

**Gibson County Council
Regular Session Meeting
March 10, 2026 at Southwest Annex**

Council members present:

- President Jeremy Overton (absent)
- Vice President Derek McGraw
- Council Member Jay Riley
- Council Member Craig Schafer
- Council Member Robert Schleter
- Council Member Michael Stilwell
- Council Member Hannah Whitehead

Also, present were:

- Auditor Mike Watkins
- 1st Deputy Auditor Kristy York
- 2nd Deputy Auditor Logan Vickers

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of Minutes

- The Council approved the minutes from the February 10th regular meeting as written.

Acknowledgements

- Clerk's report
- Treasurer's report

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Presented by Arica Cole

- EMS provided an operations report.
- EMS is fully staffed; but one employee is retiring.
- They are hosting training for anyone in Gibson County.

Sheriff Department presented by Chief Deputy Ballard

- Deputy positions: one opening.
- Corrections positions: four openings.
- Communications positions: three openings.
- Community Corrections positions: fully staffed.
- There was an average jail population of 102 inmates.
- Home detention program has thirty-one people.
- They are developing a juvenile home detention program.

Health Department Presented by Administrator Shade

- The Health Department is actively working to purchase a new building with ARPA Funds.
- Opioid Settlement money is in the planning stages.
- They are providing mental health training for first responders.

OLD BUSINESS

Jail Demolition Project Presented by Owners' Representative, George Ballard

- The demolition package is advertising in the papers; bids are due March 16, 2026.

Wheel & Excise Tax – Presented by Engineer Holden

- No additional revenue has been added into legislation.
- Counties and Cities cannot stack wheel tax on top of one another.
- They are going to increase requirements on Indianapolis to receive their distribution, which might increase the money available for other entities in Indiana.
- They are giving municipalities until July 1st to adopt new wheel tax.
- Gibson County has not increased their wheel tax since 1985.
- The county is eligible for the Community Crossings Grant because we have a wheel tax.

NEW BUSINESS

Hiring Replacement/Additional Public Defender Attorney – Presented by Public Defender Moody

- The Public Defender caseloads have increased every year since the department was established in 2020.
- This situation requires her to request a new attorney, but she will only be adding a partial attorney.
- PD Moody is ranked as a 1.0 caseload, while the other four attorneys are ranked as .66 caseloads. Attorney Spindler does not receive health insurance, so he will step down to a .33 caseload and someone new will come in to take his .66 caseload and they will receive insurance.
- The cost for Attorney Spindler and the additional health insurance will be paid from the Supplemental Public Defender fund 1200 for one year only and then they will both move to the general fund in 2027.
- Public Defender Moody requests an additional appropriation for the partial attorney and the new insurance cost in fund 1200 (see the additional appropriations request to advertise).

Council Member Schleiter motioned to approve this change for 2026, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 6-0.

Councilman Riley expressed concern because we are only three months into the new budget and already requesting additional funds. The Council is also concerned with the 2027 budget and all the changes coming. They explained that her budget might not allow for the extra attorney in 2027.

Hiring of Assistant Surveyor – Presented by Surveyor Martin

- This request is due to an employee retiring; he does not need new money; it is in the salary and budget.

Councilman Riley motioned to approve the replacement of the retiree, seconded by Council Member Stilwell. The vote was 6-0.

Request Additional Appropriation in LIT Public Safety for Ambulance Base Internet – Presented by Commissioner Lewis

- The project used TIF money for construction, and they have a balance of approximately \$46,000. The quote for this project is more than the TIF project balance.
- They request this shortfall be paid from the LIT Public Safety Fund in the amount of \$35,000.
- See this in the additional appropriation request to advertise.

Council Member Stilwell motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 6-0.

Request to Hire Replacement Nurse at Health Department due to a Retirement – Presented by Juli Ellsworth

- Director Ellsworth would like this position to begin on April 13th.
- The additional funding request is in with additional appropriation request to advertise.

