BUDGET HEARING **AUGUST 18TH 2026**

PULASKI COUNTY COUNCIL

The Pulaski County Council met for budget hearings Tuesday August 18th 2026 at the Pulaski County Courthouse meeting room. Councilmembers present were Sheila Hazemi, Michael Tiede, Jeffrey Richwine, Albert Gutwein, Tim Overmyer, Bradley Bonnell with County Auditor Teresa Bryant. Councilmember Kenneth Boswell was absent.

Also present were Connie Ehrlich, Josh Stamper, Jennifer Knebel, Kathi Thompson, Gail Lambert, Daryn Wilder, Chris Schram, Carrie Aaron, Jennifer Keller, Laura Wheeler, John Kegarise, JoLynn Behny, Theresa Calloway, Richel Fox, Leann Wright, Nathan Origer, Karla Redweik, Roy Mullis, Marsha Tetzloff, Natasha Daugherty, Tabor Brown, Jennifer Johns, Gary Kruger, Larry Weaver, Nicole Clemons,

Sheila asked that department heads share current year versus requested budget, any significant increases, any new positions, any new equipment, their two to three top priorities.

IN RE: SHERIFF, CHRIS SCHRAMM AND CARRIE AARON

Wants Animal Control to be a full-time position. Can't keep a part-time employee. Chris has gone to each town in County and they have agreed to contribute for wages. Francesville: $7-10,000., Winamac: $7,500., Medaryville: $5,000., Monterey: $3,000. Chris wants a 3–5-year contract with towns. Deputies have been covering Animal Control with 500 calls from January 2025 to May 2026. Sheila asked why he was moving $20,000. into Fund 1170 LIT as this fund will be going away in two years. The $20,000. should be moved back to County General. Sheila asked if County has contract on 911 and Chris said no. Sheila would like for Chris to look into a written contract.

IN RE: SURVEYOR, JENNIFER KELLER

Only increase is 5% for wages but did add $5,000. to purchase a drone. There will be a longevity jump for First Deputy.

Break was taken at 9:28AM and session resumed at 9:36AM.

IN RE: AUDITOR, TERESA BRYANT

First Deputy (Claims) will be retiring end of year and Teresa's Transfer Deputy will be moving into that position. She has hired Stacie Fritz to be Transfer Deputy and she will start September 1st as part-time for training. Payroll Clerk will have a longevity increase and First Deputy will be lower as new deputy has less longevity. Teresa is in charge of Jail Lease budget 1184, which is based on the amortization schedule. She also has Fund 1181 Plat Book Fees which is being used to preserving old records, as required by Indiana.

IN RE: TREASURER, LAURA WHEELER

5% wage increase for her and first deputy plus $16,000. in part-time wages. State now mandates that tax statements have to be mail out even if there is zero tax due which will result in postage increase. Laura only attends state-called meetings. Doing online classes to meet state requirements of 15 hours annually.

IN RE: EDA PAYMENTS

Jeffrey thinks some of the money should go to Sheriff to work on preservation of the records in the basement of the Justice Center. Michael wants to give to the community—schools, libraries, community foundation. Bradley wants to invest the payments and then use interest. Sheila wants to spend it on the community. Albert would like to have meeting between Council and towns so they can let us know of their needs. Would like to invest it as there is no guarantee for the future. Tim asked if some of the money could be used on the Courthouse renovations. Sheila said yes but the bonds cannot be paid off early. Sheila said if money turned over to Community Foundation, they could pass on to non-profits.

IN RE: RECYCLING/TRANSFER STATION, JOHN KEGARISE

Landfill fees are up, increasing utilities. Sheila asked about the building and John said the recycling building is in bad shape but the shop roof had been repaired. Revenue is up 23%. Equipment is aging. John thinks the Solid Waste District may dissolve. Michael is on the board and does not think it is going away but it is struggling financially. Pulaski County gets $30,000. annually from District.

IN RE: CLERK/ELECTION BOARD, JOLYNN BEHNY AND BECKY MCCLEROY

Increases in paper products, now buying local from Webb Printing. JoLynn and Teresa went with a new postage machine for better prices on certified mail (saving about $2.00 each and sends out around 50 per month for the Courts). Required to attend 8 conferences annually. Next year will be an off-year for elections so JoLynn wants to purchase 40 new panels for voting machines. County's machine will be 30 years old. DeGroot will not be doing IT for elections, which will save $7,000./year. Sheila asked if they could do a rotation but Becky said models change every year so would create confusion. Bradley asked about the legislation changing to paper ballots and no longer requiring machines. JoLynn said it would take some time to get to that point.

IN RE: ASSESSOR, THERESA CALLOWAY

Danielle will have a longevity bump. Marcie and Theresa will soon be level 3, which involves pay raises. Wants Pictometry to get better updates. They fly every two years for $56,000. On a 6-year contract. There are some areas that are gated that they have not been able to access. Sheila suggested a drone to get info faster and Bradley questioned if Assessor could share with Surveyor

Break was taken at 10:49AM and session resumed at 10:59AM.

