

**PERRY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**August 28, 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), Stan Goffinet (SG), Paul Brockman (PB), Gale Garner (GG), 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.

**AGENDA**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- a) Jim Carter, Animal Welfare Ordinance Discussion

Carter stated that on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, the Commissioners have on their agenda to approve the new Animal Ordinance. Once this is approved, the County Council can appoint an additional member to the Board. Carter presented a copy of the published notice from the newspaper that appeared on July 17<sup>th</sup>. This notice states that the County Council has two appointees, of which one is already in place.

Carter stated the Animal Welfare Board is trying to get a full board as soon as possible. Carter asked that the Council tentatively approve the advertisement of the additional board member for the Animal Welfare Board. Carter stated that when the board is a full complement of seven new faces and new ideas, he feels the board will get some things accomplished.

Kelli asked Carter that the members who are currently on the board, will they just stay or if the new Ordinance passes, will it clear the board and everybody starts over? She added that these current board members are already in the middle of their term. Carter responded that there is a difference of legal opinions, and he suggested speaking with the County Attorney regarding this. Carter assumes that those already on the board would remain on the board for another year. Carter added that in the publication, it states that the chair and the co-chair would be appointed in April of each year once they have the full seven members of the board. Carter stated the only problem he sees is where it states the chair and co-chair would be appointed in April of each year when the board has the full seven members of the board.

Kelli asked if this new Ordinance takes out the requirement that a Board member has to be of a certain club or a certain group, and Carter confirmed this. It can be a county resident.

BH made a motion of intent to allow advertising for an additional County Council position on the Animal Welfare and Control and Education Board with the requirement that the Commissioners approve this Ordinance first. SG stated that the published notice mentioned an Animal Control Officer, and the County does not have an Animal Control Officer. Carter stated that the Ordinance included the language of any other officer. Motion was seconded by GG. Motion carried 5-0.

**JOAN HESS, CLERK**

- a) Bonus/Stipend for deputies in Clerk's office

Hess stated it has been a tough year in the Clerk's office, but they are heading in the right direction.

Hess stated that Nancy Rennie and Kacey Dyer were the two Deputy Clerks that kept the Clerk's office going in really tough times. Many of the tasks in that office had to be figured out by the two of them, as Rennie was hired in February 2025, and Dyer was part-time for six months prior to becoming fulltime. There is not a lot of tenure in that office. Hess commented that these two individuals are two of the most cooperative and helpful people that she believes she has ever worked with.

Hess would like to show the County's appreciation to Rennie and Dyer. Hess did some preliminary work, and due to not being fully staffed, it appeared that as of this meeting date, which does not take in account for the rest of the year, her office is approximately \$18,000 below budget in the General Fund. Hess stated

she is not asking to replace the clerical position. Kelli asked Hess if she is not looking to replace that position next year, and Hess responded that it was included in her budget knowing once it is taken out, it will never come back. Hess would like to reward Rennie and Dyer with a one-time bonus. She has spoken with the State Board of Accounts and was told this is allowable. She was instructed by them on the proper way to do this, and it would take a motion or amendment to the Ordinance for the one-time which would change their salary. Hess was not asking for a permanent increase in their wages.

Hess wanted to publicly state her appreciation to Lacy Payne, who now works in the Prosecutor's office, for all her help. In addition, her appreciation to Prosecutor Samantha Hurst for allowing Payne to come to the Clerk's office and help as much as she did. Kelli added that Mandi Mogan also helped with the Clerk's office. Hess stated that the entire Courthouse has been extremely helpful. BH stated that Rennie and Dyer deserve this, as they have been put through it. BH asked Hess where these funds would come from? Would they come from the Clerk's Perpetuation Fund? Hess responded no, the General Fund as her office has not begun to spend all of the salary that was budgeted and approved. It would be moved mostly from the part-time clerical position that they do not have, and will not have for the rest of this year. BH stated that part of the effort to essentially cut out that clerical position was the upcoming situation that the Council is facing with budget. While BH does not disagree that these two ladies deserve this, what is the rest of the optics for the rest of the individuals in the Courthouse? Hess responded that she feels this is an unusual situation.

GG commended Hess for wanting to recognize Rennie and Dyer. When looking at all the department heads, the Highway department is down three truck drivers so everyone else is stepping up. He continued stating that if the County approves Hess' request, a lot of other departments might state that they have a similar situation.

SG stated he has been consistent of not giving bonuses or stipends during the year. He will continue to be consistent with that. Hess responded that she is aware that bonuses were given to some people in the Prosecutor's office. Kelli stated the Prosecutor is allowed to do this and it is nothing that the Council has to approve, as they are under State guidelines. Judge Lucy Goffinet can do the same.

