

PERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MEETING MNUTES
January 25, 2024

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

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

Kelli asked that the AFG Grant be added to the agenda due to the grant opens on January 29th so the timing is very sensitive. She just received information from Indiana Region 15 on this date and did not want to wait until the end of February when it is due in March.

EW made the motion to accept with amendment, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a) There were no public comments

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) 12.28.2023

KH made a motion to approve, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0.

- b) 01.02.2024

SG made a motion to approve, seconded by EW. Motion carried 6-0.

KRISTINIA HAMMACK, AUDITOR

- a) Auditor Hammack gave an ending report as of 12/31/23 with the ending cash balances, which is the beginning cash balances for 2024. The General fund has an ending balance of \$1,486,100. The year actually ended ahead \$1,516,425. The DLGF (Department of Local Government Finance) recommends that the County has between 25%-35% of the budget on reserve. The County is very close with having 24.32% on reserve.

Auditor Hammack provided the Council with a printout of the cash balances for all the funds. She stated that all the funds are healthy. She further stated there are only three funds that are under the 25%, with several funds over.

DE asked Hammack if the 2023 balance included the interest earned of \$600,000 in the General, and Hammack confirmed it did. DE commented that interest rates have risen this past year. Hammack stated she gives credit where credit is due. She feels it was not being looked at diligently prior to last year. DE stated rates were low the prior years, and Kelli stated that if you don't look to find the highest rate, you will never get a higher rate.

Hammack provided the estimated ending balance, the actual ending balance, the percent of the budget on reserve, the estimated revenue for 2024, the estimated expenditures for 2024, and the estimated ending balance for 2024.

There are currently four grants that are reimbursable. Hammack stated that the Auditor's office has set up a system with all the departments to keep track, as these reimbursable grants do go in the negative, then the reimbursement is submitted for payment. With this system, the Auditor's Office knows when this money will be received. The County ended 2022 with sixteen negative funds, and 2023 ended with four negative funds, but they are all accounted for.

Kelli asked for clarification on the 1114 LIT, the \$2.5 million. She was at a City meeting and the Council member stated you can use the \$2.5 million for whatever. Kelli stated that it is typically set aside for the Jail; it is set up with restrictions. Hammack stated she is not familiar with this. Kelli stated that she did not want the public to think the County is sitting around with \$2.5 million that can be used for anything as it cannot, it is for the jail. DE stated that occasionally the County borrows from that fund, but they have to make sure they repay it by the end of the year. Hammack stated that in 2023 the County borrowed \$100,000 from this fund to get through until Spring Settlement; Cumm Cap was short.

When Spring settlement was received, it was put right back in that account. Hammack further stated that you can not carry a loan from this fund year to year. Hammack stated the Auditor's office has done some revamping regarding Accounts Payable this year. In past years, many contracts were paid out in a lump sum in January, so funds were drained. In 2024, all the contracts have been set up as quarterly or bi-annual payments where it does not drain everything in January. Kelli stated she would like to take a closer look at the funds to see if there is something that can be paid out of a certain account that in the past has been paid out of General. If there are some adjustments that could be made, possibly next budget session more money could be freed up. Also, if there are some funds that do not have restrictions, transfers could be made. Kelli further stated that the County has to do a better job of planning for such things as the ambulance service or big expenditures such as county vehicles; that way money is set aside and available. Hammack stated that she completely agreed. She and Kelli had spoken about this in September, and it's already 2024 and still talking about it. Hammack feels that the Council and the Auditor need to start budget planning in March; look into these funds and research them. Kelli stated she is going to start looking at each fund and check the statutes as to what is eligible and what is not eligible. Possibly there are items eligible that could be used to alleviate the General Fund; maybe there is somewhere there could be a tax break for the taxpayers. Hammack agreed that looking at the funds is a positive thing to do, and to look for opportunities

