

PERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
December 18, 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), Cory Filley (CF), Gale Garner (GG), Brad Harth (BH) and Paul Brockman (PB). Auditor Kristinia Hammack, Attorney Rod Archiaddo and Sheriff David Faulkenberg were also present. There was no *News Representative* present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

CF made the motion to accept as amended, seconded by DE. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

a) Brian Herwig, EMS funding

Herwig stated he had been following Leonard Hahus with his request for EMS funding, and had some questions.

1. What did the County budget for EMS operations in the County fiscal year 2025?
2. What did the County spend for EMS in the County fiscal year 2025?
3. What did the County budget in County fiscal year 2026?
4. Knowing that the Commissioners went out for an EMS bid, receiving two bids, one for approximately \$800,000 and one for \$500,000, did the County place \$500,00 in its 2026 budget knowing that is the low bid received?
5. Was the hospital paid in full for their operating costs submitted to the County for the County fiscal year 2025? If not, what was the difference in those costs between what they requested and what the County paid?

Herwig stated there have been questions regarding funding and the bad debt.

Herwig stated that with the repeal of the Affordable Care Act impending coming out of Washington, the County should assume that bad debt is going to go up, as there will be hundreds of residents of Perry County that will be kicked off that. Wherever the County is with the budget, it is his suggestion that it is only going to get worse.

Kelli stated that this information will be emailed to him at the address he provided.

JONATHAN BLAKE, RJL SOLUTIONS

a) Monthly update

- Blake shared on the screen in the Meeting room the new logo that was adopted by the County Commissioners earlier that week.
The new brand identity will be shared across the entire county organization. It reflects the history of Perry County regarding agricultural, natural resources, and the generations of the families that have lived in Perry County over the years.
Branding guidelines will go out to all the departments. There is the primary logo, and the secondary logos that include each of the department names. Blake stated that the primary logo should be used on the website, and they have been working with An Island LLC to get it updated.
- RJL met with ATTC that day, learning more about their operations and what they do in Perry County. They did not share any immediate plans to expand.
- Earlier in the month, Blake sent a draft Tax Abatement Policy that was intended to get it on the Council's radar. The purpose of the policy would give guardrails and guidelines to go off of as RJL is evaluating new projects that come forward. Blake stated that they are by no means to be set in stone. It is intended to give RJL a path forward and an understanding both for economic development staff as well as applicants that may be coming to the community on what to expect. Further communication will come next month.

- RJL is continuing to communicate with Waupaca and their team, regarding the potential, or their request, for transfer of real estate. Blake stated that there are 61 acres south of the plant. There is some belief that they are entitled to that; RJL has not found anything nor have they been given anything that indicates that Waupaca is actually entitled to that land. Blake added that it would not be in the County's best interest to just hand over land if it is not required to. RJL has given Waupaca legal opinions as well as the opinion of the legal descriptions that were included in those agreements. RJL is waiting on a report back from Waupaca on what they want to do next.
- Blake spoke to a housing developer that is interested in bringing a housing project to the County; it is not too far from the courthouse. It is looking to bring 22 to 24 units of housing. RJL will continue to have conversations with them. They are interested in potential ready money for that.
- RLJ met with the Council of Aging, and RJL is going to be helping them with some grants to help their organization, both from an operational and capital standpoint, as the Council of Aging is looking to continue to provide services to the aging community in Perry County.

Kelli asked if Blake had any updates on the Webb Wheel expansion? Blake responded that he sent a text to the site selector on this day, and he told Blake that he was on his radar. Blake added that he does not know what that means, but the site selector expected to have an answer by now.

MINUTES

a) 11.20.2025

PB made a motion to approve, seconded by GG. Motion carried 5-0-1 (CF abstained).

KRISTINIA HAMMACK, AUDITOR

a) 2026 Salary Ordinance

Hammack stated that the 2026 Salary Ordinance is based off of the approved 2026 budget. Kelli asked if the Sheriff deputies have to be left on there, or leave them on here until the council replaces it with something else? Hammack responded the Council can do an amendment to the Salary Ordinance at any time. Hammack stated that this has to be approved in order to start payroll for January. Kelli asked that even if the Council comes back on December 30th and makes a change with something separate? Hammack responded that her office will not have the Salary Ordinance typed up ready for the Council to do on December 30th. Kelli stated that she will have it, anticipating presenting an Ordinance and a matrix that are together. Kelli stated that Hammack will have the figures before that meeting, as she wants her office to check them.

