

**PERRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 17, 2026**

The Perry County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m., as was duly advertised. Commissioners: President Randy Cole (RC) and Rebecca Thorn (RT) were in attendance. Auditor Kristinia Hammack was also present. There was no *Sheriff, Attorney* or *News Representative* in attendance.

The meeting opened with all present reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA**

RT made a motion to accept the agenda as modified, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

**VACATION OF SNYDER CURVE**

- a) RC stated that the Commissioners conducted a Public Hearing, where no one spoke in opposition to this vacation.

RT made a motion to vacate the Snyder Curve property, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- a) Steve Saalman, Soldiers of the Revolutionary War Monument  
Saalman stated that he is the County Historian, and has been given the task by the Indiana State Historical Society to create an event for the 1776 250<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of our country. He stated that a few counties have come up with the idea of erecting a monument for the Revolutionary War soldiers. Saalman stated that there are 45 soldiers.  
Saalman stated he has spoken with Veterans Officer Kevin Herp, and Herp stated that Saalman's group could get a grant through the Veterans Administration to pay for this monument, therefore, taxpayers would not be liable for this. Saalman is seeking permission to have this monument installed on the Courthouse grounds. RT asked Herp if this was the same monument that he wanted? Herp responded that it is the same Revolutionary War memorial.  
RC stated that the Commissioners have discussed this, and would like to see some type of drawing, size, or what it is going to be. Saalman responded that the individual who had this information did not show up to this meeting. There is a design. RC stated that depending on what the monument looks like and the size of it, possibly it could be put in and around the flagpole. That would provide the potential of illuminating it should the County decide to do so.  
RC stated that before the Commissioners would be able to approve anything, they would have to have some kind of an idea of size, shape, and what it is going to look like.  
RC stated that there is a Special Commissioner's meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>, and asked Saalman to get the information the Commissioners need to that meeting, as he feels they are all supportive of it.

- b) Operation Mind, Body, and Soul Corp-Veterans of Perry County-Opioid Settlement Decision  
Christopher Daniel Taylor, founder of Operation Mind, Body, and Soul Corp, along with Perry County Veterans Officer Kevin Herp appeared to check back with the Commissioners. Taylor stated that they had their ribbon cutting, and received a good response from the community regarding what they are doing and what they are wanting to do.  
Taylor stated that they have received their grant from Dubois County, which was \$26,000 and the additional \$26,000 will be received in three months. Taylor added that they are moving forward.  
RC stated the 2026 and 2027 are not good years for the County. The County Council has not contributed to any nonprofits at all in 2026. The Opioid fund has allowed the Council to pay for some bills that otherwise RC did not know where it would have come from.  
RC stated that this is a great idea, and hoped it all works out.  
RC stated that the County has to pay out in the docket in excess of \$20,000 to Pauper Attorneys. RC added this is a variable number that the County never knows, and has to pay for them. RC stated that this is not a good year to do this.

Herp stated that the Opioid money was not to bail counties out of having troubles with money. The Opioid money came down from the Federal government for organizations just like they set up, to help people from the opioid pandemic. Herp added that this has nothing to do with 'sorry we're broke, we can't afford to pay you or give the money because we need to make sure we have enough money.' This opioid money is not for that.

RC stated that if the County takes the unrestricted opioid money, it can be spent in many different ways. Herp responded he understood that, however, there is \$100,000 in the Restricted fund, and this is what they are concerned about, which is for this organization's target group.

RC stated that the Council did quite a bit of research on the opioid money before they gave it to the hospital for the EMS Services. Herp stated that this group is coming before the Commissioners to ask for money from this opioid settlement to provide services for the veterans, first responders and their families in this county. Herp added there is \$100,000 sitting in the Restricted account and asked RC if he was saying the County will give this organization zero? RC responded that the County pays approximately \$120,000 for mental health, and there are other programs at the Health Department, plus other health services.

The Council has cut everything in their budget, but RC stated that Operation Mind, Body and Soul Corp can go to the Council and ask them. The Council even took money that was excess in other accounts to make the budget balance. Herp asked if this was a Council decision or a Commissioner's decision? RC responded probably both. Herp added that the Commissioners made the decision in Dubois County. Auditor Hammack stated she had spoken to Herp previously, and since this organization is looking for a contractual agreement, then that would be the Commissioners. After the contract, then it would have to go to the Council for funding.

