

**PERRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AND COUNTY COUNCIL
JOINT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
April 24, 2026**

The Perry County Board of Commissioners and the County Council met at 11:00 a.m., as was duly advertised. Commissioners: President Randy Cole (RC), Vice President Pam Jamniczky (PJ), and Rebecca Thorn (RT) were in attendance. Council President Kelli Harding (Kelli), Vice President David Etienne (DE), Cory Filey (CF), and Gale Garner (GG) were in attendance. Auditor Kristinia L. Hammack was also present.

The meeting opened with all present reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

RT made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by PJ. Motion carried 3-0.

RC stated that the reason for the Special Meeting was requested by RJL Solutions, and they are going to review past projects and tasks that have been carried out. There will also be a discussion for 2026, and some of the County goals.

RJL SOLUTIONS

- a) Jonathan Blake appeared via off-site. He wanted to highlight some of what RJL has accomplished over the last year (see attached Client Correspondence):
- Organizational Development and Leadership
 - Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)
Blake stated that he spoke to the Site Selector for Webb Wheel, and that project is still on hold.
 - Business Attraction and Development
 - Infrastructure and Planning Initiatives
 - Strategic Planning, Research and Data Analysis
 - Redevelopment and Local Project Support
 - Branding, Marketing and Communications
 - Community Engagement and Partnerships
 - Grants and Funding Efforts
 - Key Outcomes

Blake asked for feedback from the Commissioners and Council regarding what they are doing or have done.

GG asked Blake that as far as rural water, is there no money available? GG added that it is hard to imagine a community still going forward if they do not have good, clean water. Blake responded that RJL is going after the CFP funding. In addition, the Indiana Finance Authority has grants and loan programs as well. Blake added that sometimes, there can be a mix of a grant and a loan to address rural water. That would range from a new water tower, new fire hydrant extensions, and treatment processes. Blake stated that the funding for this is slow.

- b) County's biggest challenges they are facing in the next one to three years
1. RC stated that the County is working on the water, and without water in these key areas and in areas for the County to develop for commercial/industrial. No one will consider Perry County. In addition, there has to be some method of sewage disposal.
 2. RC stated the County has the opportunity to expand in other areas of the county, potentially poultry. The road conditions have to be addressed, as people do not want to subject their equipment to roads that are not suitable for transportation.
 3. RC stated that if the County was asked for a 59-acre site that is flat, suitable for a commercial/industrial development with infrastructure, and he was unaware of where the county would offer that. Currently the process has begun to fly the ground behind ATTC to determine the quantities that are there.

4. RC stated that the County needed to continue on the 60-acre tract at Riverview, which is where the Foundry and Webb Wheel are, to see if that is suitable for development.
 5. RC stated that there is the need to push out to I-64, with the proximity of the interstate makes that a desirable site.
 6. RC stated the County needs to explore every opportunity for any type of funding, whether it is through an actual grant or an actual loan.
RC stated that all the above makes a complete circle. He feels this is crucial to the County's growth.
 7. CF mention the need for childcare.
- c) Christy Powell, RJL Solutions
Powell asked that if there was one priority that keeps the Commissioners up at night, what that would be?
- PJ responded attracting new business and infrastructure
 - RT responded roads and water. In addition, internet service as well as cell phone service. Powell asked if there are any good maps that show places that do not have access to internet or cell? RC responded that he was sure PSC would have that information.
 - GG responded water.

Blake stated that in the community survey, 56% of residents had concerns over childcare, and asked if that would be something that could be discussed with the schools or a not-for-profit? RC responded that the schools, except Cannelton, has childcare in-house for their employees. Kelli stated there are some in-home licensed daycares that could possibly be a good resource to reach out to. RC stated that if an industrial group has a real need, then they should be a part of the solution. Blake stated RJL did a study with a five-county area in northern Indiana, and that model business plan could possibly be used to help get grants to allow people get back in the workforce. Blake added that in that study, it would put 1,200 people back in the workforce.

- d) Jonathan Blake
Blake discussed incentive tools to bring new development to Perry County. Blake suggested that the County develop a procedure for how the County would take a look at incentives for future projects. This would have a metric that the County is measuring against. RJL developed a sample policy. It does not have to be a formal policy that is adopted, but just having that as a guide would be good. Blake discussed the ability to collect money when a full tax abatement is given that can be put back into the Perry County Economic Development.
- e) Blake feels that it would be beneficial for RJL to be more heavily engaged with Redevelopment. It would be looking for opportunities for preemptive investment, and how RJL would be approaching redevelopment in the County. RJL's goal is to be supportive to the County.
- f) Remaining comments/questions
- Kelli stated that a couple years ago, the Redevelopment brought in other cities to give their priorities and things they would like assistance with. The Council and Commissioners were involved as well.
 - Kelli stated that the Economic Incentives Toolkit that RJL handed out was very good. Kelli asked how does the County communicate this to the people who want to make an investment in Perry County, that the County does not know about? She added what about the people who are retired and might want to start a business or invest in something, but have no idea this exists? Kelli asked how does the County implement this? Blake responded that RJL is going to be working with their marketing team to get content to be sent over to An Island to update the Economic Development page on the County's website. This Economic Incentives Toolkit would be something that would go on there. In addition, communicating this through social media.
Blake stated that to break that down into smaller parts, so that the people can start understand that information, giving examples of based on a type of business or investment, this is what the County can do.
 - RJL would like to bring down the President of the IEDC (Indiana Economic Development Council) to have a conversation with the Council and Commissioners, and help identify ways that Perry County can help engage more effectively with the IEDC.

Blake stated that he, along with Powell, will take all the notes and feedback received at this meeting to put a strategy together that is similar to last year with a timeline. Once that is received by the Commissioners and Council, Blake asked that he receive feedback.

The meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

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

Kelli Harding
President

Minutes reviewed by:

Kristinia L. Hammack, Auditor

Minutes prepared by:

Leisa M. Ecker, Deputy Auditor