

Gibson County Board of Commissioners
Regular Session
September 02, 2025 at Southwest Annex

Vice President Montgomery led the prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners present

- Nick Burns, President
- Kenneth Montgomery, Vice President
- Chuck Lewis, Commissioner

Minutes - The meeting minutes of August 19, 2025, were approved as presented. President Burns called for a motion to approve minutes. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. The motion carried 3-0.

Claims - President Burns called for a motion to approve claims. Commissioner Montgomery made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. The motion carried 3-0.

Department Reports

Sheriff Department - Sheriff Vanoven gave the staffing report as follows:

- Deputy positions: Fully staffed
- Corrections: 5 openings; working 12-hour shifts
- Communications: 1 opening; part-time staff filling gaps
- Community Corrections: Fully staffed.
- Jail average population: 111 inmates

Weights/Measures - Director Dawson gave this report.

Soil and Water Conservation District - Dennis Simpson reported for the SWCD. They have an upcoming soil judging contest for students at the Roy Lynch Farm on September 9th. They have applied for six different grants.

Courthouse/County Buildings/Safety - Andy Schafer gave this report to Commissioners.

Veteran Service Officer - Director Pickersgill presented a report to Commissioners. He is working on a new project for the county called "Gibson County Hometown Heroes. This project will use the light poles around the Courthouse to hold banners honoring the local veterans. The target "kick-off" day is Veteran's Day, then the banners will be removed before winter to keep them in good shape. His plan is to rehang them around Memorial Day. The project is designed for families to buy into the program; the county will have a small amount to invest in fabricated double brackets and marketing the project. The cost of the banners will be approximately \$40, and banners will be returned to the families that purchase them. To buy in, there are no requirements, only that the veteran honorably served in some branch of the military. The first batch of banners will display special veterans. An anonymous donor will get the program off the ground; since this is a county project, banners will stay on county-owned light poles around the courthouse.

Highway Department – Engineer Holden provided this report.

- Completed work: Chip/Seal and overlay
- Upcoming work: shoulder stone and road striping for the newly paved roads; Community Crossings Grant Applications due October 1st

They are acquiring data assessment on hard surface roads. Engineer Holden feels the average paser rating will come in near a 7; the county needs to be above 6 to meet requirements on HB1461. He will have 20 miles of roads that will be paser rated 10, which will be a big help.

Jail Project Update - Owners Representative Ballard gave this report, the parking lot will be paved this week after some excavation work is completed.

Commissioners Old Business

Old Jail Demolition Package – Attorney Spindler advised Commissioners the environmental cost is still unknown. President Burns called for a motion to table the item pending further information from Three I Design. Commissioner Lewis made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion carried 3-0.

Toyota Perimeter Road Phase I for Community Crossing Grant– County Engineer Holden was approved by the RDC three years ago to pave this area near the end of the TIF. He is going to propose this paving be in two phases. Tulip Tree Drive would be phase 1; it is five lanes. It's only one road, but half the project. The TIF funds are allocated. He will go to the RDC meeting and provide them with an update. He feels 11,000 vehicles a day and the proximity to Highway 41, will be a good scoring project to run through the Community Crossings Grant. He is planning a 4" overlay in hopes that this paving job will outlast the present one, which is approximately 12 years old. They plan to do the milling and overlay during Toyota shutdown; they will provide good communication to Toyota during this project, as always. He presented a United Consulting contract to Commissioners; United Consulting will run this project and provide the required inspection.

President Burns called for a motion to approve the contract with United Consultants, Phase I. Commissioner Montgomery made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. The motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners New Business

Equipment Purchase – County Engineer Holden presented Sourcewell pricing on excavators; he recommends the County purchase the CAT M320 excavator through the Sourcewell pricing which complies with IC 36-1-7. Sourcewell is pre-approved government pricing. He explained that he would like to move forward on ordering as it will be six months before it is delivered. Payment will be made from next year's budget.

President Burns called for a motion to approve the purchase of the CAT M320 excavator through Sourcewell pricing. Commissioner Montgomery made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. The motion carried 3-0.

Pickup Truck Bids - Pickup trucks will need bids as there are no local vendors in the Sourcewell plan; Engineer Holden would like to start working on this, so the purchase is paid from the current year budget. He will put together a spec sheet for the bidding process.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to put out bids for pickup trucks, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion carried 3-0.

