

PERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MEETING MNUTES
March 28, 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), Stan Goffinet (SG), Kelli Harding (Kelli), Keith Huck (KH), and Paul Malone (PM). Auditor Kristinia Hammack, Chief Deputy Eric Dickenson, and Attorney Rod Acchiardo were also present. There was no *News Representative* present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

KH made the motion to accept with amendment, seconded by PM. Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

SAMANTHA HURST, PROSECUTOR

a) Criminal Justice VOCA Grant

Prosecutor Hurst stated that this grant is applied for every two years. This grant funds the Victim Advocate Division. This has been a 70/30 grant in the past; this year it might be 68/32.

SG made a motion to approve applying for the Criminal Justice VOCA Grant, seconded by KH. Motion carried 5-0.

TARA LUCAS, PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE SUPERVISOR

a) Lucas stated that in October she approached the Commissioners regarding a request to apply for a \$10,000 grant through Indiana Department of Homeland Security due to it would require a building modification at the Armory Annex if they receive the grant. Lucas stated that approval has been obtain for the \$10,000 grant.

The total cost of the baby box itself is just over \$15,000, and the Health Department does have the funding in their Vaccine Reimbursement Grant to cover the remaining cost of the box itself, maintenance fees, contractor fees, and any fees associated with hooking up the alarm system that is required for the box. Lucas stated that at last weeks Commissioner meeting, she approached them again to let them know the grant was approved, has had multiple conversations with the company, and all three agreed that the County could press forward with this. Lucas further stated she is coming before the Council asking to proceed forward with. It will require no additional funds from the County; it will be completely covered and the yearly maintenance will also be covered.

Lucas provided statistics of baby boxes in Indiana, as well as infants that are dropped off and discarded by other means. She also stated that most surrenders do not occur in the county which the mother resides.

DE asked Lucas if she has the grant, and she replied yes. DE asked for a copy to be provided to the Auditor's office. DE also asked if this is a reimbursable grant, and Lucas confirmed this. Kelli asked how long before the reimbursement would be received, and Lucas stated that it is very quick from Indiana Department of Homeland Security. She further stated the box will not be put into production until they get paid due to the large expense. There is approximately an eight-week lead time from the time they get paid to the time it is complete.

PM asked where are the closest boxes to Perry County, and Lucas stated that Spencer County just received theirs in February.

PM asked what happens once the baby is placed in the box, is there an alarm or does it trigger a signal, and Lucas confirmed this. This box is temperature controlled and steps were taken to ensure that the box would be placed in the correct spot. Lucas further stated that this box comes equipped with a camera and that certain personnel will have access to this, being the Tell City Police Department and the Perry County Sheriff's office. It will also trigger an alarm to dispatch.

DE asked Lucas if she knows where she will fund the balance of this from, and she stated that it will be funded from the Vaccine Reimbursement Grant.

Kelli asked if reoccurring costs were minimal, and Lucas confirmed this. Lucas stated that there would be an alarm fee and a maintenance fee that will be covered by their Health First Indiana budget going forward.

Kelli made a motion to approve this grant, seconded by PM. Motion carried 5-0.

- b) Lucas stated her department is a quarter of the way through the building year of 2024, and they are making huge strides with starting to push out their programs. Lucas stated they do have some funding that needs to be switched around. There were two contracted employees in the 2024 budget, and did not get them hired and in place until early February, which left some funding in both of those line items in the January portion. She would like to transfer the School Liaison portion for January in the budget and split it between Office Supplies for School Wellness Packs and remaining \$533.33 into Operating Supplies for Car Seats. In addition, they are asking that the Sanitarian Assistant for the month of January go into Utility Services. It will be \$1833.33 from the 60% portion of the School Liaison in January, and \$2,275 for the Sanitarian Assistant for January. KH asked Lucas if everything she is wanting to do is OK with the State, and she confirmed this. Lucas further stated that this will continue to happen in the first year, especially in July or August when they know more about their Health Immunization Grant. Lucas stated they have a plan for this, but will have to come before the Council to ask for permission before the State will approve it. Kelli stated she is assuming Lucas is working on 2025 budget as well, and Lucas confirmed this. She stated they have the soft budget which is due June 1, 2024, and it does not have to be County Council approved, but it does have to be turned into the State saying this is where we think we are, knowing that it can be tweaked a little bit as they get closer to October.

