

PERRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 21, 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. Vice President Pam Jamniczky (PJ) was not present. Auditor Kristinia Hammack was also present. There was no *Attorney* or *News Representative* in attendance.

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

AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a) **Mary K. Elder:** Questioned with RC the being Republican County Chair, and the Clerk Deputy who was terminated and is running for County Clerk on the Republican ballot in the upcoming election, is it legal for RC to be making decisions on this matter? RC stated in his opinion, the party and party affiliation had no weight in this issue. It is strictly an employment issue and how it will impact the county financially. This is the basis that all the decisions are being made on. Elder stated that she doesn't understand how this could not be seen as party related. She also stated that Indiana is an at will employment state, and that the First Deputy is directly tied to the Elected Officials personal office. She also stated the Clerk possesses the power to terminate anytime for non-discriminatory reasons and that a First Deputy can be fired for political disagreement. RC stated that the legal opinion they are receiving on this matter is that there are some first amendment and fourteen amendment issues and this could put the county in federal court. This is not in the best interest of the county as it could be very expensive. Elder then asked if the other two deputies in the Clerk's office were ever spoken to regarding this matter? RC answered no to this question and stated that Commissioners do not hire nor fire employees. RT added that the only people in attendance of the executive sessions were the Clerk, County Council, Commissioners, and legal counsel. RC stated evidence was looked at, not opinions. The decision was made in the best interest of the county and the taxpayers. Elder asked about insurance, and RC responded that if this ended up in federal court, county insurance would not cover legal fees. Elder stated that she does not see the justification of giving the terminated deputy \$27,000 plus legal fees and that this said deputy has a GoFundMe account set up on Facebook for donations to cover legal fees. RC stated that what goes on Facebook is not relevant to the county. RT added that due to this being in litigation, there are things that were discussed in executive sessions that they are unable to speak about. Elder stated she believes this should all be public information before \$27,000 plus is paid out. RC responded that all the information will be made public, but not while it is in litigation. Currently the Commissioners have voted to pay it, and the County Council must vote to fund it, but no documents have been signed. RC assured that the public will know exactly what happened, and why this occurred following the completion of litigation.

MINUTES

- a) **07.06.2026**

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

DRUG COURT COMMITTEE

- a) **Restricted Opioid Funds:** Judge Lucy Goffinet informed the Commissioner that she had forwarded an email to them from the Community Corrections Director, Traci Fischer, outlining what has occurred. Goffinet shared that currently Perry County Drug Court is funded through a grant with Community Corrections and that the Community Corrections Grant has two parts. On June 29, 2026, they were informed that legislation cut \$11.3 million from Community Corrections, which cuts their entire Drug Court funding. Immediately after hearing about this, the Drug Court Advisory Board called a special meeting. In this meeting the restricted opioid funds were discussed as the Drug Court Program is an eligible use of these funds. Drug Court is an evidence-based program that addresses an

individual's mental health needs and is an alternative to prison. Goffinet shared that over 170 Perry County residences with substance abuse diagnosis have been given resources, and 94 of these individuals have graduated from the program, with a 68% success rate. Goffinet shared the plan. Community Corrections currently has some project income and if awarded the restricted opioid funds in the amount of \$103,328, the program can be funded for two years. This funding will give them two years to look for alternative funding. During this time, they plan to work with RJL Solutions and look for grant opportunities. Also, they have heard from State Representative Steve Bartels that he doesn't believe this was supposed to happen. They are hopeful that during these two years it will be corrected.

Goffinet also stated that a Commissioner and a County Council member sit on the Drug Court Advisory Board, and all funding passes through the Auditor's Office and Commissioners.

RC asked how someone is selected for drug court? Goffinet replied that first when a person is referred to drug court, they must have a substance abuse diagnosis. Most drug court referrals are from the Prosecutor's Office, but Probation and Community Corrections can refer as well. Prosecuting Attorney Samantha Hurst added that drug court is not easy, and it takes a person who is dedicated and wants to make a change in their life. Most of the time this is not your first-time offenders, it is usually offenders they have seen a couple of times. Goffinet then stated that there are "phases" in drug court, over a minimum of 14 months. The program is tailored to the individual on their timeline. Hurst added there are sobriety requirements, and in the case that an individual has a relapse, they are not kicked out of the program. The team works to find out the trigger and works through it with the individual, but they cannot pass on to the next phase until they are sober for the required timeframe.

RC asked that the funding they are looking for will fund the support staff needed for this program. Both Goffinet and Hurst responded that is correct.

RC stated he feels the Drug Court Program is excellent. If a citizen can be helped to turn things around and be a productive citizen, that is much better than ending up in our county jail. RT stated she has sat in on drug court and has seen it works; it is truly a good thing.

RC added that he would like to see them look for matching grants and truly feels there are grant opportunities out there, and if they secure other funding, then the opioid monies can be used for something else.

Goffinet requested something in writing to earmark these funds for the Drug Court Program. RC stated that that can be done.