- b) Hammack stated that an encumbrance of funds can be done from 2023 in 2024 until the AFR (Annual Financial Report) is filed. There was an oversight in the Auditor's office as a bill was to be paid out to Baker Tilley for \$8000. That bill did not get put on the December 28th claim docket. Hammack discovered this and it is now set to go out on the February 5, 2024 claim docket. The \$8000 needs to be encumbered. Hammack has verified that this can still be done. Kelli asked Hammack about additional appropriations can not be done until March. She asked Hammack if something could be sent out to the department heads to make them aware of this. Hammack stated she has already provided this schedule for additional appropriations to department heads along with claim docket deadline schedule.

KH made a motion to approve the encumbrance of \$8000 to pay Baker Tilley, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0.

- c) Auditor Hammack stated that the County website is not very user friendly regarding navigating through it and being able to put things on it. You can currently click on individual departments, but they are not really updated and it is hard for the public to navigate. Hammack would like to take on this project to revamp the County website and partner with An Island, who takes care of the County's IT. Hammack stated with the current website, if an individual calls in and needs a form, it is easier to get the form and email it to them versus direct them to our website. DE asked if the County is receiving any complaints on the website, and Hammack stated it is not being tracked, but she receives many calls in the Auditor's office, and she is sure other offices receive calls as well. Hammack has spoken with An Island, and the County is looking at a cost of up to 120 hours out of the already budgeted amount to set it up, and then \$3000 per year afterwards, which this is for the domain and all the training. Anjan Kashyab presented slides of websites that An Island has developed. He stated that the County's website is not horrible, but just a bit older. He stated that with the current website, department heads can not upload anything to their page; it has to be shared to the Auditor's office and they upload it. He also mentioned that there is no support with the current website. With An Island's website, each department would be able to manage their own page. An Island had developed websites for the City of Tell City, Rockport, and Corydon which can be viewed to see the quality of their website. Kelli stated his company typically uses all the hours that are budgeted without building something like this. How many hours does he anticipate for building this website, and Kashyab stated just the 120 hours. Kelli asked what is their hourly rate if they exceed the budgeted 120 hours, and he responded \$75.00/hour. Kelli stated the Council will end up having to do an additional appropriation at the end of the year, and Hammack stated that any additional hours performed will carry over into the next year; unused hours carry over to the next year as well.

Kelli stated she likes that the departments would be able to upload forms making it user friendly, she is all for it, but asked Hammack if they cannot do that now? Hammack stated that currently if a department wants to update something on their page, they have to contact the Auditor’s office and have them put it on the website for them. The current system is a process to even get something added on the website. It takes multiple steps to get this done

SG asked what year the current website was created, and Hammack stated she did not know.

Kelli asked Hammack if there is a list of things that would be beneficial, or is that something the Council could help with? Hammack stated she is wanting to do something next year with the board appointments. She would like to create a form on the website that has all information from an interested person that includes name, email address, phone number, and with a drop-down box to check which board you are interested in. This can then be moved from the website to a spreadsheet. Kashyab stated that the current website is being maintained, it is not being managed.

Kelli asked if payments would be able to be taken online, and Hammack stated that the Treasurer currently takes property tax payments online. Kelli is wondering if other fees could possibly be taken on-line, like possibly the Clerk. Kashyab stated if there is a link with the State, then possibly this is something that can be done.

Kelli asked Kashyab why the \$3000 yearly fee when the County already pays a lump sum for hours? She said she understands if they go over the allotted hours for IT work, but just hates to pay another \$3000 in addition to contracted hours. Hammack stated the additional \$3000 is for the domain and all costs associated with the website. Kashyab stated An Island can work with the County to try and lower the costs. DE asked with the 120 hours to create the website, these hours will just come from the budgeted hours for 2024 and not cost additional?

Hammack reiterated that if An Island goes over the budgeted hours in 2024, the negative is carried over to 2025.

Kelli stated she would like to have a little time to review the other website An Island has created; she asked that information be sent to her and she can also look at the other sites.