Kelli made a motion to approve, seconded by PM. Motion carried 5-0.

- c) Lucas stated that in the original 2024 budget, they budgeted some of their emergency dental services and Lucas has worked with the County Attorney several times trying to figure out a good way to make that work. After speaking with the County Attorney and several other counties, if the county changes it to say Dental Health Kits:
1. They can reach a lot more people than what they can by keeping it the current way
 2. It would mean that they will actually purchase Dental Kits, which the Health Department has a fair in July, and be able to do more education by handing out kits.

This would give Lucas permission to not change anything with the funding, but to change the purpose of the funding from Emergency Services to Kits.

KH made a motion to approve, seconded by SG. Motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) 2.22.2024

SG made a motion to approve minutes as presented, seconded by Kelli. Motion carried 5-0.

KRISTINIA HAMMACK, AUDITOR

- a) Waggoner, Irwin, Scheele Invoice

Auditor Hammack stated she had spoken to them regarding a bill from them dating back in 2022. She contacted them and informed them she took office in January of 2023, the County has new Council members and Auditor, and they agreed to take off all the 2022 items. Hammack sent the Council a revised bill, and it is down to \$1,377.50. This is for work that they did in 2023 on the Personnel Policy Handbook. Hammack also talked to them and asked that the County be billed at least quarterly for this; the County cannot do this being billed in March of 2024 for bills back in 2022. This has to be taken back to the Commissioners on April 16th for an additional appropriation due to no money left in the Consulting Services budget. Hammack asked if this additional appropriation needs to come from General or Riverboat? SG stated he feels it needs to come out of General.

SG made a motion to take the additional appropriation out of General, seconded by DE. Motion carried 5-0.

- b) An invoice was received from American Legal Publishing, and Hammack stated the County paid \$495.00 last year out of Fund 1138, which is Riverboat. She

reached out to the company, and apparently the County has been under contract since 2020. This company takes the County’s Ordinances and uploads them to their site where anybody can search them, however nothing has been uploaded to this site since 2021. The Auditor’s office is utilizing Data Pitstop, which the County was paying for this previously and not utilizing it. Hammack is looking for direction as how she should proceed due to having two sites for the same thing. She further stated that the minutes are uploaded to the County website and also Data Pitstop, and she feels that the State is moving in the direction where everything will eventually be put on Gateway. Kelli asked if the actual Ordinances are put on Data Pitstop, and Hammack responded they are with the minutes. Kelli stated that with American Legal Publishing, they have a record of the actual Ordinances up to 2020. Hammack stated that she has spoken with Darren at Data Pitstop, and they can organize as they do the County’s minutes, the County’s Resolutions and Ordinances for no additional cost. Kelli mentioned that Data Pitstop is a public website, so anyone can get on it. DE stated he does not feel that Data Pitstop is very user-friendly. Hammack stated the County budgeted \$500 for American Legal Publishing service, and the price has increased to \$550. Kelli asked how long the contract is that the County has with this company, and Hammack responded it is an annual subscription. DE asked that the County budgeted for this service, and Hammack responded yes.

KH made a motion to discontinue the service of American Legal Publishing, provided Data Pitstop can add these documents, seconded by PM. Motion carried 5-0.

c) Transfers

Community Corrections

FROM: 9116.12100.00000.0232	Project Income Fund Social Security	\$ 117.86
TO: 9161.11902.00000.0232	Court Recidivism Grant Field Officer	\$ 117.86

This is a transfer to cover the remaining Field Officer salary for 2023. Moving the funds will close out the 2023 grant with a zero balance. Approval was provided from the State of Indiana Grant Authorities.