IN RE: SHERIFF, CHRIS SCHRAMM AND CARRIE AARON

Chris and Carrie asked to speak again regarding the statement that their budget increased $500,000. The jail budget has been separated from the Sheriff's budget this year. Carrie had PERF, Social Security and insurance as a line item in jail's budget and these items are actually paid through County General. Carrie put these items in the budget so she could track jail expense but was not included in their general budget.

IN RE: EMA, RICHEL FOX

Increased part-time wages from $8,000. to $13,732. plus all wages increased 5%. Fuel increased from $4,000. to $5,000.; training increased from $500. to $10,500.; $3,000. for call-out overtime; schools an extra $10,000. Training is needed to be eligible for grants. Needs new radios. Michael asked if LEPC money can be used for radios, Richel is checking.

IN RE: COMMISSIONERS, DONALD STREET JR. AND TERESA BRYANT

Health insurance only increased 3-4% this year, renewed August 1st 2026. Donald and Teresa met with property insurance agent in June. Will be looking into removing equipment/vehicles no longer in use as Donald expects a large premium increase on property/liability at December 31st 2026 renewal. Would like for County to have an HR position with funding coming from ARPA interest, approximately $280,000. With no HR position, County Attorney and Commissioners are handling most of the issues. IT Director wants to hire a full-time position, which would cut down on outside expense. Commissioners are looking at a plan for maintaining County buildings. County attorney is now under contract. Donald thinks all department heads should be salaried, not just elected. Last year increased fire departments from $5,000. to $10,000. and wants this increased to $15,000. Purchased new postage machine and certified mailings have gone from $6. to $2. Jacki Frain, Director of Pulaski County Human Services, talked about funding changes she is facing. Last year County gave her $40,000. and she asked for that amount in 2027.

Recess was taken for lunch at 11:43 AM and session resumed at 1:00PM

IN RE: COMMUNITY COUNDATION, LEANN WRIGHT

Thanked the County for their support which has allowed them to do Community programs. Asked for $10,000. from County General. Sheila asked about endowments and these are permanent investments for long-term sustainability. Their target return on investment is 6% but returns have been 10-14% the last couple of years. Some of the $10,000. will be used for leadership programs which will be provided free of cost.

IN RE: DRUG FREE COUNCIL, MARIE ROTH

Marie asked that the $30,000. Opioid funds be available for 2027 grants and the $39,972.36 in Drug Free Court fees be available.

IN RE: CDC, NATHAN ORIGER

State regulations require him to separate Economic Development and Redevelopment Commission/Economic Development budgets. He asked to reinstate the full-time Project Coordinator position. Goals are to complete the façade improvement grant and work with small

business. He is still catching up after working on the Justice Center and Courthouse projects. Total combined budget is $633,538.

IN RE: ZONING/BUILDING INSPECTOR, KARLA REDWEIK

Asking for increase in condemned building fund (from $40,000. to $65,000.). Has 18-32 properties in County that need attention. She would like to work from township to township cleaning up. Wants Tina Dunn's position to be considered Deputy Building Inspector and has lowered part-time help to increase Tina's pay accordingly. Karla estimates solar fees to be $960,000. She has charged solar for reimbursements and added additional 5% surcharge. In 2025 collected $144,106. and so far in 2026 collected $11,904. She is required to put her fees in a different account. Permits are good for 12 months.

IN RE: VETERANS' OFFICER, ROY MULLIS

Increased payroll. 2026 budget is $20,635. and 2027 is $34,692. In 2025, 601 veterans and current is 622. Widows and dependents has greatly increased. Increasing advertisement to get more veterans in the office. Also increased travel as more training required.

IN RE: RECORDER, MARSHA TETZLOFF

Only change is 5% wage increase and increase in dues/subscriptions $25.

Break was taken at 1:46PM and session resumed at 1:54PM

IN RE: EMS, NATASHA DAUGHERTY

Last year EMS was appropriated $1.2 million. Recently added bulk fuel tanks. In budget, added $10,000. for building repairs due to ADA changes. Would like to start a vehicle fund for a 2-year replacement plan. Michael asked about a medical director, but Natasha was not able to comment as this was discussed during an Executive session. Billing has brought in $513,326. Michael asked about "Kelly Day" and Natasha is waiting to hear from County Attorney Jacob Ahler.

During some open time, discussion held on having a Special Session Monday August 24th at 9:00AM to work on budget.

IN RE: IT, TABOR BROWN

Need to purchase a new server. Have VMware now, which used to cost $40,000. but will be $260,000. There is room in this year's budget for the new server. Tabor wants to hire an assistant to keep IT in-house. He figures $32.89/hour for 40 hours, which would be $68,410.20. If new employee wants family plan on health insurance, cost would be $83,359.05. This will allow County to cut down on Roeing expense, which has already been paid $196,266.35. The State offers some benefits that Tabor will look into.

IN RE: AVIATION, DARYN WILDER

Not as much revenue in fuel. Sells around 700 gallons/week in summer. Increased snow removal as pickup needs some work.