DE asked that with the Highway Restricted and Unrestricted, they are included together, correct? Hammack responded yes, they group together.

BH wanted to acknowledge the fact that Eric Dickenson told him that the Tell City Police Department has been helping the County with the Sheriff's matrix, and the Sheriff's Salary Ordinance. BH wanted to make sure Derick Lawalin gets some credit for working really hard with the County. He added that it has been helpful to Dickenson, as well as Sheriff David Faulkenberg. Lawalin deserves the respect that comes with his effort.

Kelli stated that when she added up how many deputies the County has, it is not the total that the County actually has. Hammack responded that some are paid out of different line items, as some are out of Public Safety. In addition, there is one out of Courthouse Security.

BH made the motion to approve, seconded by DE. Motion carried 6-0.

b) Requesting end of 2025 balances of all remaining health insurance appropriations to be transferred into Health Fund #5110 (not MVH Restricted 1173)

Hammack stated this is an annual occurrence. The County transfers the 2025 remaining appropriations for all of the Group Insurance to the County's health fund. This aids in building the County health fund, as the County is self-insured. The County pays the first \$60,000 for every individual who has insurance. Hammack added that this fund has been built up significantly over the last three years. Kelli added it has definitely raised and has gotten in a better position. Hammack stated that with HR/Payroll Deputy Kelli Wilgus finalizing the last payroll, the following will be transferred:

- General Fund- -Group Insurance
FROM: #1000.12300.00000.0068 County Commissioners\$ 29,336.05
FROM: #1000.12300.00000.0660 4-D Child Support \$ 26,655.19
FROM: #1159.12300.00000.0610 Health Department \$ 51,961.15
FROM: #1176.12300.00000.0533 Highway Unrestricted \$ 56,880.24
TO: #5110 Perry County Medical
& Life \$164,832.63

Kelli stated that these funds were budgeted for that purpose, and they are being put back into the big pot for that purpose. Claims for 2026 will come out of this big pot.

CF made a motion to approve, seconded by BH. Motion carried 6-0.

c) Additional Appropriation Request:

- General Fund—Planning and Zoning; Board Members
#1000.11102.00000.0101 \$ 250.00
Hammack stated that permits are booming, and this is needed for the board members that provide the service of getting the permits in the amount of \$250.00. This will zero out that line item for this week's payroll.

DE made a motion to approve, seconded by PB. Motion carried 6-0.

- General Fund—Planning & Zoning; Social Security
#1000.12100.00000.0101 \$ 20.85

DE made a motion to approve, seconded by PB. Motion carried 6-0.

- General Fund—Solid Waste; Liability Insurance
#1000.34200.00000.0506 \$ 22,033.00
Hammack stated that Solid Waste is now part of the County. With doing this, it changed their schedule of their period timing. In addition, while going through the policy, there were a lot of things that were not properly insured before. There will be discussion with Wes Terry as far as getting reimbursed for some of this, however, this bill needs to get paid now, as it is part of the County's insurance. The County's insurance period began September 1st. Kelli added that there are some credits that should be coming back due to the timing.

BH made a motion to pay, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0.

- Unrestricted Opioid Fund—County Council; Vehicle Supplies
#1238.23104.00000.0061 \$ 43,252.50
Kelli stated she, along with BH, GG, Dickenson, and Sheriff Faulkenberg met regarding vehicles, and the different types of vehicles. Faulkenberg received three quotes. Faulkenburg is wanting to go with the Durango, and handed out the quotes to look at.
Kelli stated that this was discussed at the budget workshop when the Council was talking about wanting to get one or two vehicles outside of the budget.
Faulkenberg stated that the quote that they are wanting to go with is John Jones. The base price is \$43,252.50. Other quotes were received from Thomas Dodge from the Chicago area, and Sternberg, which is local in Jasper. John Jones is out of Salem. Faulkenberg stated that John Jones is the cheapest, and Kelli added in stock.
Faulkenberg stated that the price quote for the outfitting of those, and it is everything that his department is thinking is needed.
Kelli stated that when Dickenson called Jones, they had three sitting on the lot. She asked Dickenson if they agreed to go ahead and take possession of three, can they do that and pay for the other two in January? Faulkenberg stated that they could do that. Faulkenberg added that Jones would take the County at its word if requested. Kelli stated that the Sheriff department would pull from their budgeted funds set aside in January to pay for the other two. Kelli added that with the outfitting, and it being truly what they quoted with no surprises, then there will be some money left over in the Sheriff budget. If so, the Council to look for other money to put with that to look at getting the fourth vehicle in the first of the year.
Dickenson stated that with information put together last April, and wanting to get rid of three vehicles, he would like to ask permission of the Commissioners to auction the three vehicles, as they are at service life.