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

Highway

FROM: 1176.11109.00000.0531	Truck Driver	\$14,080.00
TO: 1173.11307.00000.0531	Temporary/Seasonal	\$14,080.00

DE stated that the Highway has a Truck Driver position open for a period, and the second Temporary/Seasonal was missed at budget time. Rather than doing an additional appropriation, they are wanting to do a transfer.

KH made a motion to approve, seconded by PM. Motion carried 5-0.

Highway

FROM: 1176.44105.00000.0533	New Equipment	\$ 6,000.00
TO: 1176.44701.00000.0533	Furniture and Fixtures	\$ 6,000.00

Highway Superintendent Steve Howell stated this is for the purchase of a new copier.

PM made a motion to approve, seconded by KH. Motion carried 5-0.

Cash Transfer (Loan)

FROM: Fund #1114	LIT-Special Legislation	\$200,000.00
TO: Fund #1170	LIT Public Safety	\$200,000.00

DE stated this fund is running a little short, and this is to carry the County through until Spring Settlement. Kelli asked if this is the fund that is changing, and DE stated this should not be a problem as long as it is paid back prior to the end of the year. Hammack stated that if the County has to borrow money until Settlement, this is the account that this is taken out of. Hammack spoke with the State Board of Accounts regarding this. After the Hospital payment of \$117,000 was taken from this, as well as the purchase of the new ambulance of which \$187,535.88 was taken out of Tribal, and left a balance in the LIT Public Safety fund of (\$325.75). She is still researching this fund due to many claims were paid out of LIT Public Safety on December 28, 2023; she believes some PSAP was paid from this.

KH made a motion to allow this transfer, seconded by SG. Motion carried 5-0.

d) Additional Appropriations

- General Fund: Circuit Court-Pauper Attorney

Kelli stated that the County is on pace with this to be at \$800,000 if this continues as it has the first three months. \$150,000 was budgeted, which has been used, plus this additional \$48,828.22 and only three months into the year. She asked the Council where they plan to fund this from when the bills come if for the rest of the year? She further stated that the County is looking at another potential \$600,000 or more, that was not planned for in the budget. DE stated that he feels it will be difficult to find funding if it comes to where an additional \$600,000 or more is needed.

PM asked Prosecutor Samantha Hurst how many trials has she has had this year, and she stated there have already been three jury trials this year. PM asked if they are included in what the County has paid out this year, and Hurst stated that the ones in January would have already submitted claims. She further stated there have been a lot of cases, and many big cases.

Kelli stated that during budget, it was discussed that crime is not decreasing, and the severity of crime is not decreasing, which is why she was adamant that the Council did not take money from the \$300,000 that was set aside, which she did not even feel that was enough, due to spending over \$500,000 last year. She further stated it was not responsible to take the money from \$300,000 down to \$150,000. There were comments made that we'll cross that bridge when we get there; they are here. Kelli is ready to hear the Council's ideas where this money will come from for the rest of the year. She further stated she was not in favor to lower the amount. She wanted to hear for the Council who were. PM asked Kelli where she proposed to get it from, and Kelli replied her proposal was to not do it in the first place and fund it properly during budget. She asked PM what was his proposal since he made the motion in budget, and he responded that there had to be cuts made. Kelli stated that needs should have been put before wants, and items the County is obligated to pay. She wants someone to figure out where the money will come from to fund this for the remainder of the year without a tax increase. DE stated that the County is restricted by the maximum levy, however there were several places that could be cut to achieve that maximum levy. This does not mean it was wrong to give salary raises, but at the same time the County is not meeting its needs that keep it afloat. DE further stated that Pauper Attorney is a huge expense in which the County is obligated by the State to pay.

SG stated he too was concerned about this at budget time, and now it has hit. The only way he knows of to get the money is to either raise taxes, which he is not for that, or cut goods, services, and maybe employees. Kelli asked Hammack if the \$48,828.22 brings to the County up to just the bills it currently has, and Hammack responded this is everything that she has received. Hammack stated that she feels something needs to be brought to the Legislators due to how are small communities supposed to fund this? Kelli stated that it was just passed in the last session where Perry County is included where the State will help pay for misdemeanors up to 40% for the test counties.

