cut, so it is either cut or raise taxes, and she is not interested in raising taxes. Kelli is not in favor of cutting jobs, when the offices can try to absorb some of these duties and spread them out in the offices and take on more.

Baumeister stated his office is behind, and they are going to get further behind.

SG stated he feels the board needs to start making cuts through attrition.

DE made a motion that at this time the County does not hire a part-time person until the County knows something in April, and then go back and look at it at that time, seconded by SG. Motion carried 7-0.

TARA LUCAS, PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE SUPERVISOR

a) HFI Employees

Lucas stated that she sent the Council several emails explaining where the Health Department is currently with the Health First Indiana employees. She asked if the Council had any questions on how things were previously done and the requests being made to change them? Kelli asked if Lucas could quickly go through it. Lucas stated that in 2024, they hired a School Health Liaison and a Sanitarian Assistant, which were listed as contracted, non-county employees. Lucas worked with the County Attorney on this and came to the conclusion that this is what they would be.

In January of 2025, the Sanitarian Assistant position was approved by the Council to go fulltime and was funded at a fulltime rate, still hopefully to keep them contracted. However, after she spoke with Waggoner, Irwin & Scheele, and it was determined that it would be best if both of these positions were converted to part-time County employee positions. Lucas forwarded the verbiage that Lori with Waggoner, Irwin & Scheele sent to Lucas.

Lucas stated the biggest take-a-way that she got from this is the importance to explain to the First Health employees, as well as grant employees, that this is not a guaranteed position. Lucas further stated that when she interviewed for these two positions, she was very upfront and honest about that. If the Council would go ahead and approve these positions to be County employees, knowing that the Health Department has the funding to cover, that Lucas would still have one position to fill, which is the Liaison position at the school. However, the Sanitarian Assistant needs to be hired.

DE asked if both positions are fulltime, and Lucas stated no, the suggestions from Waggoner, Irwin & Scheele and the County Attorney, were to keep these positions under 30 hours per week. The liaison works 21 hours per week, and the assistant position, would be 25 hours per week. This provides the help that the department needs, while keeping them within that funding mechanism so that they do not have to reallocate funds. Lucas stated that they would hire with the understanding with the individuals that the funding is only through December 31, 2025. Lucas stated that hopefully it gets extended at the same funding rate, but nothing is guaranteed.

Kelli stated that there was a question from the memorandum from Lori with Waggoner, Irwin & Scheele. There is a sentence that states “additionally the employer/employee relationship will likely continue indefinitely”. Kelli called Waggoner, Irwin & Scheele and her suggestion was on the job description, at the top, put that it is grant position, and where it has status, to put part-time grant funded. In addition, at the bottom, put that if funding is not available, this could be eliminated. Lucas stated she could make those changes.

CF made a motion to allow the two positions to be part-time and they are with the understanding that it is HFI grant funding fully, and that could go away, seconded by DE. Motion carried 7-0.

STEVE HOWELL, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

a) Truck driver resignation/vacancy

Howell stated that he had an operator that retired, and this position needs to be replaced. Howell does not know if he will be hiring an operator or a truck driver, as he has four applications, and four truck drivers that want to move up to that position. Kelli asked that this would not require another position, and Howell stated no.

PB made a motion to approve the truck driver/operator position, seconded by SG. Motion carried 7-0.

b) Howell asked the Council about the take home vehicle policy that the County is going to start charging for. Howell stated that this involves nine employees, it has been part of the job for many years, and they are scattered around the county to respond quickly to trees in the road. The closest employee is dispatched to the downed trees to get lights flashing. BH asked that the employees are aware that they are on 24-hour call? Howell stated the employee gets a four-hour minimum when called out. Auditor Hammack reiterated that BH is asking that the employee can not turn down the opportunity or cannot tell Howell that they can not go. Howell stated they can respond that they are indisposed, and another employee is called. Howell further stated that it is for safety that the Highway department gets someone to a fallen tree.

On weekends, Howell stated he will drive county roads to view from calls he received regarding the condition of a road that he did not have time during the week to visit.

Howell stated that charging the \$3.00 fee to take the vehicle home is a pay cut, as taxes will have to be paid on it. DE stated that the State Board of Accounts requires this fee, as the County has not been in compliance for years. Howell asked if the County is now going to cut his employees pay because it was discovered, and Kelli stated that taking the vehicles home is a significant cost to the County to have nine vehicles going from their house to the job, and then back to their house, with cost of gas, oil changes, tires, and wear and tear on the vehicles. Howell stated he agreed with Kelli that it is, however the County could get sued for somebody hitting a tree. Kelli asked how many times someone gets called out for this, and Howell responded he tracks this. Howell is to get this information to Kelli.

