

Gibson County Council Regular Session Meeting February 11, 2025

The Gibson County Council met in a regular session on February 11, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at the Southwest Annex Meeting Room.

Council Members Present: President Jeremy Overton, Vice President, Derek McGraw, Council Members: Jay Riley, Craig Schafer, Robert Schleter, Michael Stilwell, and Hannah Whitehead
Also present were Auditor Mike Watkins, 1st Deputy to Auditor, Kristy York, and 2nd Deputy to Auditor, Logan Vickers

The Council opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Approval of Minutes: The Council approved the January 14th regular session meeting minutes as written.

Acknowledgement of Clerk Reports – Council acknowledged this report.

Department Reports

Sheriff Vanoven - presented the reports to the Council and the jail is running an average of 106 inmates. They have conducted a new staffing survey according to the requirements of the Federal Lawsuit; they will be required to add 10 new positions. They have six openings in Corrections; an opening for one Deputy; and two openings in Communications; Community Corrections is fully staffed.

Health Department – Administrator Shade gave Council the monthly reports. They are going to increase food permit fees from an annual fee of \$50 to \$75, in line with neighboring counties. The state septic rule changed in July 2023; this will require a change to the County's Ordinance that will permit holding tanks. They are also going to implement an "installer registration". They feel this will help the department assist the installer with their septic system.

Hopkins Park – Michael Stevenson, Vice President, told the Council they have a letter of resignation from a board member. The other board members recommended that Shelby Cavanaugh be appointed by the Council. Councilman McGraw made the appointment motion, second by Councilman Riley. The vote was 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Jail Update – Owner's Representative Ballard told the Council that Parker Excavation is making major repair to the storm and sewer lines. They are working hard to get the Dispatch Center ready to go and they are working on a punch list to complete some unfinished tasks. Duke will reimburse the County approximately \$20,000 for installing energy efficient equipment inside the jail. Gibson Solar reimbursed the jail fund \$100,000 in March 2024 to help install solar panels on the Sheriff's Office. They hope to move into the new jail in March. Councilman Overton asked if there was a contract to maintain the water softener in the new jail; there is a contract for this service. All floors in Community Corrections have been refinished.

Prosecutor's Office Payroll & Job Descriptions – Prosecutor Cochren returned to the Council to request that the salary ordinance be changed from "secretary (2)" to "paralegal (2)". He also requests both salaries be equal to the Public Defender's paralegal. Councilman Schleter feels the public defender paralegal has several qualifications and he would like to ensure these two paralegals also have those qualifications. Councilman Schleter made a motion to accept the employees that have the qualifications; or give them six-months to become qualified and backpay if they receive the certifications. One of the prosecutor's employees meets the qualifications. Prosecutor Cochren feels there will be a cost associated with this. He feels they will need to go through coursework plus, he has an issue that two people will be doing the exact same work with different rates of pay. He feels law allows experience to sit in for education. Another concern is that future employment opportunities might cause a problem of not finding a qualified paralegal

because of the rate of pay being offered. The research he conducted showed the test at \$450; but he is uncertain about the cost of the coursework but feels it could be done online. The prosecutor has money to pay for the test and coursework. The prosecutor is wondering if the court reporters are certified. Councilman Schleter feels they should be certified if they are going to be paid the "Paralegal" rate of pay. Prosecutor Cochran does not feel the County requires that his paralegals have association into the Indiana Bar Association; he feels his paralegals are certified enough to work in his office. Councilman Schleter has a motion on the floor, but there was no second to the motion. Councilman McGraw asked if Prosecutor Cochran holds his "paralegals" to a certain standard. Prosecutor Cochran says his professional opinion is they both do their job over and above what is required. Council Member McGraw motioned to equal the pay between Prosecutor Cochran's department and the Public Defender's Office for the Paralegals with an effective date of February 11, 2025, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 5-3 with Council Members Whitehead, Schleter and Schafer voting nay. Auditor Watkins asked where this pay will come from. Prosecutor Cochran offered to pay the salary differential, FICA and PERF from Fund 2502 Deferral User Fee Fund.

Circuit Court Reporter Replacement – Judge Meade was present to discuss this replacement with the Council; no funds are required; he simply requests permission to replace at the same salary as the exiting court reporter received. The Council granted permission.

EMS Salary/Stipend for Salary Schedule – Arica and AJ were present to discuss this item. Attorney Spindler says they will have a meeting on Thursday to discuss math to make this new endeavor work. The proposal is to pay a "stipend" of approximately \$279 per week for Arica and AJ's administrative duties. An hourly rate of pay will need to be determined by combining the two positions to arrive at an overtime rate for the administrative duties. Attorney Spindler will present the plan to the Council once he has everyone's approval. The overtime rate while they are working the truck will not change. Arica and AJ are satisfied they can do this extra work; they will continue to be paid at their regular overtime rate until the salary schedule is revised.

Council Member McGraw made a motion to advertise for next month's meeting based upon today's conversation, and requests that Attorney Spindler bring the results to Council in March, seconded by Council Member Stilwell. The vote was 7-0.

Caseworker Additional Pay – Jessica Day, from the Prosecutor's IV-D office asked to add a Caseworker to the Prosecutor's HUB grant to supplement a salary. This money is received annually from the Indiana Attorney's Counsel to assist with special Prosecutor cases (there are three HUBs in Indiana). This is an hourly rate of pay increase; she is taking a current position on the salary schedule and raising the amount to be paid and paying it from the HUB grant. This individual will receive this extra money out of the HUB grant only; the extra money is tied specifically to the HUB Grant. The salary ordinance will need to be adjusted before this can change. Councilman McGraw motioned to advertise this item, seconded by Councilman Riley. The vote was 7-0.