- **Unrestricted Opioid Fund—County Council; Vehicle Supplies**
#1238.23104.00000.0061 \$ 12,074.05
This is for the upfitting of the above vehicle.

- **Unrestricted Opioid Fund—County Council; Vehicle Supplies**
#1238.23104.00000.0061 \$ 12,074.05
This is for the upfitting of the above vehicle.

- PSAP Fund—County Council; 911 Dispatch Services
#1235.38000.00000.0061 \$ 55,656.00

Hammack stated that when the County does its budget, it is based off of the numbers of the previous year due to not have the numbers, and more usually comes in plus a supplemental comes in. This is money received for dispatch, and by appropriating it, it can be sent out for payment. Kelli stated that this is the intent of this funding. She feels it is a good faith effort to show Tell City that the County does want to be good partners, and continue to increase its funding as the County can.

GG asked Kelli if there is more need for discussion with Tell City, and she responded yes. The last email she had from Mayor Chris Cail asked him to get with his Council, as well as Cannelton, to get dates that everyone could get together. Kelli does not believe she has heard back. She added the budget was set for 2026, and it will probably be a little low based on what the County will be getting in. The Council could only work with the numbers they had at the time of budget.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Crossing Fund—Highway Department; County Road Improvements 	#9141.00000.44501.0534	\$400,000.00
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Hammack stated that at the prior month's meeting, the Council made a motion of intent for this amount for Community Crossings. Kelli asked if this was a part of the paving, and Hammack confirmed this.

Kelli stated that the County did not get approved for 2026 Community Crossings first round. Commissioner Randy Cole received an email from the State. Originally, he was told that the State is giving less money this year for Community Crossings, but the County was not sure why it got denied, as usually it does not get denied. By receiving the full amount for 2025, there could have been some consideration for if the County would have received any in 2026. With Cole's email to the State, they sent a response that there was an application error, something with the road names. The State did not recognize the roads, so Kelli believes they have been communicating with Howell on how it can be corrected for July's submission. Kelli added that there is still a chance the County get funding next year.

- Property Reassessment Fund—Assessor; Cyclical Reassessment #1224.31500.00000.0008 \$ 2,230.00

Hammack stated that the amount of the appropriation was not enough to cover the contract. Hammack and Kelli spoke on this day regarding this, the contract was pulled, and the contract amount for phase one going from May, 2022 through April 20, 2026, is \$343,864. That amount divided by 48 months, and looking back at the history, the County has been paying \$7,163.83 per month which is the invoiced amount. Hammack looked back, and the original appropriation that was requested and approved for the 2025 budget was \$83,736. It was a little bit short of the \$85,965.96 annually that the County would need.

d) Transfer Request:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| • Cash Transfer | | |
| FROM: 1138 | Cumulative Capital Development Fund | \$200,000.00 |
| TO: 4800 | Capital Projects Fund | \$200,000.00 |

Hammack stated this was to repay a loan that was done at the beginning of 2025. This had to be paid back by the end of the year. Once Fall Settlement was complete, the transfer was done.

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- PB made a motion to approve, seconded by BH. Motion carried 6-0.

- CF made a motion to approve, seconded by DE. Motion carried 6-0.

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

a) Kelli stated that the County Council and the Commissioners are now accepting letters from residents who are interested in serving on any Local Governing Board for 2026. Letters of Interest can be submitted through the link on the website on the homepage titled “Submit 2026 Board Appointments”. The website is perrycounty.in.gov. Kelli stated that any resident who feels more comfortable emailing the Council or Commissioners can do so. Hammack requested that the Council and Commissioners submit that email to her as she is the official record keeper of the County. The deadline is December 26, 2025.

- The Commissioners Organizational meeting is Monday, January 5, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.
- The County Council Organizational Meeting is on Monday, January 5, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

b) A Special Meeting for the Sheriff Deputy Matrix and Ordinance is set for December 30, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Courthouse Meeting Room.

c) Kelli stated that there are three employees who are retiring at the end of the year that the Council wanted to thank. These individuals have many years of service. They are Steve Hauser, the EMA Director, Sandy Jarboe, the EMA Assistant, and Greg Hendershot, the Parks & Rec Director.

Minutes approved this 22nd day of January, 2026.

Leisa M. Ecker, Deputy Auditor