

Gibson County Board of Commissioners
Regular Session
October 21, 2025, at Southwest Annex

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

Commissioners present

- Kenneth Montgomery, Vice President
- Chuck Lewis, Commissioner
- Nick Burns, President (absent)

Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the October 07, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

- Commissioner Lewis made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion carried 2-0.

Approval of Claims

- Commissioner Lewis made a motion to approve presented claims, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion carried 2-0.

Department Reports

Animal Services - Sharon Werne

- Construction of the new shelter is progressing rapidly.
- Recent fundraisers include:
 - Knights of Columbus Pickleball Tournament
 - Golf Scramble at Oakland City Golf Course
 - Support from Best Friends (national organization) with animal adoption stipends.
 - Dick Clarks and Rz will be hosting give back days for the shelter.
- The Shelter was recently hosted by River Oaks and featured on the Lifestyles TV Show.
- Interim director is currently in place.
- \$348,000 was awarded by TIF to complete Phase I and begin Phase II.
- Goal: Move all animals into the new shelter by year-end.
- EMS donated supplies.
- Shelter is seeking gently used dog houses.

Gibson County Council on Aging - Director Colbert

- Expressed gratitude for access to highway department fuel.
- Served lunch to 68 attendees (maximum capacity is 70).
- Director Colbert reports the organization is doing well.

Highway Department - County Engineer Holden

- Provided updates on the Federal Bridge Projects.
- Submitted Community Crossing Grant application on October 3.
- Road assessments nearly complete:
 - Current passer average rating: 7.1
 - Newly paved roads receive a temporary passer rating of “10” for one year.
 - No roads rated “1” (complete failure); very few rated “2”.
 - County must maintain an average above a “6” to adjust MVH distribution from 50/50 to 40/60.
- Toyota perimeter road study begins next week.

- US 41 Southbound (near Fort Branch)
 - Evening closures starting next Tuesday (5pm until 4am)
 - One lane opens during the day
 - Expected duration: 4 nights

Commissioners Old Business

Jail Project Update presented by Owners Representative George Ballard

- Auxiliary Jail Parking Lot: Expected to be paved by the end of the month.
- Old Jail Environmental Study: Currently underway; results pending. Three I Engineering will host a meeting regarding the findings.
- New Jail Energy Incentives: Received an additional incentive from CenterPoint Energy totaling approximately \$35,000.

Highway Department - Truck Bids

- Bids opened by County Attorney Spindler
 - Faulkner, Princeton – GMC Siera 2500 Crew Cab: \$50,525
 - Ruxer Ford, Jasper – F250: \$50,652
- Attorney Spindler recommended taking bids under advisement for Engineer Holden’s review.
- Engineer Holden Recommendation: Approve the low bid from Faulkner.
- Commissioner Lewis motioned to accept the low bid from Faulkner, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion carried 2-0.

Commissioners New Business

Termination of Road Agreement with Peabody Midwest Mining & ALH

- Engineer Holden and Commissioner Montgomery reviewed the roads with Peabody and found them in good condition.
- Commissioner Montgomery confirmed the mine has met all road requirements.
- Attorney Spindler requested a motion to terminate Road Agreement 1838-000223-00.
- Commissioner Montgomery moved to terminate the road agreements, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. The motion passed 2-0.

Polling Location Changes - East & North Gibson Areas

- Clerk Sherri Smith acknowledged the longstanding contributions from polling locations and workers.
- To improve standards and ensure the safety and comfort of voters and poll workers, the election office conducted a thorough review and recommends the following changes for 2026 election cycle and beyond.
- East Gibson Polling Location Changes
 - Recommended New Location: Oakland City Community Center
 - Mackey Church Preschool Area
 - Current space is limited and shared with preschool children.
 - Proposed move: 7 miles to Oakland City Community Center.
 - Somerville Fire Department
 - Not a secure location.
 - Proposed move: 4 miles to Oakland City Community Center.
 - Francisco Lions Club
 - Difficulty retaining poll workers; facility not suitable.
 - Proposed move to Oakland City Community Center.

- Poll Worker Consolidation: All poll workers from Mackey, Somerville, & Francisco will be reassigned to the new location to avoid long lines.
- Public Concern: An audience member expressed concern about older voters' ability to travel.
 - Clerk Smith assured that voters will be educated on alternative voting methods.
- Commissioner Lewis motioned to follow the Clerk's recommendation and move the polling locations to Oakland City Community Center, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion passed 2-0.
- North Gibson Polling Location Changes
 - Recommended New Location: Patoka Methodist Church/Family Life Center
 - Mount Olympus Gym
 - Not secure.
 - Proposed move: 9 miles to Patoka Methodist Church/Family Life Center.
 - Hazleton Community Center
 - Low voter turnout.
 - Proposed move: 9 miles to Patoka Methodist Church/ Family Life Center.
- Poll Worker & Equipment Consolidation: All resources will be moved to the new location.
- Commissioner Montgomery moved to approve the changes, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. The motion passed 2-0.
- Additional Notes
 - These changes reduce Gibson County polling locations to six in total.
 - Clerk Smith anticipates the Secretary of State may recommend all counties transition to voting centers.
 - Gibson County remains precinct based with 32 precincts voting at 6 locations.
 - Voters will be notified of changes via:
 - Mail
 - Social Media
 - Newspapers
 - Radio

Changes to Solar Ordinance

- Attorney Spindler provided for public comment regarding proposed changes to the Solar Ordinance.
- No public comments or discussions were made.
- The item was tabled for future consideration.

Public Hearing on Proposed Parcel Division – Request from Elite Companies, Inc. FKA SPM Development

- Scott Buedel, representing Cash Waggner & Associates, spoke on behalf of Elite Companies.
 - A prior development with multiple homes and a central septic system was opposed and voted down.
 - Elite Companies retained ownership and are now proposing to divide the south-most portion of the northern section of the parcel into three parcels, ranging from 1.1-1.7 acres.
 - Each parcel is planned to have its own sewer field beds, though County Sanitarian approval is still pending.
- Public Hearing Opened by Attorney Spindler
 - Lonnie Burns, adjacent property owner to the east, raised concerns about:
 - Access to the new parcels.
 - Notification of flooding risks in the area.
 - Commissioner Lewis noted that flooding disclosures fall under disclosure laws, and Surveyor Martin will follow up with official answers.

- John Sprinkle, a neighbor on the east of Highway 41 questioned the impact on his property. It was clarified that the development is on the west side of Highway 41 and adjacent property owners are notified as part of the process.
- Commissioner Lewis recommended tabling the request until confirmation is received from the County Sanitarian regarding septic suitability.
- Commissioner Lewis motioned to table the request, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion passed 2-0.

LIT Money for Medic Four Turn Around

- EMS is not present
- Commissioner Lewis moved to table the request, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion to table passed 2-0.

Citizen Comments

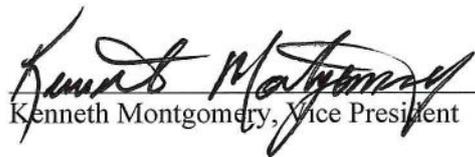
- Sunday, October 26: Purdue Extension will host a Trunk or Treat from 1-3p.m.
- Sunday, November 2: Hometown Heroes Program kickoff at 4p.m.

Adjournment

- Commissioner Lewis motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The motion carried 2-0.

Meeting Minutes October 21, 2025

Nick Burns, President



Kenneth Montgomery, Vice President



Chuck Lewis, Commissioner



ATTEST: Mike Watkins, Auditor