RC stated that he is glad they received funding from Dubois County, and referenced that Dubois County has four times the assessed valuation that Perry County does. Taylor responded that the money would not even be in the County if it was not for the lawsuit against Pfizer and all the big pharmaceuticals for opioid misuse. Herp added that everyone on their board has been touched by opioid somehow, therefore, this organization is determined to get this money. RC stated that the APR money, the Tribal fund, the CARES Act fund, none of that was brought out of Perry County pockets, other than Perry County recipients pay Federal taxes, and that is where the money came from. RC added that the County used that money a lot to patch spots. Herp responded that the Opioid money did not come down to bail out the County; it came down to help people. This organization is determined to make sure that it does help people, not buy a Sheriff vehicle. RC responded that it is the Council that put the Sheriff's vehicle program together.

RC stated that there are stipulations on what the Opioid money can be used for. There is Restricted and Unrestricted Opioid, and there is a whole list of things that they can be used for. RC added that this organization appears to probably be one of them, but there are numerous other areas also. If the County really had the ability to spend it, and it is not this year, then the prudent thing for the County would be to say it has X number of dollars, and it is looking for options. The County would then let people in the community come forward and give their proposal of what they are looking to do. This would be similar to what the County did with the ARP funding.

Herp asked RC what his plan was with \$100,000 in the Restricted account? RC responded that he did not have one. Herp asked then why is it just sitting there? Let's put it to work to help people. Taylor stated that there are guidelines and restrictions for the use of Restricted Opioid money.

Several personal comments were made from the audience as to the reason this organization is so important, and the effect it has not only on the veterans or first responders, but also their entire families.

RC responded that no one had stated that this cause is not worthwhile. With the EMS, where when they make a run to a location and the person does not get transported, then there is no revenue. RC was asked by someone in the audience is that would happen with or without the opioid settlement sitting in the fund? RC responded yes. He was then asked that the County would pay for it with or without the opioid settlement money? RC responded that the County would potentially have to raise taxes, or something in some fashion in order to compensate. RC was then asked if he thinks that as taxpayers, they would not

interest in paying \$.50 extra so that organizations like this can get funded? RC responded maybe so, and maybe that is an initiative to come in and support possibly a whole group of areas. RC stated that he was told no long ago, that if the County is going to collect taxes from that person to give to nonprofits, then the County is charging that person too much for taxes. That person felt like they needed to contribute to the organizations that they want to.

RC reiterated that he thinks what this organization is doing is positive, and it is a good thing. It is just the funding end of it. Taylor responded that he feels the hospital needs to work on their insurance billing. Herp stated that since 2021, over 600 veterans have switched their care to Perry County Memorial Hospital. He had Congressman Messmer in his office a few weeks ago. Messmer stated that Perry County Memorial Hospital is by far the best rural hospital in the State of Indiana. Herp added that he hears RC talk about the hospital, and need to do this and that, however, the District Congressman stated that Perry County has the best rural hospital in the State of Indiana. Herp asked why does the County have to keep throwing resources at it if Perry County has the best? The VA is paying the veterans doctor bills at Perry County Memorial Hospital, which is millions of dollars coming into the county through veterans. Taylor stated that all this organization is asking is for the County to give a little back of the money that was given for this cause. Spencer County Veteran Officer stated that by Herp getting the hospital approved, he can bring his veterans to this hospital which brings a lot of money into Perry County from Spencer County. Spencer County veterans bring in approximately \$7.5 million per year in benefits from the army in just VA benefits, direct and indirect. This includes the Audiologist and the doctors. Herp stated that with the millions of dollars coming into Perry County since 2021, this organization is asking for a little help for the veterans, first responders, and their families, which accounts for 30-40% of the county population. He added that this organization's target is almost one-half of the county population. Herp stated that the County has \$100,000 in the Restricted Opioid fund, and this organization is set up to help people that fits the Opioid Settlement to the tee. Herp added that not giving this organization anything, he was not going to accept that as an answer. If the County says no, he will go all the way up, as he thinks it is wrong that the County is not going to support its heroes, the veterans and first responders, the people in this community that save people's lives every day, and that fight for our country. RC responded that the County is not opposed to Veterans by any means.

RC asked Taylor if this organization had reached out to the hospital since the VA has impacted their revenue? Herp responded that is something that can be done after going for the Opioid money that came from the Federal government.

