

SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

REGULAR SESSION

PULASKI COUNTY COUNCIL

The Pulaski County Council met in regular session Monday September 9th 2024 7:00PM at the Pulaski County Highway Garage training room. Councilmembers present were Kenneth Boswell, Michael Tiede, Jeffrey Richwine, Sheila Hazemi-Jimenez, Jeffrey Richwine, Tim Overmyer and Jerome Locke with County Auditor Laura Wheeler.

Also present were Teresa Bryant, Joe Moyer, Brandi Larkin, Don Darda, Holly VanDerAa, AJ Gutwein, Jenny Knebel, Chris Brucker, Kelly Gaumer, Gail Lambert, Connie Ehrlich, Crystal Kocher, Dan Knebel, Mary Welker, Fred Rogers, Nathan Origer, Kevin Tankersley, and Chris Schramm.

Kenneth Boswell opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Council meeting recessed for a public hearing on the 2025 budget.

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING

The Proposed 2025 Budget read as follows:

Casino River Boat	\$100,000
County General	10,133,101
Reassessment	135,250
Police Pension	15,000
Courthouse Lease rental	1,132,000
Highway	4,685,115
Local Roads & Streets	260,000
Cumulative Bridge	385,000
Health	199,640
Cumulative Building	96,000
Jail Lease Rental	339,144
Aviation/Airport	231,340
Cumulative Cap Development	307,000
Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT)	1,825,795
County User Fee	28,300
Local Health Trust Account	5,000
Supplemental Juvenile Probation Services	15,000
Supplemental Adult Probation Services	66,300
Plat Book Fees	8,000
Local Health Maintenance	7,000
Drug Free Community	30,000
Pre-trial Program Grant	82,788
Community Foundation Grant	45,658
Veterans’ Court Grant	134,500
Court Interpreters	2,500
County Elected Officials Training	5,000
DRMO	5,000
Community XS MG-Highway	1,500,000
Statewide 911	271,421
Accident Reports #24	8,000
SIM-Opioid Grant	60,000
Firearms Training #31	15,000
Clerk’s Perpetuation Fund	5,000
Aviation Grant	570,000
Airport Improvements	15,000
Misdemeanant Fund	130,000
LIT-PSAP	739,121
Opioid Restricted	135,000
Opioid Unrestricted	41,000
VOCA Grant	86,180
BT Health Grant	6,130
Drug Court Grant	142,800
Identification Security Protection	1,700
Local Emergency Planning Commission	10,000
Health SB4	328,157
LOIT Public Safety. County Share	1,575,022
CARES-Local Health Department	42,500
American Rescue Plan	1,500,000
	\$27,461,462

Grants make up about \$5,000,000 of the budget. County General revenue estimate is \$8,900,000. If an HR Department is determined to not be working in a few years then Council would not fund this department and it would go away.

With no other public comment, public hearing was closed at 7:15PM and regular session reconvened.

IN RE: SHERIFF

9-1-1 Assistant Director discussed. There are currently 10 dispatchers, and one of these will be made the assistant leaving 9 dispatchers and 1 assistant. Michael Tiede made a motion to approve new 9-1-1 Assistant Director position at 5% increase, as of October 1, 2024 and Jeffrey Richwine seconded. The 5% is an increase over their wage as it is today. Motion carried unanimously.

IN RE: CDC

As of end of August, County has a current actual owner’s-contingency balance of \$408,709.76.

Final concrete pour for slab completed last week and the new vestibule concrete poured today. Bat removal finished Friday and guano-removal team is almost complete. Sheet-metal team has begun installation of ductwork for the HVAC sub and electrical, plumbing and masonry subcontractors are continuing their tasks. Masons are working their way around the building grinding out old grout as well as installing lintels in the building. Delta III was on site today to take markings to prepare for site-drainage work and the waterproofing materials should arrive tomorrow. Excessively rotted decking was discovered in one section of the flat roof and it was determined someone who previously did repair work put the flashing in backward.

CDC additional of \$100,000.00 to Professional Services explained. There is one final payment to make to the consultants for the regional entrepreneurship project funded largely through READI funds from Indiana Economic Development Corporation. This is a reimbursable-grant program, so funds must be expended and then reimbursed from both the Northwest Indiana Forum and other participating Counties. There will be one or two last invoices for the ongoing rebuild of the County’s website and possibly one or two more bills from Barnes & Thornburg regarding litigation pertaining to changes to County’s Unified Development Ordinance.