Additional Appropriations - Request to Advertise

1000-11909-0009 General Prosecuting Attorney Supplement	\$3,000.00
1000-31109-0201 General Superior Court Medical / Psych Exams	\$10,000.00
Council Member Riley motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Schleiter. The vote was 6-0.	
1159-12201 Health Public Health Nurse	\$6,800.00
1159-12307 Health Group Insurance	\$3,400.00
1159-10401 Health FICA	\$600.00
1159-12500 Health PERF	\$1,000.00
Council Member Schleiter motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 6-0.	
1170-43900 LIT Public Safety Fund EMS Equipment	\$35,000.00
Council Member Stilwell motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 6-0.	
1200-12102 Supplemental Public Def Service Trial Attorney Fees	\$30,000.00
1200-12307 Supplemental Public Def Service Group Insurance	\$25,000.00
Council Member Riley motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Stilwell. The vote was 6-0.	
1213-32800 GAL/CASA Advertising/Printing	\$3,000.00
1213-31206 GAL/CASA Volunteer Recruitment	\$2,000.00
1213-31107 GAL/CASA Volunteer Retention	\$1,500.00
1213-31301 GAL/CASA Mileage	\$3,796.00
1213-12303 GAL/CASA Overtime	\$3,318.00
Council Member Schleiter motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Riley. The vote was 6-0.	
1233-11298 LIT-Correctional/Rehab Facility Owner's Representative	\$6,500.00
Council Member Riley motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Schleiter. The vote was 6-0.	
4101-31803 Donations EMS Public Relations	\$999.00
Council Member Riley motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Whitehead. The vote was 6-0.	
4901-37103 Auditor's Property Endorsement Maintenance Contracts	\$18,000.00
Council Member Riley motioned to approve this additional appropriation advertisement, seconded by Council Member Whitehead. The vote was 6-0.	

Public Comment

Gibson County Chamber of Commerce Director Vanoven

- The Chamber invited elected officials to speak at the Farm Bureau Ag Breakfast Political Forum on March 14th; you can register at the Chamber to speak.
- There will be ribbon cuttings at Deaconess Procedure Center & Hucks on Broadway.
- The golf scramble will be at Princeton County Club on May 8th. See sponsorship at Go Gibson.

Councilman Schleiter –The County Council needs to appoint two people to the Redevelopment Commission. The current appointments are Bruce McIntosh and Phil Young. The Union Township Trustee has requested representation on the board and Councilman Schleiter would like to offer his

services. Councilman Schleiter motioned to replace Bruce McIntosh on the Redevelopment Commission, seconded by Councilman Stilwell. The vote was 6-0. This appointment will begin with the next RDC meeting.


Larry Michel – presented information to the Council. He is a taxpayer and a member of the Redevelopment Commission, but he is speaking as a taxpayer. He would like to improve the dialog between the Council, the Commissioners, and the Redevelopment Commission. The original TIF will end this year. He feels it is an important matter to discuss. He feels bringing in a new TIF for 25 years is too long.

Randy Hall, Gibson County Taxpayer – he feels the county is doing the best they can, but taxpayers of the county are struggling and moving out. He feels rent is out of control. Gas prices are higher in this county than in other counties. Also, he feels crime is up, he feels that adding housing is only going to add to the problems. He feels the response time for the police to show up is not acceptable. Councilman Riley says we are the 14th lowest in the state for property taxes; the county cannot control gas prices, and housing is expensive because it is in high demand.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Schleiter, seconded by Council Member Riley.

Minutes from March 10th regular meeting.




Jeremy Overton, President

Derek McGraw, Vice-President



Jay Riley, Council Member



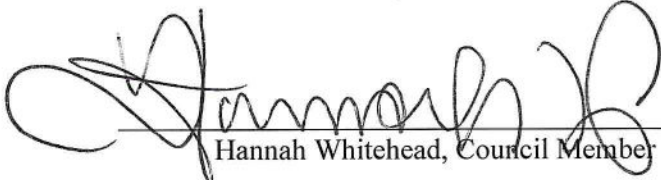
Criag Schafer, Council Member




Robert Schleiter, Council Member



Michael Stilwell, Council Member



Hannah Whitehead, Council Member

Attest: 

Michael A. Watkins, Gibson County Auditor

