

JENNINGS COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

January 31, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m.

Annex Building

Tina Ellis, Dave Woodall, Gene Rudicel, Jerry Lamb, Mandy Creech, and Dave Cheatham were present. Tina Ellis opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Dave Cheatham followed the Pledge of Allegiance with prayer.

Matt Sporleder is concerned with the Department of Labor issue. He does not believe that the attorneys have the best interest of the county. Matt thinks that we need someone that has our best interest, not just dollar signs. He also feels that there is a conflict of interest with a certain employee with the Department of Labor. He does not want to roll over and pay. Dave asks Matt if he spoke to the county attorney. Matt says that the county does not owe this money, and he refuses to roll over. Tina said that an executive session needs to be set up to discuss this more in depth. Comp time was not managed well, and the county does not owe this money. Matt believes that the county needs to do away with comp time. There will need to be an over-time line added to the budget if the comp time is dissolved.

Tina said that she is getting phone calls from people that are wanting to get hired on the county highway and are being told that the commissioners are saying to call Tina. Matt said that not one of the commissioners had told anyone to call her. Dave said that the Class A drivers are underpaid. Matt said that he is good at raising wages, but the council must be onboard giving the extra money. Tina says that the highway needs to work within their budget. Dave said that the highway has money in their budget! Dave says that county government is not what it was like 20 years ago. We must compete with other counties! Matt said that it is all about communication. Matt said that the highway department suffers on so many levels.

Council and Commissioners have set an executive session for Thursday, Feb. 6 at 9 a.m.

Dave C. discusses Governor Brauns promise to lower property tax. Dave is asking council members to hire an attorney for the county council. Dave W. is suggesting that the board president reaches out. Dave C. makes a motion to seek the services of an attorney and receive proposals from qualified interested parties. Dave W. seconded the motion, passed unanimously. *amend*

Dave C. said that the council needs to set aside time for a workshop to go over some of the issues on his list. Tina says that we do not need a motion to have a workshop. A workshop is strictly a workshop. There will be no voting, no motions, and no public interaction. A workshop is only to discuss policy and procedures.

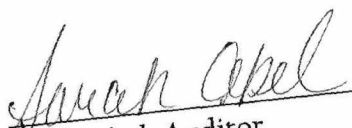
A workshop with council and commissioners will be held on Monday, Feb. 10, 2025.

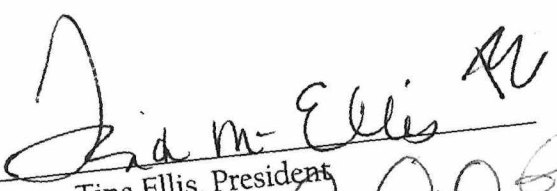
Dave W. made a motion to transfer \$500,000 from the 1173 bituminous account to the 1173 paving account. Council will need to make an additional appropriation back to the bituminous account. Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

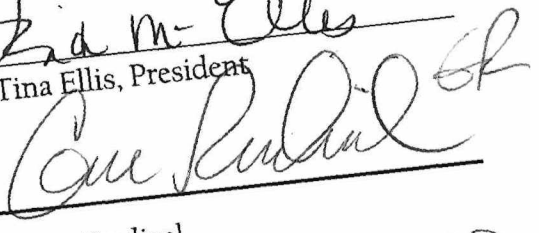
Dave says that the commissioners need to make sure they have the spending authority before any contracts are signed. Dave also is asking the Auditor to ask for a follow-up email from department heads when they turn in an invoice. The recorder is asking if she could scan the documents and email them to the auditors' office. The auditor states, Absolutely, that can be done!