IN RE: CIRCUIT COURT

Mary Welker expressed her frustration with high humidity and water leaks in Justice Center roof. The humidity has been 60% ever since courtroom constructed and maintenance/contract have now decided that a dehumidifier should be added to HVAC. Light switch on skylight has gone out 3 times and it will be 30 days before replaced. Tuesday there was a tile down in jury room and water has gotten into the dry wall in the file room. There is a humidity issue in the entire Justice Center but not as bad elsewhere. Maintenance is a Commissioners issue.

IN RE: OTHER BUSINESS

Sheila Hazemi-Jimenez made a motion to approve all of the following transfers and advertised additional, Jerome Locke seconded, and motion carried unanimously.

TRANSFERS:			
-0009 PROSECUTOR			
From:	31100 Training	\$1,500.00	
To :	39300 Acquisition of Evidence		\$1,500.00
1173-0531 HIGHWAY			
From:	23300 Bituminous	20,000.00	
To:	23400 Hot Mix		20,000.00
ADVERTISED ADDITIONALS:			
	1112-0700 LIT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/CDC (LOANS)	100,000.00	
	8138-0232 PUBLIC DEFENDER GRANT	1,218.54	
	8139-0232 PUBLIC DEFENDER GRANT	3,096.42	
	2504-0232 JURY FEES/CIRCUIT COURT	(10,000.00)	
	2504-0201 JURY FEES/SUPERIOR COURT	10,000.00	

Jeffrey Richwine made a motion to approve and sign minutes from August 12, 2024 regular meeting, August 12-13, 2024 budget hearing and August 26, 2024 special session, Sheila Hazemi-Jimenez seconded and motion carried unanimously.

IN RE: BUDGET-HEARING DISCUSSIONS

EMA requested 65,000 for a new truck. Transmission in current vehicle is acting up plus vehicle is starting to rust out and needs repaired. Discussion followed as several councilmembers think new transmission would only be around \$6,000. Council decided to reduce equipment to 6,000 for vehicle repair and put part-time to \$8,000.

County Attorney Kevin Tankersley spoke about Human Resources (HR) Department. HR would help in interpreting employee handbook, disciplinary actions, training, guidance on health insurance, including retirees, gathering information for the boards. Employees and department heads need somewhere to go and much easier going to one person. The Sheriff and Tankersley recently spent 2 hours on an unemployment claim.

If cost of living adjustment dropped from 5% to 3%, it would save County \$90,000. There is also a 5 year-grant through representative Rudy Yakim’s office that could replace the current Navigator grant, which expires in June 2025.

County General is approximately \$1,100,000 over estimated revenue and is suggested to disapprove all additional employees/pay raises/funds for CDC, Surveyor, Clerk, Maintenance, Soil & Water, EMA, Community Foundation, and Probation with stipends paid as recommended by State and part-time wages increased by \$1.00.

Jeffrey Richwine made a motion to reduce EMA part-time to \$8,000 and equipment to \$6,000, Sheila Hazemi-Jimenez seconded and motion carried unanimously.

Jerome Locke made a motion to approve \$2500 stipends for Auditor and Clerk, but Clerk stipend if only on general election years. For 2025, only Auditor eligible for stipend. Sheila Hazemi-Jimenez made a motion to pay Auditor \$2500 stipend, Bradley Bonnell seconded and motion carried unanimously.

Michael Tiede made a motion for no new employees and Bradley Bonnell seconded. After further discussion Michael T. Tiede rescinded his motion. Sheila Jimenez-Hazemi than made a motion for no new employees, Michael Tiede seconded and motion was than rescinded by Sheila.

A special meeting to discuss budget set for October 1, 2024 at 9:00am in the Pulaski County Highway Training Room.

Public comment: Hiring a project manager discussed as well as outsourcing HR. Bradley Bonnell already checked into this and said it would be more expensive. Jenny Shank-Maxwell in Auditor’s Office and Fred Rogers in Sheriff’s Department have been doing most of the HR duties and would like to continue doing so. Another County was interested in teaming up on an HR project but it would be next year. Several people spoke up for the Navigator position.

With no other business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 9:03PM.

Approved and signed this 14th day of October 2025 by the Pulaski County Council.

KENNETH BOSWELL

MICHAEL TIEDE

JEFFREY RICHWINE

SHEILA HAZEMI-JIMENEZ

BRADLEY BONNELL

TIM OVERMYER

JEROME LOCKE

ATTEST: LAURA WHEELER, AUDITOR, PULASKI COUNTY, IN