Kelli stated her issue is the same as others on the Council. It is not that they do not deserve something. However, Kelli shares the same concerns, as the Sheriff's office is low on Sheriff's Deputies, and the issue is where does it stop? Kelli feels there are a lot of situations where departments run short. Kelli applauded Hess for standing up for her department.

No action was taken.

#### **STEVE HOWELL, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT**

##### **a) Open Positions**

Howell stated that he had a Grader Operator retire, and two truck drivers quit. He is requesting to fill those positions.

Howell stated that the truck drivers do not just drive trucks, they run tractors as well. In the summertime, they are mowing, and in the winter, they are grading. He has 16 people with a full crew, and almost 500 miles of roads. Howell needs to fill these positions in order to maintain the roads properly.

Hammack asked Howell what positions he has open right now, and he responded four truck drivers. For the grader position where someone retired, Howell moved a truck driver to the operator position. SG asked Howell that these are all budgeted position, and Howell responded yes.

SG made a motion to fill the positions requested by the Highway Superintendent. BH stated to Howell that he speaks of these positions doing double duty in mowing. Howell responded that there are a lot of days that instead of driving a truck, they are mowing. These individuals can also operate the smaller tractors. BH stated that the County is trying to pinch pennies. Howell stated these positions install coverts, and install one almost every day. The prior week, his department did not have enough people to have a flagman out while installing. Howell stated that there are not enough people currently to maintain almost 500 miles of roads. BH stated that Howell is requesting replacing three truck drivers, and asked if Howell could get by with only two? Howell responded it would shut other things down. Kelli stated that there was a gentleman who stated something regarding if you drive a truck, and are an operator, you get a little more? Are

these people operators half of the time and truck driver half of the time? Howell responded no. Kelli asked what is considered an operator, is it operating the big equipment? Howell responded yes, but anything that the Highway needs them on, but mainly the big equipment. Howell further stated that the truck drivers take a vehicle home with them, and have a saw with them in case there is a tree down on the road. Operators have to drive their own vehicles.

Kelli asked Howell about potentially putting together a spec to bid out for a local trucking firm to haul the rock back and forth. Howell responded that had been tried in the past, the problem with doing this is that the County does not get the rock where the Highway department wants it, and not the thickness that they want it. The Highway trucks haul eight tons, and when the roads are freezing and thawing, they themselves have trouble getting through them. If a 22-ton load is put out there, the truck will be on its axles. Kelli responded that is only when there is ice and mud; Howell stated that is when the rock is needed. Howell does not feel that the County could hire a trucking firm to haul the rock any cheaper than what his department currently does, based on having the equipment to do this. Kelli responded that the cost to replace these trucks and plus the cost to find and replace truck drivers. Howell responded that when they tried using a trucking company, it was spread too thick and then a loader would have to be sent out to move the rock. Kelli stated she thought using a trucking company might make the department a little more efficient.

PB stated he believes that Howell does need the help. Since he has been on the Council, the only calls he has received have been regarding the conditions of gravel roads. PB further stated that it is critical to get the rock, whether the Highway hauls it or it is contracted out. PB stated the roads are looking much better, and applauded Howell and his crew for all they do.

GG seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

- b) Howell stated that the Community Crossings has changed at the middle of the year. Howell asked permission to apply for this second grant. He thought it was going to be for \$400,000, however, it will be for a million. This will be for next year, 2026.

SG make a motion to allow, seconded by PB. Motion carried 5-0.

#### **STEVE HAUSER, EMA DIRECTOR**

- a) National Priority Grant

Hauser stated this grant is through the Department of Homeland Security, and can apply for up to \$150,000. This grant has to be tied directly to terrorism in some shape or form within the County's plan.

During the security meeting held the prior week, it was determined this grant would be geared more toward courthouse security type items. It was discussed to possibly get a metal detection type scanning unit, possibly cameras, and to update the entry system on the west side of the building. Hauser stated that the County may not be able to get all of this, as they do not have prices on any of this yet.

Kelli asked that with the metal detection scanning equipment, that she assumed would be for the front door, and asked if the deputy who sits at the front desk would man it? Hauser responded he did not have that answer, as that would be up to the Security Committee and the Sheriff. Kelli responded that the Council would need to know if this would require another employee. Kelli further stated that the County does not want to apply for this grant if it does not know all the details. Kelli asked Sheriff Alan Malone if the person who sits at the front desk, could they watch the metal detector? Malone responded no, there would have to be someone else and it does not have to be a fulltime deputy. Someone could be made a Special Deputy, which is what Dubois County does. The front desk deputy needs to be roaming, and into the courtroom. Malone feels that if the County ever gets to the point for the front door, which he thinks is needed, at least to get it in place and look further down the road at what things can be done with that equipment. Malone stated a Special Deputy with some special training could be put with this equipment. Kelli asked if a Reserve could be used, and Malone responded no, a Reserve can not be paid. The County could pay a Special Deputy.