Tara Lucas, Public Health Nurse Supervisor made a comment regarding having a website they can utilize, especially with the new HFI grant, it is pertinent to have a functioning website to get information out to the public. They currently rely on Facebook and have just now got their site back up and running.

Coroner Warren Taylor made a public comment regarding the board appointment form on a website.

Kelli made a motion to table this until the next meeting, seconded by SG. Motion carried 5-1.

- d) Auditor Hammack stated she had emailed information on the EDIT breakdown. While working on the budget with Baker Tilley last year, one thing they discovered is that the LIT and EDIT dollars are received together monthly. They were not being receipted into the EDIT Fund 1112. The County share of EDIT was going into 1112. Highway share of EDIT was going into fund 1112, the County share of Special Projects was going into 1112, Economic Development was being receipted in and expended from 1112, Jail Operations was going into 4927 and Courthouse Security was going into 1000. Hammack confirmed that expenditures were being paid out of 4927 and 1000. All of the EDIT dollars should be receipted into 1112. Hammack wanted to clarify and that it is noted that starting in 2024, all EDIT funds will be going into 1112. Hammack stated that at budget, on Form 4B, it did not pull all the EDIT over due to some money going into General and some into Jail Operations. Kelli wanted to verify that prior year’s historical data can still be viewed, and Hammack confirmed this. Hammack stated Baker Tilley discovered this when they were working on the budget. With everything going into 1112, you will be able to see all the EDIT.

SG made a motion to approve, seconded by EW. Motion carried 6-0.

- e) Health Transfers

• Health Department-Cash Transfer		
FROM:	4928 Medicaid Reimbursement	\$110,177.55
TO:	9167 Vaccine Reimbursement	\$110,177.55

Tara Lucas stated she had spoken with Auditor Hammack regarding taking accounts that nothing is being done with and combine them into one and close out the obsolete accounts.

KH made a motion to approve the transfer, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0.

- Health Department-Cash Transfer
FROM: 1168 Local Health Maintenance \$97,743.68
FROM: 9170 Trust \$4,821.50
FROM: 4101 Donation \$4,950.73
FROM: 4914 Sharps \$435.31
TO: 9123 Cash Carryover \$107,951.22

This is the same reason as above transfer.

KH made a motion to approve, seconded by EW. Motion carried 6-0.

COUNTY COUNCIL

- a) The contract for the Council attorney for 2024 was presented. There are no changes from last year's contract. Auditor Hammack asked if this contract is just to have Acchiardo on retainer, or if they have any questions on an as needed basis? Acchiardo stated it is for the Council meetings, and if someone has a question, or if he is needed to put together an ordinance. If there is something that is more involved, his hourly rate is \$225.

KH made a motion to approve, seconded by SG. Motion carried 6-0.

- b) Additional Board Appointment was discussed for the Personnel Policy Committee. DE always thought this appointment was a joint appointment with the Commissioners for the Courthouse additional appointee. Auditor Hammack stated this was the way it was done last year, but it was brought to her attention that this is not the way it is stated in the Personnel Policy. Kelli stated that the problem is it is not clearly stated. Who is an elected official as stated in the policy? Hammack stated the policy does say elected official, and what she has done in the past is that any interested elected official presents their letter of interest to her by January 19th, and an email was sent out on January 19, 2024, to all the elected officials. Kelli read the portion of the Personnel Policy that was being discussed. She stated that in the past, it was a joint appointment between the Council and Commissioners for the Courthouse Elected Official on this committee. Kelli asked who are the elected officials that are referenced in this policy? Is it every elected official in the County, or is it the joint Council and Commissioners set that appointment? County Attorney Acchardio stated he would have to review this. Hammack stated that the clarity she received was that last year it was Commissioner/Council appointment. Hammack was informed this year that this position is supposed to be appointed by the elected officials. The way it was done in the past is the exact same as was done this year; submit your letter of interest and Hammack created a Google form, where she did not know who voted for who, with a drop-down. There were two interested elected officials. She sent this out to every elected official whose vote came back anonymously and a tally is given of who received what number of votes. Kelli questioned if this is an Open-Door violation if voting on email? She stated that technically you are not allowed to do that. Hammack questioned would you have everyone come to a meeting to vote? Kelli is not saying if this is the right way or the wrong way to do it. Kelli stated clarification is needed to know what is the right way of doing this, and have the attorney research this to see if this was an Open-Door violation by voting on an email with a link. Acchardio stated he does not have the answer for them at this time. He stated that probably the best way to appoint someone to this advisory committee is to have the joint Council/Commissioner method. Hammack stated this is not all the elected officials; there are other elected officials other than the Council and Commissioners. The Council has two representatives, and the Commissioners have one representative, and who speaks for the employees and the other elected officials? Hammack stated it puts too much control with just the Commissioners and the Council. Kelli stated they pick someone from the Courthouse elected officials, they are not picking another Commissioner or Council member.