RC asked how much their organization actually wanted for the year, as he thought the \$60,000 was enough for their entire year? Herp responded that it was \$60,000 and then \$40,000. RC asked what they were trying to raise for 2026? Response from the audience was that they are trying to expand services. RC asked that they are actually trying to get more than 60,000? Taylor stated no, the two-year program that was presented to the Commissioners was \$60,000 for the first year. RC stated he asked this question as the hospital directly benefited for the VA accepting them, and they have patients in there now. RC asked if the organization has asked for potential cooperation in some kind of monetary fashion from them to contribute to this? RC added that Herp stated he was going to do that as soon as he leaves this meeting, which makes him think that the organization is looking for in excess of \$60,000 in the first year.

RC asked if this organization found six organizations who would give \$10,000 each, would that meet their need? Response from the audience was those organizations are not sitting on funds directed for this. Herp added that there are several different programs that they want to put in play, and they need the funding to do it. The only way this organization is going to help people, and change the outlook in Perry County, where hopefully other counties follow suit and follow this template, is by the support from the Commissioners.

Taylor mentioned that he was getting an ambulance from the Dubois County funds to put together a Veterans Crisis Intervention team. This team will go out and help police officers, talk veterans down, and help them with their families. Herp stated that the Vietnam veterans are getting to the age where dementia and Alzheimer's are going to start. The County is going to start having a lot of mental health challenges ahead. In addition, there are the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

There are a lot of veterans dealing with issues, which trickles down to the County's law enforcements where they have to deal with that.

RC discussed the possibility of an ambulance from Perry County that is not being used. Taylor stated that would definitely help and would save them money from something else.

RC suggested getting a couple of Council members and one or two Commissioners to sit down with a few from this organization and get into the nuts and bolts of how it exactly is. Taylor stated that this organization is preventative maintenance, not corrective maintenance. He added that the County is going to spend its money one way or another, and it just makes sense to spend it when it is cheaper.

A meeting will be scheduled in the next week or two for further discussion.

### **MINUTES**

a) 02.17.2026 Minutes

RT made a motion to approve, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

b) 03.02.2026 Minutes

RT made a motion to approve, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

### **TRACI FISCHER, COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS DIRECTOR**

a) Community Crossings Grant

RC stated that this grant was approved at the last meeting, and it is needed to be modified. Hammack stated the modifications were to add insurance expenses to the grant.

RT made a motion to approve the modified Community Corrections grant, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

### **STEVE HOWELL, HIGHWAY**

a) Overview of Annual Report

Howell stated that he needed the Commissioners signature on the Highway's Annual Report.

RT made a motion to approve the Annual Report as presented, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

### **KRISTINIA HAMMACK, AUDITOR**

a) 03.13.2026 Payroll: \$175,302.46

RT made a motion to approve, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

b) 03.13.2026 Payroll W/H: \$36,887.01

RT made a motion to approve, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

c) Medical Insurance: \$21,980.56

RT made a motion to approve, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

d) 03.17.2026 Solid Waste Claim Docket: \$1,979.86

RT made a motion to approve, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

e) 03.17.2026 Accounts Payable Claim Docket: \$1,695,304.45

RT made a motion to approve, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

### **COMMISSIONERS**

a) SRI Agreement

RC stated that SRI sells County properties when they go to tax sales and Sheriff sales. SRI handles all the advertising on this and charge nothing, except taking a percentage out of the sale. SRI handles all paperwork.

RT made a motion to approve the SRI agreement, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

b) Open Board Appointments

RC stated that the Commissioners need to hold off on this until Attorney Andrew Foster gets them a definitive answer on the makeup. From what RC has read, the County has to find a physician, along with some other peculiarities with the 2025 change in the law. Hammack stated that the County has received letters of interest.

RT stated that the Commissioners need to advertise for the CVB board, the Parks and Rec board, and the Alcohol board. Hammack responded that all boards that have openings have been advertised on the County website.

RT made a motion to table, pending the confirmation from the County attorney on the procedure that the County needs to follow and the credentials of those serving, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

The next Commissioner Regular Meeting will be Monday, April 6, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m. CST.

RT made a motion to adjourn, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

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Randy Cole  
President

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Pam Janniczky  
Vice-President

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Rebecca Thorn

*Minutes reviewed by:*

*Kristinia L. Hammack, Auditor*

*Minutes prepared by:*

*Leisa M. Ecker, Deputy Auditor*