Break was taken at 2:23PM and session resumed at 2:49PM

IN RE: CORONER, JENNIFER JOHNS

Decreased Chief Deputy as not used much and moved to Alternate Deputies. Other Counties pay by the case, not hourly. Decreased lab supplies as get a lot of donations. Bio Medical charge has increased as well as autopsy fees. She needs one more radio.

Session was recessed at 2:54PM and resumed 9:00AM August 19, 2026.

Councilmembers present were Sheila Hazemi, Michael Tiede, Jeffrey Richwine, Tim Overmyer, Albert Gutwein , Bradley Bonnell with County Auditor Teresa Bryant. Councilmember Kenneth Boswell was absent.

Also present were Josh Stamper, Judge Mary Welker, Judge Crystal Kocher, Sara Kroft, Sandy Lucas, Natalia Gebkha, Charissa Estes, Kathi Thompson, Sam Williams, Josh Valteria, Larry Weaver, Edwina Guffey, Dr. Timothy Day, Gary Kruger, Kelly Gaumer, Michelle Fox, Michelle Fox, Abbey Berger

IN RE: PROSECUTOR, KELLY GAUMER

General payroll increased 5%. Changed account 10303 Secretary1from $45,080. To $42,081. due to longevity decreased as personnel change. Reduced overtime from $5,000. to $4,000. Increased oil changes, training, postage, travel. Longevity bump in 4D budget and 8140. Increased part-time as interns stayed longer this year (June-August). Kelly only has one grant—VOCA.

IN RE: SUPERIOR COURT, JUDGE CRYSTAL KOCHER AND ABBY BERGER

Main increases is in Public Defender (PD) as our pay is one of the lowest in Indiana. Superior Court usually has 4 PDs but only 3 right now. County will lose State reimbursement if number of PDs is low. Increased office equipment as seats in court need replaced. Have had 16 jury trials which is an increase over last year. Pulaski County is one of 12 counties receiving misdemeanor reimbursements. Current grants are reducing recidivism. 2027 goals are to continue are to continue with grants, reduce recidivism . Judge was told to talk to Nathan Origer about using some of the Courthouse project's left-over funds to purchase 8 new chairs. Crystal reminded Council that the State will try again to eliminate Superior but Circuit Court is mandated. Will need some audio devices.

IN RE: PROBATION, SANDY LUCAS AND JUDGE MARY WELKER

Take out account 11512 from fund 2100 as Sandy will not rehire for the position. Put $25,000. in overtime as had to use PTO before.

IN RE: CIRCUIT COURT, JUDGE MARY WELKER AND SARA KROFT

Salaries increased 5%, added some part-time, increased pauper counsel but decreased pauper counsel non-fee expense. Only about $9,000. increase. DCS has moved their office to Starke County. Franklin Williams is the Director of the local office. Had 31 cases working with DCS in 2024, 28 in 2025 but only 3 cases this year. This will affect CASA grant in 2028. All computers were updated this year. Received a grant from Community Foundation for Pre-Trial. The programs Circuit Court works with are JDAI, Pulaski Plates, CASA, 4D Grant. Prosecutor has only sent 6 cases to Circuit Court.

IN RE: EXTENSION, SAM WILLIAMSON AND JOSEPH VALTERIA

Joseph is in charge of regional operations. Budget is based on a formula with Purdue. Programs include 4H, Community Development, leadership, health and human sciences, building, tax and cash. Increased for Purdue contract but decreased other areas. Sheila asked about fees for 4H and state fees are $15. per person. They have scholarships to help those that cannot afford.

IN RE: HEALTH, EDWINA GUFFEY AND DR. TIM DAY

Due to State funding cuts, moved school liaison from 1161 to 1159. That employee also is the preventative coordinator and emergency preparedness coordinator.

Recess was taken at 9:23AM.

IN RE: SOIL AND WATER, NICOLE CLEMONS AND MICHELLE FOX

Have not had to use "rents and leases" as office in the USDA building.

IN RE: MAINTENANCE, LARRY WEAVER

Increased overtime due to pay increases. Had some estimates for roof replacement as Commissioners requested. Working on getting books out of Quonset. Wishes Council would do a wage review. Larry fixes 90% of issues. Jail has a lot of maintenance needs; humidity in Circuit Court and leak in jail.

IN RE: HIGHWAY, GARY KRUGER

Just received an email that Pulaski County will be receiving $231,066.54 for MVH and $15,328.49 in gas tax. Had wind damage this spring but deductible too high, so will come out of his budget. Cum Bridge in fund 1135 was reduced as 2026 budget had funds for 17 bridges and 7 have been completed. Can apply for Community Crossings September 1-30 for 2 big road projects. Sheila asked about applying for 2nd half of Community Crossings and Gary said we need wheel tax for that. Haven't been able to do road repair.

President Hazemi adjourned the budget hearings at 9:46AM.

Approved and signed this 14th day of September 2026 by the Pulaski County Council.

SHEILA HAZEMI

MICHAEL TIEDE

JEFFREY RICHWINE

TIM OVERMYER

ALBERT GUTWEIN

BRADLEY BONNELL

absent
KENNETH BOSWELL

ATTEST: Teresa Bryant
TERESA BRYANT, AUDITOR, PULASKI COUNTY, IN