System Navigator in Public Defender's Office – Public Defender Moody has received a 100% reimbursable grant for this new employee; she provided the Council with a copy of the grant. This employee will become a full-time employee of the County with full benefits. Public Defender Moody requests this employee be paid \$50,000. On the data collection part-time employee, the grant will pay \$14,560 per year. She asked the Council to state the rate of pay this employee could be paid. She went on to explain that the data must be timely and accurate, and she suggests the council approve eight hours per week at \$20 per hour; which would cost approximately \$9,000 per year and would be within the budget the state is allowing. If the grant goes away the data collection goes away. In 2026, this must expend out of the general fund (1000). However, this year it can expend through either the public defender's supplemental fund (1200) or the general fund (1000). This cost will be 100% reimbursed. She will notify the Council when/if the match decreases. The grant is a two-year commitment. Councilman Stilwell is hesitant to pay a rate outside the current salary ordinance parameters. She encouraged the council to allow the system navigator and pay rate, but she can roll with the flow on the part-time rate of pay. This will be an addition to the salary schedule,

which will be amended for the next meeting. Council Member Riley motioned to advertise to hire the system navigator at \$50,000 and do the salary amendment for Public Defender Moody's department, seconded by Council Member McGraw. The vote was 7-0.

Council Member Stilwell motioned to approve the part-time data collection person, set forth by contract at \$20 per hour, not to exceed the grant amount awarded, seconded by Council Member Schleter. This means this will be paid with 1099 without any withholding taxes. The vote was 7-0.

Overtime Line in EMA Budget – The Council suggested that EMA add an overtime line into their budget. Director McKinney has overtime hours from last year, that needs paid out. Auditor Watkins feels the comp time should be paid out at last year's rate but asked the Council where the money will come from. The Council suggests she spend the money and clean it up later. Director McKinney suggested that Council use the Public Safety LIT tax to pay the overtime, but there is no 2025 budget for this fund. Councilman McGraw motioned to create an overtime line in the EMA budget; it will start with a zero balance and transfers or additional can be made to cover the deficit; seconded by Councilman Riley. The vote was 7-0. The comp time payout from last year will be presented in a separate meeting. The Council suggests the comp time be approved with Commissioners before payout is presented to the Council.

NEW BUSINESS

Additional Appropriation for Cumulative Bridge Fund – Debbie Marvel and Michael Stevenson with SJCA were present to request an additional appropriation of \$460,000. This is so they can participate in the Federal Aid of Bridge #289 (\$250,000) and #74 (\$210,000). The federal aid projects are reimbursed at 80%. Councilman McGraw motioned to approve advertisement of this additional appropriation, seconded by Councilman Stilwell. The vote was 7-0.

2025 Salary Schedule Amendment #3 – Logan Vickers explained that this amendment is not going to work after all the changes during this meeting. A new amendment will be presented at the next meeting. Councilman McGraw motioned to table amendment #3 until next month, seconded by Councilman Schleter. The vote was 7-0.

Logan asked if he could start paying the medical director at the new rate of pay; the council wants to approve the amendment before changing the payrate.

Permission to Advertise Additional Appropriations

Cumulative Bridge Fund was approved to advertise earlier in meeting

	30000 Other Services/Charges	\$ 460,000
LIT Correctional/Rehab Facility	10000 Personal Services	\$ 3,240
	30000 Other Services/Charges	<u>\$1,552,438</u>
	Total	\$1,555,678

Council Member McGraw made a motion to approve advertising this additional appropriation, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 7-0.

Additional Appropriation Resolution

Fund 9143 Public Defender Pre-Trial Services Grant 10000 Personal Services \$ 3,000

Council Member McGraw made a motion to approve this additional appropriation resolution, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 7-0.

Encumbrances (Carry Forwards from 2024 into 2025)

General Fund	\$227,663.81
Non-General Funds	\$228,127.32
Total	\$455,791.13

Transfers

Fund: 1000 General Fund; Jail	from 10201 Corrections Officer	
	into 11300 Part-time	\$20,000
Fund: 1135 Cumulative Bridge	from 11801 County Engineer	

Fund: 1176 Motor Vehicle Highway

Fund: 1202 Surveyor Corner Perpetuation

into	33003	Professional Services	1,379.90
from	11801	County Engineer	
into	33003	Professional Services	\$10,000
from	11411	Registered Surveyor	
into	33002	Services & Charges	\$10,423
from	12009	Section Corner Certifications	
into	33002	Services & Charges	\$1,200

Council Member McGraw made a motion to approve all transfer requests, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 7-0.

Public Comments:

Randy Hall, Princeton is concerned about tax rates. Also, he is concerned that Toyota putting a battery plant in will cause a need for special equipment by fire departments and EMS. He does not feel the solar farms should receive tax abatements. Councilman Overton explained how the assessments are computed.


Gibson County Chamber Director Vanoven reported chamber day at the state house will be held on March 11th. A Political forum will be held on March 15 at The Ag Day Breakfast at the Knights of Columbus in Princeton. She invited all elected officials to get on the agenda to provide an update. The GO Gibson guide is printed, and a pdf version is available to download.

Councilman McGraw motioned to adjourn the meeting.


Minutes from February 11, 2025, meeting



Jeremy Overton, President




Jay Riley, Council Member




Robert Schleter, Council Member

Hannah Whitehead, Council Member

Attest: 

Michael A. Watkins, Gibson County Auditor



Derek McGraw, Vice-President



Craig Schafer, Council Member



Michael Stilwell, Council Member