Kelli asked Hauser if a paid person could be applied for in this grant, so that the County can have a part-time? Hauser responded that he could look into this, however, this would only cover this one year. BH added that after the one year, then the County would have the cost of that one employee in future years.

Malone stated it might be more conducive to hire several, so that the County would not have to pay insurance, etc.

Hauser stated that this grant is 100%, no County match.

b) Enduring Needs Grant

Howell stated this grant is through the Department of Homeland Security, and can apply for up to \$150,000. This is geared toward local needs. This grant has been applied for previously to update the 800 radios.

Hauser stated that the State is going to be doing statewide upgrades of the tower sites. Hauser does not have an exact date on these upgrades. Once these updates are made, the County will be required to update its existing radios. This will be very expensive. Hauser stated that most of the counties in the area, District 10, are applying for this grant through Homeland Security, to go ahead and upgrade their radios in preparation for this upgrade. If the County waits until the upgrade hits, the County will have two choices; find the money or turn the radios off, as they will not function. This grant would allow the County to be proactive in getting that upgrade already in place. These radios will cost approximately \$149,000 due to looking at approximately 100 radios. This would also increase the number of radios the County has for First Responders.

Kelli asked Hauser if he applied for this grant last year and got denied, did he receive a reason? Hauser responded that they will not tell you why. Hauser further stated that most counties did get denied last year.

Hauser stated that this grant is 100%, no County match.

GG made a motion to allow Hauser to apply for the National Priority Grant and the Enduring Needs Grant, seconded by SG. Motion carried 5-0.

c) AED/AED Supplies Grant

Hauser stated this grant is for \$2,000 and is a non-matching grant. It is for AEDs or AED supplies. This would allow the County to get one more AED, some additional pads, and possibly batteries.

Kelli asked if this is a local grant, and Hauser responded this grant is through EMS Commission, Homeland Security.

SG made a motion to allow Hauser to apply for the AED and AED Supplies up to \$2,000 with no match, seconded by PB. Motion carried 5-0.

Kelli thanked Hauser for getting the Rocky Point siren back up and operational. Hauser responded that the County should get reimbursed 75% of the cost.

## **MINUTES**

a) 07.24.2025

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

## **KRISTINIA HAMMACK, AUDITOR**

a) Abatements

Kelli stated that at the last meeting, the Council tabled tax abatements because there were a couple of questions. Kelli spoke to Council Attorney Rod Acchiardo regarding those questions.

One question pertained to page two of the CF1 form, where it stated that the County has 45 days from the time that the County receives the form to do something with them. Acchiardo stated he believes that the County would be okay with that, but the Auditor's office would need to make sure that when these are received, it is file stamped with the date. The other suggestion he made was as these abatements come in, go ahead and put on the agenda for the month.

Acchiardo did state that there was one question about the Envision Eye Care abatement not signed. Acchiardo stated that the form was stamped by the firm that prepared it, and if the Council was okay allowing them to sign it, then to obtain the actual signature. This was obtained on this date.

Kelli stated she checked all the abatements, and read the following aloud:

- There are 12 abatements with ATTC. There are two at 80% with three years remaining, three at 85% with three years remaining, one at 40% with two years remaining, one at 30% with two years remaining, two at 30% with one year remaining, one at 20% with two years remaining, and two at 20% with one year remaining.
- Envision Eye Care has one at 100%, and this is a five-year abatement. There is four years remaining, and it goes down 20% every year.
- Indiana Municipal Power is the solar field that is located behind Redemption Church, which was formerly the old Jr High. This is the last year at 10%.

SG made a motion to approve all the abatements, seconded by GG. Motion carried 5-0.

b) 2026 Payroll and Holiday Schedule

Auditor Hammack stated that as the County is going into budget season, these schedules are always done prior to going into budget.

2026 will be a 26-pay period. There will be a 27-pay period in 2027. There will be 14 holidays in 2026.

GG made a motion to approve the 2026 payroll schedule bi-weekly and the 2026 holiday calendar, seconded by SG. Motion carried 5-0.

c) Additional Appropriation Requests that were received by Auditor Hammack for advertisement 10 days prior to this meeting:

- General Fund—Circuit Court; Pauper Attorney  
#1000.31104.00000.0232 \$50,000.00

Hammack stated she has spoken with the Circuit Court and they are planning ahead. The County always pays out of the Pauper reimbursement fund first, which currently is at zero. The County is expecting another reimbursement which is close to \$37,000. There is right under \$53,000 in the General fund still available. If the appropriation is made, and if they do not have the bills to spend it, it will not be spent. BH stated that he feels that with the financial situations at this point in time, he does not see any reason why this discussion could not be tabled for another month to see how things go.