Howell is asking the County to give these nine employees a raise to cover the additional taxes this generates, or for the County to pay their taxes, which he

stated would not be that much per person. Kelli stated the cost to the employee will be \$156.00 or less per year in taxes. Howell stated he hates to see these employees take a pay cut, and Kelli responded that this is the Federal government's rule. Once the County was made aware of it, it has to start following it. Hammack stated that a rotation for after hours calls could be looked at, and will be discussed at the next Personnel Policy meeting. The \$3.00 per day is for the commute, it has nothing to do with being on call. Kelli reiterated that it is not \$3.00 out of pocket, it is the tax on the that.

c) Insurance money

Howell stated he has spoken with several of the Council regarding taking money from the Highway department, and use it somewhere else, Federal Highway and INDOT money, which is gas tax money, is not to be taken to use at the Courthouse. That money is meant to be put on the roads. This was for \$84,023.06.

Howell stated he went all summer without two truck drivers trying to save up money where he could, as he is needing to get some trucks. The newest trucks are 2018, which there are three of them, and everything else is older. Howell planned to use this money, which would almost pay for one truck. He expects these trucks to cost \$125,000 each. Kelli asked if these are the dump trucks, and Howell confirmed this.

Kelli feels that the County needs to get a plan for those bigger expenses, and plan for the future.

Kelli asked Howell if he is talking about back in the Fall when there was money setting in the insurance fund, and the Council made the decision from any department that had money left over in their insurance, for it to go into the big insurance pool. It may say Courthouse, but it is not really for the Courthouse, it is for the insurance pool. This money was budgeted for insurance, not county roads. The appropriation was made to move this to the County Health fund.

MINUTES

a) 01.23.2025

SG made a motion to approve, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0-1 (BH abstained).

b) 01.31.2025

CF made a motion to approve as amended, seconded by DE. Motion carried 6-0-1 (BH abstained).

KRISTINIA HAMMACK, AUDITOR

a) 2025 Salary Ordinance-Approve Ordinance adding Solid Waste

Auditor Hammack stated that the amended 2025 Salary Ordinance was sent out to the Council, which is adding the Solid Waste as County employees.

DE made a motion to approve the Salary Ordinance with the additions of Solid Waste, seconded by PB. Motion carried 7-0.

b) Additional Appropriation Request:

- Pretrial Diversion – Prosecutor, Law Enforcement Donation
#2502.39104.00000-0009 \$10,000.00

Hammack stated this is to replace the transfer to Office Supplies that was done last month.

DE made a motion to approve, seconded by GG. Motion carried 7-0.

- Supplemental Adult Probation (SAPS) – Circuit Court, Law Books
#2100.45200.00000.0232 \$ 8,000.00

Hammack read aloud the explanation from the department head, which stated that due to cutting the line item in the County General for law books that are required yearly, they need to be paid out of SAPS once the amount in County General reaches a zero balance.

CF made a motion to approve, seconded by BH. Motion carried 7-0.

- General – Courthouse, Cleaning Services (for Prosecutor's Office)
#1000.31402.00000.0161 \$ 2,400.00

Glenn's Cleaning Service was the only cleaning service that was budgeted, however, the Prosecutor wants to continue their cleaning individually, as they have an employee who cleans.

- General – Courthouse, Social Security (for Prosecutor's Office)
#1000.12100.00000.0161 \$ 200.00

This is the social security for payment to the employee who cleans the Prosecutor's office.

DE made a motion to approve, seconded by PB. Motion carried 7-0.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Kelli stated the following Ordinances create particular funds within the EDIT funds.

- a) Ordinance 1: Establishing the EDIT – Major Maintenance Projects Restricted Fund
This Ordinance established the use of Edit funds for any lawful purpose including major maintenance of County owned properties and facilities.
- b) Ordinance 2: Establishing the EDIT – Courthouse Security Restricted Fund
This Ordinance is for any lawful purpose related to Courthouse Security.
- c) Ordinance 3: Establishing the EDIT – Jail Operations Projects Restricted Fund
This Ordinance is for any lawful purpose related to jail operations projects.
- d) Ordinance 4: Establishing the EDIT – Economic Development Restricted Fund
This Ordinance is for any lawful purpose for economic development.
- e) Ordinance 5: Establishing the EDIT - Highway Projects Restricted Fund
This Ordinance is for any lawful purpose related to Highway projects such as paving of roads.
- f) Ordinance 6: Establishing the EDIT – Special Projects Restricted Fund
This Ordinance is for any lawful purpose related to special projects.

Hammack stated that currently all funds are in one fund, 1112, and this will allow being able to see the balance of each individual line, and will eliminate manually calculating the amount in each category.

DE made a motion to approve the six new Ordinances, seconded by SG. Motion carries 7-0.

- g) Open Board Appointments
Hammack stated that on this day she received two letters of interest for the PETABOA board.

- Internal-Planning & Zoning Committee

DE made a motion to appoint PB to the Planning & Zoning Committee, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0-1 (PB abstained).

- Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals
Kelli stated there are two openings for this and it is listed on the County website. She further stated that based on State Statute, these appointments need to be either a Democrat, Independent, of Libertarian.
- Zoning Appeals Board
Kelli stated this is listed on the County website.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. CST.

CF made a motion to adjourn, seconded by SC. Motion carried 7-0.

Minutes approved this 27th day of March, 2025.

President, Perry County Council

Minutes reviewed by:

Kristinia L. Hammack, Perry County Auditor

Minutes prepared by:

Leisa M. Ecker, Deputy Auditor