Patoka River NWR Land Acquisition Review – Heath Hamilton is with Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge. They have an approved acquisition boundary in Pike and Gibson Counties. They have been instructed to get "a no objection" from the County for continued use of their Land & Water Conservation Fund. They purchase properties inside their approved acquisition boundary, as the property becomes available. Their money comes from offshore drilling royalties. Commissioner Lewis has reviewed this request and confirmed with Mr. Hamilton that this is acquisition of land by interested and willing sellers; no one is taking anyone's land.

Attorney Spindler explained that based upon what he has heard, he thinks Commissioners would be inclined to grant the “no objection” if the acquisition is done through consensual cooperation with the property owners and not eminent domain. Attorney Spindler asked for a motion to this effect. Commissioner Burns made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion carried 3-0.

Citizen Comments

- Mark Fehrenbacher thanked Commissioner Burns for mowing a stretch of grass that is only mowed by INDOT twice per year.
- Chamber Director Vanoven thanked everyone for purchasing an envelope for their scholarship endowment fundraising project. The Isaiah Project ribbon cutting is September 25th at noon at the YMCA.
- Engineer Holden announced that according to INDOT website, SR 64 will be chip/sealed from the east side of Princeton to the west side of Francisco. This work will begin on Monday, September 8th and is slated for the entire week, in case they have weather to work around.
- Stacy McClellan, President of the Owensville REH Board would like to request Gibson County Coal TIF money for the Owensville REH Center floor replacement project. Commissioner Lewis motioned to approve the REH Board approaching the RDC to see if there is funding available for the replacement of the Owensville REH Center floor. The cost of the floor is unknown until they rip up the current floor. It could range from \$137,000 up to \$178,000. Commissioner Lewis asked if Commissioners had to set an amount. Attorney Spindler did not feel that an amount had to be set. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burns. The vote was 3-0.
- Todd McConnell lives in the area behind Toyota on CR 350 S. Mr. McConnell presented Commissioners with a signed petition dating back to 2023. This petition requested that Commissioners restrict the use of a stretch of CR 350 S between CR 100 E and CR 350 E (approximately 2.5 miles) for commercial hauling by 18-wheel tractor-trailer vehicles due to safety concerns of the residents in this area. He does not feel the road is designed for this kind of traffic and while Toyota did curb the traffic, they cannot control it. He feels there should be signage in the area instructing the trucks of the restrictions. In 2023, the Commissioners had agreed to install signs but did not. Commissioners have ordered speed limit signs for this road; however, they have not yet been delivered. Engineer Holden explained to all that he had submitted a grant application for projects like this. He said if they receive the grant there would be public input meetings. They will know about the grant next month and it will be a high priority. Engineer Holden feels if the grant is received, a safety action plan could be complete by summer of 2026. Then they will submit a funding request for the plan and start doing projects in 2026. He does not feel they can load limit the road as there are no bridges. He also feels the restricted access would be difficult to enforce as you would have to know the vehicle’s destination. County Engineer feels Toyota should reiterate to their vendors to stay on the state roads. Commissioners will try and contact google for the route removal from GPS. Mr. McConnell feels other counties prohibit this type of traffic. It is people that do not know the road that cause the problem; he suggested a “no thru commercial truck traffic” sign. The highway department will investigate this. Mr. McConnell feels waiting another 2 months is essentially doing nothing after they have waited two years. He felt that the solar construction security curtailed the traffic problem. Larry Michel wonders why they cannot have a twenty-foot county road. Engineer Holden explained this would require moving shoulders and acquiring new right-of-way, etc. Commissioner Burns wondered if there were any restrictions to installing no truck traffic signs. Engineer Holden feels it is a warning only, but not enforceable, but they will look at

installing some signs and speaking to Toyota. This item will be put on the agenda for next meeting to give Toyota an opportunity to be heard and time for everyone to consider this action.

Adjournment

President Burns called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lewis made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion carried 3-0.

Minutes from September 02, 2025 meeting



Nick Burns, President



Kenneth Montgomery, Vice President



Chuck Lewis, Commissioner



ATTEST: Mike Watkins, Auditor