Based on the past monies expended so far this year, they should not run out of funds. A Special Meeting could always be called if it would be needed.

Kelli asked Hammack when is the last time an additional appropriation can be made, and Hammack responded the beginning of December.

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

- General Fund—Sheriff's Office; Part-time Officer  
#1000.12102.00000.0005 \$ 5,000.00

Auditor Hammack stated that this will cover the pay of part-time deputies since losing fulltime deputies, until vacancies can be filled and new deputies can be trained.

BH made a motion to approve the \$5,000 for the part-time, seconded by PB. Motion carried 5-0.

- Property Reassessment—Assessor; Office Supplies  
#1224.21100.00000.0008 \$ 2,000.00

Auditor Hammack stated that during budget reviews, this line item was zeroed out to balance the Levy funds, with an intention to do an additional after the first of the year. The Office Supply line item in General was only \$300.00, and Assessor Mendy Lassaline has already moved some funds to help cover the expenses.

Kelli stated that there is only four months left in the year, and this is for \$2,000. Kelli stated she would have liked to have a little more documentation what this would be needed for. BH added that the Council needed a little more detail when requests like this are presented to the Council. BH added that the Council needs to be more business like so that they can have adequate discussions to explain why a department's expenses are going up. This would allow the Council to be more aware of what is going on in their office, and also provides confidence that what the Council is being asked to pay is actually something that they should be asked to pay.

BH stated he is not questioning the appropriateness of this request by the Assessor; however, he wanted to have the confidence that a vote the Council makes is going to be for something that should be paid for. Kelli agreed with this.

Hammack stated that she did know that last year when the County was doing the budget in the public sector, there are the max levies. Hammack also remembers that last year, they were pulling threads to hit that max levy. Assessor Lassaline asked at the budget meeting to have this category cut in order to hit the max levy, the County has the cash balance to support that budget, however, the budget can only be raised so much each year. This is different than in the private sector, where the budget would be for every penny that would possibly be spent.

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

Malone stated that the Misdemeanant comes from when someone is sentenced to the Perry County Detention Center as a misdemeanor, the County does get money from that. Kelli asked that they serve their time there, and Malone confirmed this.

Kelli asked Malone if he asked for this in his budget, and he responded no, he cut his budget back this year. Kelli asked if it was included in the 2026 budget, and Jail Commander Ron Gibson responded the full amount was put in for 2026.

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

- Misdemeanant Fund—Detention Center; Meals #1175.39201.00000.0380 \$3932.39

Malone wanted to put the remainder of the Misdemeanant money received towards inmate meals, and hopefully this would get them to the end of the year, depending on population.

GG made a motion to approve, seconded by PB. Motion carried 5-0.

d) Funding of Courthouse Paving from Fund 4800--\$98,600.00

Hammack stated that this is an unadvertised request to seek a Motion of Intent. This request was from the Commissioners, and they are looking to approve the bid for the paving of the courthouse at their September 2, 2025 meeting. Their intent is to pay this out of the Capital Projects Fund 4800. The Commissioners are asking for a verbal intent to go ahead and move forward with accepting that bid on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Hammack would then advertise this, and at the September 11, 2025 Special Meeting/Public Hearing, this additional appropriation can be officially approved. This verbal will allow the Commissioners to accept the contract for the bidding.

Kelli stated she spoke with Commissioner Randy Cole on this day, and he had spoke with a gentleman with Libs Paving Company, Inc. Libs is ready to do this paving in September.

GG made a Motion of Intent to approve as requested, seconded by BH. Motion carried 5-0.

## COUNTY COUNCIL

- a) A Department Head 2026 Budget Listening Session will be September 3, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. at the Courthouse
- b) Joint Tell City Common Council/ County Commissioner/County Council Dispatch work session on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at the Armory Annex.
- c) A Department Head 2026 Budget Listening Session will be Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. at the Courthouse
- d) Public Hearing and First Reading of 2026 Budget Request is Thursday, September 11, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at the Courthouse
- e) There will be three days of Budget Session at the Armory Annex starting at 8:00 a.m. on September 16, 2025.
- f) The next Regular meeting is Thursday, September 25, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m. CST.

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

Minutes approved this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2025.

## President, Perry County Council

*Minutes reviewed by:*

*Kristinia L. Hammack, Perry County Auditor*

*Minutes prepared by:*

*Leisa M. Ecker, Deputy Auditor*