Kelli stated if it is all elected officials, then it should not state Courthouse Elected Official, as the Prosecutor and Coroner are elected officials not in the Courthouse.

SG made a motion to table until the County Attorney can review this, seconded by GG.

Motion carried 6-0.

- c) DE stated that the County met with Jared Stimpson, CEO of Perry County Memorial Hospital. In 2022, no billing for Ambulance Service fees to the County was sent for the last part of the year, which the appropriation rolled back into County General. The hospital is proposing that rather than go back and pay those invoices that were not submitted in 2022 of approximately \$200,000, the County purchase a new ambulance, and Stimpson will take off the \$200,000. DE stated after the purchase, the County needs to establish an amount to set-aside each year for the next purchase. SG asked what the cost of the ambulance is, and DE and Kelli responded \$240,000-\$250,000. KH stated the County is already behind the eight-ball due to not purchasing an ambulance for four-five years, so really should be looking at purchasing two. Kelli stated that they would like to have one now, and if the County could plan for the next purchase. Kelli stated the County could set aside amounts so that in three years, it would be able to purchase another ambulance, as this is responsible budgeting.

DE stated the County currently has \$50,000 that was encumbered from 2023, plus appropriated another \$10,000 in 2024, which gives \$60,000 and possibly use the \$180,000 from the Tribal Fund. Coroner Taylor questioned why use all the Tribal funds when other departments are in need of equipment? Kelli stated that with the Tribal Funds, you have to show that it is for use for the entire County, and the ambulance service would like to move on this as it takes such a long time to get one once it is ordered. She feels this is a perfect use of Tribal Funds. Since there is \$60,000 set aside, plus use up to the full amount of Tribal Funds which is between \$180,000-\$189,000, would allow to get an ambulance ordered. Then, the County can put in place a plan for the future for the next ambulance.

Coroner Taylor made public comment about Tribal Funds being used for this purchase.

Public comment was made by Cindy Taylor.

Kelli made a motion to use Tribal funds up to the full amount, if needed, for the ambulance purchase plus the \$60,000 already available to get an ambulance ordered, seconded by KH. Motion carried 6-0.

- d) Letter to LIT-Special Legislation Fund

This is just to change the language of this fund. When the jail was built, a tax was passed to fund the building of the jail and pay off the bonds. The taxpayers were over taxed and if it carried out for the thirty years, the county would have in excess of \$10-\$12 million. Then the first option came up to be able to pay off the bonds, the County did. It saved the County a million dollars in interest. The year prior to this, once the bond was paid off, it was to go to the Highway Department. The County went to the Legislation and had this changed to Jail. Now, they are asking to have this changed so that this not only goes to the Jail, but to Capital Projects for all the County buildings. Currently there is \$2.5 million in this fund, which is a restricted fund. There is another established fund through Local Income Tax that is accumulating approximately \$125,000 per year; after this year, it should have \$250,000. Hopefully this will help the County not have issues if it needs a new roof, parking lot paved, etc. We will have money to do what is needed. Kelli stated she feels this is better planning.