Hurst stated that there are options and that possibly the Judge could meet with the Pauper Board regarding counties that have full-time Pauper Attorneys, and this is not just in big counties. When she was meeting with Warrick County, they were getting a full-time Public Defender's office. What is helpful for the County is that you give the Public Defender their budget, and they have to work within that budget. She also stated that there are counties that have contracts, and at one time Perry County did have contracts, but with speaking to Judge Goffinet that did not work out well. The county then switched to a rate and Public Defenders bill based on that rate. Hurst further stated that there are full-time Public Defenders that are shared by counties in a certain region. DE stated that if the Pauper Board would consider one of these options, it would take lead time and there would be no immediate relief. Kelli asked if the county could still get a reimbursement with a potential full-time employee or full-time Pauper Attorney, and Hurst stated the County is still eligible for all the reimbursements that it is currently.

Hurst stated that by statute, whatever the Prosecutor and Judge earn, is what the full-time Public Defender has to earn. It is not cheap, but it is better than \$800,000.

Kelli offered that if a Councilperson is needed to help the Pauper Board to work through this, as well as Hammack. Hammack stated that currently there is no incentive to get these cases moved along; it is like they are being drawn out. Hurst stated she feels it depends on each separate attorney as some do not want to spend their time on Pauper cases and want to get those resolved.

SG made a motion to approve appropriation, seconded by PM. Motion carried 4-1. Kelli voted no as she would like to not take an additional and look within the budget to see what can be cut.

- General Fund: Circuit Court-Per Diem

#1000.13600.00000.0232 \$15,000.00

DE stated this was due to a rate increase. Kelli stated that \$3,000 was budgeted, and now an additional \$15,000 is being requested. She asked what the rate was and what it is now. Hammack stated that in the notes that were provided, this was to cover juror expenses for upcoming trials. The amount in the budget was prior to the passage of the higher juror compensation rates. These are expenses that have to be paid.

Kelli asked if there is somewhere else this could come from besides General. DE stated this would increase this expense from \$3,000 to \$18,000. Hammack stated that if they do not use the full \$18,000, that amount would stay in General.

SG made a motion to approve, seconded by KH. Motion carried 5-0.

- Riverboat: Commissioners-Software Maintenance

#1191.36500.00000.0068 \$17,048.49

This is for the new server that An Island has installed.

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

- Riverboat: Commissioners-Consulting Services

#1191.31101.00000.0068 \$1,954.50

This is for legal fees.

Kelli made a motion to approve, seconded by PM. Motion carried 4-1-0. KH abstained.

- Distressed Road: Highway County Road Improvements

#1218.44501.00000.0534 \$600,000.00

KH made a motion to approve, seconded by Kelli. Motion carried 5-0.

- LIT: Highway County Road Improvements

#1112.44501.00000.0534 \$700,000.00

Howell stated this is the EDIT money where they use part of it for Community Crossings matching funds, plus might have to use some on Brushy Fork depending on bids, and this pays for any other paving the highway does.

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

- Cumulative Bridge: Highway County Road Improvements

#1135.31209.00000.0531 \$26,736.00

This is for Phase 1A of the bridge inspection which will be 80% reimbursed. Kelli stated she viewed the bridge inspection on-line, and asked if what they found was fairly normal? Howell stated that there were many signs this past year, but everything else was fairly normal.

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

- Cumulative Capital Development: Courthouse Building Maintenance

#1138.36106.00000.0161 \$15,000.00

Hammack stated that this is not an additional. During budget time, the requested amount was changed from \$15,000 to 0.00 due to a misunderstanding when setting up the Building Maintenance fund with EDIT and LIT. She thought this would take the \$15,000 out of this budget and pay it out of EDIT and LIT. Council stated that EDIT and LIT were for big projects. However, the \$15,000 never was added back into the budget. Currently there is no account line to pay any of the building maintenance from. In addition, with the 2025 budget, she would like to propose the Council to make locations on this line item for the Courthouse. She feels it would make it easier to see how much is being spent on the North Annex or the South Annex.