In a previous meeting there was a Baker Tily invoice tabled because the council thought that it was an invoice for TIF. It is not TIF's invoice, it belongs to the council. Jerry made a motion to pay the invoice in the amount of \$547.50, Dave C. seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Gene made a motion to adjourn, Dave W. seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

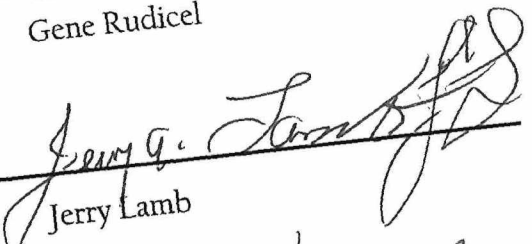

Sarah Abel, Auditor


Tina Ellis, President

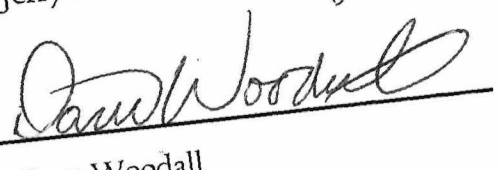

Gene Rudicel

Mike Gerth, Vice President


Dave Cheatham


Jerry Lamb


Mandy Creech


Dave Woodall

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Dave C. discusses Governor Brauns promise to lower property tax. Dave is asking council members to hire an attorney for the county council. Dave W. is suggesting that the board president reaches out. Dave C. makes a motion to seek the services of an attorney and receive proposals from qualified interested parties. The council president can appoint a person/people to seek this information. Dave W. seconded the motion, passed unanimously. Dave W. states that if there is a three-person board, he would like to sit on this board. Gene, Dave W. and Dave C. will be the three people on this board. Tina is excluding herself from this because Alex Zimmerman, county commissioner attorney, is her son-in-law.

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some of the mistakes are minor, up to \$.06 off, but why is it off if we are using the figures on the salary ordinance? Kenny moves on to talk about meeting minutes. He believes that the county is not doing them correctly. He said that he used to get a draft copy emailed to him. Kenny moves on to changes in salary for promotions. Kyle Lee was promoted to Sergeant and will receive a pay increase. He said that the money is in his budget for this. Kenny said that he paid for bread last year and spent \$10,000.00. He did not purchase the bread with his normal vendor because the price was high. The \$10,000.00 was spent out of the commissary fund and he would like to be reimbursed from his meal account. Kenny said that SBOA says that you can reimburse the commissary account, it is just not the best practice to do so. Kenny will send the bill to Tina and the council will vote on it next month.

The Auditor explains that when her office noticed the error in paying the two employees that are no longer employed, she contacted the bank and had it reversed. Dave asked the auditor if it is easier to use the paper voucher. Sarah explains that the two employees that were paid were not marked inactive in the system, therefore they automatically rolled over into the payroll cycle. Dave said that he would make a motion to use the payroll voucher, and the Auditor explained that we already use the voucher. The payroll voucher is a State Board of Accounts form that is already used. Dave W. mentions purchasing a new payroll system. Jerry said that he would like to see payroll outsourced although if a new payroll system works correctly, he would be okay with that. Dave C. asks some questions about the payroll voucher form. Tina tells Kenny that she appreciates all his input, concerns and comments, and that she will work with the Auditors office and see what can be done.

Kenny said that the Sheriff's office received new radios and would like to supply the coroner with the old radios. The council said that they do not have a problem with the sheriff giving the radio to the coroner.

Tina Brison (Treasurer) gives the monthly report for the trust account. Tina E. explains to Dave C. that the county had two interest-bearing accounts and that in the last meeting the council asked the treasurer to combine those accounts because the interest was better with Trust Indiana. The amount in the trust currently is \$2,218,600.00. The account was opened in August 2024 and received \$21,951.87 in interest for 2024.

Andy Judd with the Probation Department tells the council that he has secured two grants. The first is a planning grant and it is for \$20,000.00. The purpose for this grant is to hire an employee to do research for us to become a JDAI county. When you become a JDAI county in the State of Indiana you qualify for \$192,5000 paid over the course of four years. The second grant is for \$93,000.00, in which some will go back into probation user fees and approximately \$10,000 will be used for drug testing in our community. Andy said that he will come back with a formal plan.

Judge Bright discusses her pretrial coordinator position with the council. The Pre-Trial Coordinator employee has elected to take the county benefits. Judge Bright explains that this position is covered by a grant, and if for some reason the grant goes away, then the position will be dissolved. Currently, this employee is being paid as a vendor (1099). Ellie explains that there will be zero expense to the county for this position. The council explains to Ellie that they currently are not supporting any new positions, and insurance is the biggest factor in the situation. Tina explains that the county insurance is \$3 million and that is for 160 employees.