

Gibson County Council 2026 Budget Meeting – Department Requests July 08, 2025

The Gibson County Council met in Special Session on July 08, 2025, immediately following the Council's Regular Monthly Meeting (roughly 10:00 a.m.) at the Southwest Annex Meeting Room.

Members Present: President Jeremy Overton, Vice-President Derek McGraw, Councilmen, Jay Riley, Craig Schafer, Michael Stilwell, Robert Schleter, and Hannah Whitehead (absent). Also present: Gibson County Auditor, Mike Watkins and staff members Lynda Cumberland, Logan Vickers and Kristy York.

All department heads were given the opportunity to appear before the Council and present their 2026 budget requests. Most departments requested \$2 per hour raise increases.

Circuit Court – Judge Meade feels his 2026 budget is less because he is not going to hire a third court reporter, which eliminates \$72,000. They will, however, use part-time help and they want to increase this line to \$20,000 instead of \$5,000. He also requested that his court reporter's salaries match those of the Paralegals in the Prosecutor's and Public Defender's Departments. He feels his Court Reporters do more paralegal work than any other department, thus he requests they receive that differential plus any normal raise that other departments are receiving.

Surveyor – The Surveyor has requested his base pay be the same as other elected officials, plus the Indiana Code says a registered surveyor will receive a stipend for being registered. The stipend amount is one and one-half times the base salary. He submitted two different budgets for Council to review. He has requested that if Council does not agree to increase his elected official salary to match other elected officials, he will ask that the general fund pick up 100% of the registered surveyor instead of one-half being paid by fund 1202. He will also ask that the general fund pay 100% of the section corner certification line, rather than fund 1202 paying it.

Prosecutor – Prosecutor Cochren is requesting a 7% raise for his department to resemble rates in the private sector. In fund 2502, the Laserfiche line has doubled because of software updates.

Health – Administrator Shade explained that the 2026 Local Public Health money revenue will be cut to \$172,614 and they will use this money to fund their personal services in fund 1161. The remainder of the 2026 budget will be funded with their reserve cash in fund 1161.

Superior Court – Judge Krieg explained that there will be a lot of murder trials coming into the courts and this leads to other additional expenses. He worries that he has not budgeted enough to cover the interpreter services as he is trying to be as conservative as possible. He went on to mention that state paid prosecutor/judges would not see pay increases/bonuses, thus probation will follow with exception to one probation employee who will see an increase due to his number of years in service.

Magistrate – Judge Ricker requested that court reporters match the salary of Paralegals as they do the same job. Also, the Bailiff salary is based on that of a deputy.

Sheriff, Jail, & E911 - Sheriff Vanoven and Chief Deputy Ballard presented the budgets. They requested that the E911 Coordinator receive a larger raise than other employees. They budgeted for more Communications Officers. They plan to bring Captains back and they requested to add one patrol officer. They also want to increase the telephone line for the added cost of air cards. In the jail budget, they are requesting 30 Corrections Officers; Council asked them to fill the current roster of 21, then approach about making additions. They have been paying for dental care of inmates through whatever line had enough to support the cost and for 2026, it will have its own line. They will pay \$2600 per month for basic care, and they will perform the treatment at the jail. Council wondered if the old jail's utilities could be shut off. In fund 1222 Statewide E911, they requested adding two dispatchers to the Sheriff's budget so they have 24/7 coverage. Council asked to add one additional. Their maintenance cost also increased.

Public Defender - Public Defender Moody requested that her employees receive the same amount of raise as the Prosecutor's department, specifically the Administrative Assistant position. She told the Council they could adjust any line, except System Navigator; this is a line the state has agreed to reimburse 100%.

Probation – Amy Ellis did not have a lot of change to the general fund, but they are requesting a change in the 2000 Adult Administrative Fund. They are trying to purchase a kiosk with opioid grant funds, but this will create an added expense in their budget for maintenance.

EMS – Arica Cole and AJ Alldredge request to add six full-time employees to their roster in 2026. If this happens, they would like to add another ambulance, but this is not in the budget. They increased their uniform and oxygen lines. They added a public relations line.

Animal Services – Sharon Werne requested that Council allow additional funding to assist with adding one full-time employee and increases in pay. Because they will be in a new building that is three times the current size in 2026, they expect their utilities to increase and request additional money to support this. The budget request is \$408,101 above the current budget.

EMA - Director McKinny requested a raise because she feels she is working in three positions. She would like to add a full-time employee, but if Council does not approve this, she would like to add a part time employee. She is not requesting that Council fund both lines, only one or the other. The Council suggested that this department pay for non-working sirens from fund 1170.

Community Corrections – Shawn Brown presented a budget for fund 1122. They are changing things around this year and will use 100% of the grant money to pay salaries; they will use the grant money by October of 2026. This will allow them to use 100% of the grant without sending any back to the State.

Highway– Commissioner Lewis presented the budgets on behalf of County Engineer Holden. The highway department has added a certification stipend line to most of their funds. They will also be renaming some of their personal lines, but this will take place after the last payroll of 2025. They are requesting a new full-time position of Administrative Assistant/ADA/Title IV.

Their travel line increased as they intend to send employees to training classes. Their communications expenses increased as they plan to add four cell phones and install GPS on vehicles. They increased their rental of equipment line as they intend to rent a second broom during chip/seal season. They also wish to add a new chip/seal machine in 2026.

Commissioners— In the EDIT budget, they request to increase the special events line due to the labor day weekend festival. The County Engineer Expenses line is increased so the highway department can purchase new software. The Council would like to remove the Sheriff Department & EMS Equipment lines and move these amounts into fund 1170. The highway department also requested a line for a building so they can add an oil/tire changing area onto their building. It was discussed by Council that the new fund 1170 LIT Public Safety should have Commissioners turning in budgets and claims.

This session on budgeting concluded around 1:00 p.m. The next session will be held on July 15, 2025, following the Commissioners' meeting (approximately 10:00 a.m.).

Minutes from July 08, 2025 Departmental Budget 2026 Meeting

Jeremy Overton, President

Derek McGraw, Vice-President

Jay Riley, Councilman

Craig Schafer, Councilman

Robert Schleter, Councilman

Michael Stilwell, Councilman

Hannah Whitehead, Councilman

Attest: _____
Mike Watkins, Gibson County Auditor