Three graduates of the Perry County Drug Court Program shared their experiences and why they are hopeful that the county will approve to fund this program. Each story was very touching. RC personally thanked these three graduates for their courage to speak. RC also thanked the drug court staff for their commitment to the program.

RC made a motion to earmark \$103,328 of the restricted opioid funds by a resolution for the Perry County Drug Court Program, seconded by RT. Motion carried 2-0.

STEVE HOWELL, HWY SUPERINTENDENT

- a) **Highway building AC:** Steve Howell stated that the air conditioning unit went out. It was the original unit. The cost of replacing it is \$9,140.00.

RC made a motion to approve this expense to be paid out of CEDIT Fund, seconded by RT. Motion carried 2-0.

- b) **Update on paving:** Steve informed the Commissioners that the Highway Department has been so busy with all the work from the rain, but he wanted to give an update on paving. Shiloh Road is done except for the shoulder stone that should be fixed this week or next. C&R Construction will be back mid-August to finish the Community Crossing paving. E&B Paving will be back at the end of August to finish the LIT paving. The bridge on Oxen Road should be done tomorrow (July 22, 2026). Howell commended the Highway Department for all the work they have done on repairing these bridges. With the Highway Department doing the work, it has saved the county a lot of money. The work on the bridge in Carter Valley will start tomorrow (July 22, 2026), and it should be done in two weeks.

- c) Howell stated that in June and July the HWY Department has worked 251 ½ hours of overtime. Howell stated this is due to damage from the storms and excessive rain. He feels this is the most damage the county has had in 30 years on the roads and it just keeps repeating in the same locations. Howell stated they are behind due to this, but they are doing their very best.
- d) **Lane Miles Distribution:** Howell informed the Commissioners that earlier that week, they found out that the county is getting \$281,901.31. The County can apply for the Community Crossings again and get \$718,098.69, that is what the state will give if approved. The county match of 20% will be \$142,619.74.
- e) The Leopold Picnic is this weekend, and they are requesting road closures for this event. Howell stated this is something the county does every year for this event. RT made a motion to approve closure of the roads in the center of town, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

KRISTINIA HAMMACK, AUDITOR

a) 07.17.2026 Payroll: \$184,928.05

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

b) 07.17.2026 Payroll W/H: \$39,388.78

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

c) Health Insurance Claims: \$1,919.32

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

d) 2nd Quarter Sheriff Pension: \$39,218.50

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

e) 2nd Quarter Federal Excise Tax: \$522.24

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

f) 07.21.2026 Solid Waste Claim Docket: \$4,033.64

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

g) 07.21.2026 Accounts Payable Claim Docket: \$737,200.09

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

COMMISSIONERS

- a) **SBOA Invoice for 2025 Audit:** RC stated this is the invoice for the 2025 Federal Audit of ARPA funds. This year it was \$3,388. Previous years have been around \$12,000 and \$17,000. RC added that the funds that were set aside for federal audits have been exhausted. Auditor Hammack stated that the annual invoice for the county's state audit is typically paid out of General Fund as an additional appropriation each year. RC recommended taking this to the County Council to see where they want to pay it from.
- b) **Discussion to update Personnel Policy Policy— Waggoner, Irwin, Scheele & Associates, Inc. (WIS) taking over Human Resources Complaints and the Auditor's Office will continue overseeing employee benefits.** RC stated that he feels the issue is the county has a handbook with specific requirements on steps that must be taken and thinks that what is needed is for department heads to be made aware of these procedures. RC followed with department heads need to ensure the policies and procedures in the handbook are being followed with proper documentation. RC feels like training is the first step. Hammack informed the Commissioners that in the handbook, it states that any HR complaints are to go to the county attorney. Currently, the Auditor's Office is the bridge of communication with the county attorney. In discussions with council members and Commissioner Pam Jamniczky, the request is to take the Auditor's Office out of this line of communication. With the county not having an attorney on hand all the time, it was suggested to have employees with HR complaints contact the county's Human Resources Consultant directly. This process will get employees in contact directly with trained individuals while also ensuring privacy for the employee. Auditor Hammack advised that the county's current consultant, WIS, bills by the hour when services are provided. The county currently budgets \$3,000 annually for HR Consulting. RC stated the importance of finding someone established who is neutral. Auditor Hammack stated that she feels a consulting firm is a neutral party more so than the county attorney. RC then added he doesn't want the county to open the flood gates to cost. RC also reiterated the need to get department heads trained on the handbook policies and

procedures. Hammack stated that WIS is widely used by other Indiana counties, and we use them on an as needed basis. RC ended with asking Auditor Hammack to inquire with WIS about training opportunities and pricing. In addition, ask WIS what the average annual expense would be would look like if the county went this direction.

The Commissioner next Regular Meeting will be Monday, August 3, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. A Special Commissioner Meeting with the Planning and Zoning Board will be on Monday, August 3rd, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m. CST.
RT made a motion to adjourn, seconded by RC. Motion carried 2-0.

_____ Randy Cole President	_____ Pam Jamniczky Vice-President	_____ Rebecca Thorn
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*Minutes prepared by:
Kristinia L. Hammack, Auditor*