KH stated he feels it would be wise to leave \$1 million in that fund for the Jail.

DE stated this fund would still be for the Jail as well; it is for all the County buildings. Kelli stated she likes that this is a broader scope of what the funds can be used for.

DE stated the County is wanting to change the language, and getting this to Stephen Bartels will see that this gets passed.

Kelli made a motion to change the Special Legislation to All Capital Projects for the County, seconded by SG. Motion carried 5-1.

- e) 2024 AIC Legislative Conference

DE stated he added this to the agenda, but believes it is already past. Auditor Hammack confirmed this.

- f) Kelli stated that since the Budget Sessions and the Capital Expenditures for the EMS could not be funded, which were two Lucas devices, CPR assist devices for \$39,000, three C-MAC laryngoscopes for \$16,000, and four cardiac monitors for \$120,000. Kelli met with Brandon of Perry County EMS, and he stated these are the most important items needed.

Kelli has been looking for a grant or some opportunity to fund these items. She stated she sits on the Region 15 Board and asked them in the fall to help her watch for what type of grants are available. There is a FEMA AFG Grant (Assistance to

Firefighters Grant) that can also be used for EMS. The specifics that this grant can be used for that are listed as high priority eligible for EMS which are automated defibrillator and automated chest compressor. These are things that are currently needed. Kelli spoke to Region 15 asking for more information on this grant. They stated they would need the County's commitment by voting on this, and also need \$500 to fill out the application, and then if awarded the grant, it is 5% of the amount. If the County purchased the items the EMS listed, the total would be \$175,000 to ask for in the grant, and the County's portion would be the initial \$500 for the application, and then be required to pay 5% which would be \$8,750. There will be a small fee at the end if the County does get this grant due to Region 15 following up with the paperwork and the reporting.

Kelli would like to apply for this if the Council is okay with it. She further stated that the Council would need to know where the initial \$500 would come from, thinking possibly Riverboat. It's a \$500 gamble for \$175,000 for equipment. The application period begins January 29th, and ends March 8th.

SG made a motion to apply for the grant and the \$500 application fee be taken out of Riverboat, seconded by EW but requested to have three, three, and three of the items the County will purchase. KH stated it should be four, four, and four as they will have four ambulances on the road. Kelli will talk to the EMS and verify the amount they need.

Motion carried 6-0.

g) Attorney Liability

The County has received an invoice for \$800 due to a lawsuit filed against the County. DE stated that under Commissioner there are Consulting Fees of \$2,000 that could be utilized. He stated that he did not know if the Riverboat would be the place to take this from, as the total this lawsuit is unknown; it could be considerable. SG stated that at least \$8,000-\$9,000 needs to be reserved for the AFG Grant if taken from Riverboat. Kelli agreed that Riverboat would be good, but asked if the initial amount that can always be transferred back, or do they just pay from there as the bills come in?

Auditor Hammack stated there is \$3,000 in the Commissioner's budget for consulting. Past history this has been utilized. The County currently has the \$800 bill, and if taken from Riverboat to pay, you would have to wait until March due to needing an additional appropriation since it was not appropriated. Hammack stated that there can be an additional line item under Riverboat for Commissioner in the future.

This \$800 will be paid out of Commissioner General-Consulting Fees.

h) Conflict of Interest Statements are due January 30, 2024. For anyone who is a Board Appointee, these were sent out January 11th asking the appointees to complete and return to the Auditor's Office by January 30th.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m. CST.

KH made a motion to adjourn, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0.

The next scheduled meeting will be February 22, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes approved this 22nd day of February, 2024.

President, Perry County Council

Minutes prepared by:

Kristinia L. Hammack, Perry County Auditor