With having no line item for this, which was discovered in January, it could not be added until after the Annual Financial Report was complete in March. For the total budget for Cumulative Capital Development, it should be \$281,500 and it is \$266,500. PM asked if this will carry this line item to the end of the year, and Hammack responded that this is the amount the Council budgets every year. She further stated that last year, the County spent \$13,353.

KH made a motion to approve, seconded by PM. Motion carried 5-0.

- General Fund: Courthouse-Utilities-Radio Tower/Greenwood
#1000.35105.00000.0161 \$240.00

DE stated this has not been budgeted for in 2023 or 2024. A new tower was added in 2023. Kelli stated she is wondering why this is not a PSAP expense. Hammack stated that the Council made an in-house transfer; Steve Hauser appeared before the Council and asked for this line item to be added. When the 2024 budget is prepared, 2023 budget is used as a reference.

Kelli would like this to be budgeted out of PSAP for next year, and Hammack made a note to include this.

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

COUNTY COUNCIL

- a) Baker Tilly Scope for assistance with 2025 budget

DE stated that the Council along with Auditor Hammack met with Baker Tilly for a question-and-answer session this month. There is an A section for the initial of \$30,000, B section is for \$20,000 annually, and C section is for items Kelli thought would to be included in Section A. There needs to be clarification on this. It appears that if the County would have any additional questions, it would fall under Section C and be charged additional. Hammack feels that Section C would be applicable if the County chose not to take Section A and B. DE also stated that during this presentation, Baker Tilly stated the cost would be \$35,000 initial, and \$15,000 annually. The paperwork received states the initial is \$30,000 and annually \$20,000.

Hammack will email Baker Tilly the questions that anyone has on these scopes. Kelli stated she feels that the County needs this assistance as it would be good for the financial health of the County and its future. Kelli wants a commitment from the Council that if they enter into this and pay this money, the County is actually going to follow it; the recommendations and the plan that Baker Tilly puts together for the County and how the County gets to their plan. She would like to see a Resolution due to this being a lot of money to waste if the County does not utilize this.

KH feels that if most of the Council is on-board with this, then Baker Tilly needs to come back and the can ask their questions.

SG asked how many counties are actually using this service, and Hammack did not remember Baker Tilly giving that information. SG stated he watched the live stream, and feels this program would also be an asset for future Auditors and Council.

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

- b) The Cumulative Capital Development Rate was discussed when Baker Tilly gave their presentation. They stated that the County was at the maximum levy and it could not be raised. The County was at the maximum last year as well. Baker Tilly informed the Council that it could be raised to .316 to .333 which would generate another \$20,000. PM and Kelli stated they are not in favor of doing this. Kelli wants to work through the current situation and see how the Council can be efficient with the current tax rate and not raise taxes.

Kelli made a motion to not advance any increases in taxes for the Cum Cap rate, seconded by KH. Motion carried 5-0.

- c) DE stated that back in 2020, the Council visited offices as a liaison to answer questions and build communication. A rotating schedule was presented to the Council. All Council members were interested in this except SG.

Hammack stated she thought having the Liaison schedule would help the offices and Council work better together and have a better budget session. She feels it is important that the Council knows what goes on in the offices and it will be beneficial when it comes to budget, seeing the needs and abilities of the offices. It will set lines for communication.

KH made a motion to put the Liaison schedule in place, seconded by PM. Motion carried 4-1.

- d) David stated that at one time there was an approved Ordinance for Grants, however a signed copy can not be found. He has a Joint Resolution for the Perry County Council and the Perry County Commissioners. DE feels that this resolution needs to be revisited, tweak it, and have the County Attorney look at this.

Kelli stated that she feels it is a good thing to be able to appropriate budget and know what the departments are applying for. If the grant is approved, the Council can use this information in the budget in the future.

- e) Steve Howell asked for permission to advertise for a truck driver due to being short a driver.

KH made a motion to allow the Highway Department to advertise for a truck driver, seconded by PM. Motion carried 5-0.

- f) The next regular meeting is Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 5:00 p.m., which will be held at the North Annex Training Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m. CST.

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

Minutes approved this 25th day of April, 2024.

President, Perry County Council

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