

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**September 11, 2025**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The Parke County Council convened in a regular meeting on Thursday, September 11th, 2025 to consider additional requests in excess of the budget allowed for 2025, and to conduct such other business as may be properly brought before the Council.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Council members present were Roy Wrightsman, President; Thomas Rohr, Vice President; Jack B. Butler; Matt Helderman; Rick Patton; Mary Alice Gregg; Susan Kramer, Auditor. Also, present were Katie Potter, Kim Shorter, Jason Frazier, Leanna Collisi, Stacie Amerman, Julie Lanzone, Chris O'Brien and Jacob Roddy.
- III. **READING OF THE MINUTES:** Minutes for the Council Meeting held on August 14th, 2025 were presented. Jack B Butler made a motion to approve the August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 minutes as presented. Matt Helderman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
- IV. **ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUESTS:** The Council considered additional appropriation requests as published in the newspaper July 18th, 2025.

Council President, Roy Wrightsman, reviewed the appropriations from written requests submitted by Auditor, Susan Kramer. Thus, the following ordinance was adopted: WHEREAS: it has been determined it is now necessary to appropriate more money than was appropriated in the annual budget for 2025, BE IT ORDAINED, by the County Council of Parke County, Indiana, for the expenses of said County government, the following additional sums of money are hereby appropriated and ordered set out of the funds herein specified, subject to the law governing the same: Matt Helderman made a motion to approve the additional appropriation requests as advertised on August 21st, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mary Alice Gregg and it carried unanimously.

**PARK & REC SHELTER DONATION**

Building & Structures	4111-00-04-7021	5,113.84	5,113.84
<b>Total PARK &amp; REC DONATION</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,113.84</b>	<b>5,113.84</b>

**COMMUNITY CROSSING GRANT**

Bituminous	8173-02-02-3110	1,500,000.00	1,500,000.00
<b>Total COMMUNITY CROSSING GRANT</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,500,000.00</b>	<b>1,500,000.00</b>

- V. **JURY PAY:** The Auditor presented the Parke County Clerk's Certification of jury fees collected for August 2025, and requested \$485.87 be transferred into the Jury Pay Fund, pursuant to IC 33-19-8-8. Rick Patton made the motion to direct the Auditor to transfer the jury fees collected in the amount of \$485.87 from the County Users Fund to the Jury Fee Fund. The motion was seconded by Matt Helderman and unanimously carried.
- VI. **REAPPROPRIATIONS:** None presented
- VII. **TRANSFER OF FUNDS:** None presented

## VIII. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Public Meeting held to discuss modification to the Local Income Tax Rates for Parke County

Tort Claim for Dylan and Chelsea Sinn, received and acknowledged.

## IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Redevelopment Commission (RDC):** Original deal on the bank building is dead, pursuing purchasing the bank building directly from the owner.

**Courthouse Security Committee:** Did not meet.

**Planning and Zoning Board:** Approved Comprehensive plan

**West Central Solid Waste District (SWD):** Did not meet.

**Northern Parke Regional Sewer District:** Awarded 3-million-dollar forgivable loan through the state.

## X. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:

- **Susan Kramer, Auditor:**

- The Auditor's Cash Flow Statement was submitted for review by the Council Members.

- **Katie Potter, Assessor:**

- Reassessments currently in Florida, Wabash and Sugar Creek townships.
- Will be awarding the 2026 Reassessment bid at the September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Commissioners meeting.

- **Chris O'Brien, EMA Director:**

- Seeking permission to pursue a state grant to purchase moveable barriers to be used for crowd protection during the Covered Bridge Festival. There is no county match required.

- **Kim Shorter, Treasurer:**

- Preparing for the 2025 Tax Sale, will be held in the Parke County Circuit Courtroom on Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 10:00 am.

- **Jason Frazier, Sheriff:**

- Will be selling two 2015 Ford Explorers used as pool cars, two used Tahoe's will be passed down from the Sheriff Deputies.

- **Julie Lanzone, EMS Director:**

- Parke County EMS – 188 responses, \$614,000 approx. in revenue
- Parke-Vermillion EMS – 167 responses, \$599,000 approx. in revenue.

## **XI. NEW BUSINESS:**

- Jacob Roddy with Enterprise Fleet Management presented a fleet analysis proposal for Parke County. Currently Parke County has a fleet size of 37 vehicles the average age being almost 9 years with the average annual milage around 16,000 miles. Open ended leasing model giving equity at the time of resale is returned to client to go towards the replacement vehicle, projected maintenance savings of \$70,000 per year. There are no over mileage fees of wear and tear fees on the leased vehicles, all maintenance is tracked by the vendor. Fuel cost will not be tracked as Parke County uses bulk fuel. Mr. Roddy has been instructed to work with the Highway Department, Sheriff's Department and Parks and Recreations to determine needs and to work on financial proposal for the project.
- Opioid Grant Requests, Stephany Dowd was not present.

Crossroads Recovery Service grant request for \$4,000 to provide addiction counseling.

Southwest Parke School Corporation grant request for \$20,000 to teach all types of coping skills this would be provided by Hamilton Center.

Tom Rohr made a motion to approve the grant request for Crossroads Recovery Service and to table the grant request for Southwest Parke Schools until requested information about compliance is received from Hamiton Center. The motion was seconded by Jack B Butler and it carried unanimously.

### **RESOLUTION 2025-10**

#### **PARKE COUNTY COUNCIL**

#### **A RESOLUTION RELATING TO LONGEVITY PAY FOR PARKE COUNTY EMPLOYEES AND UNITS OF GOVERNMENT**

This resolution amends and replaces Resolution 2022-06

**WHEREAS**, Indiana law empowers local governing bodies to adopt the necessary ordinances and resolutions to provide for the effective governance of the unit [I.C. 36-1-3 (Home Rule)]; and

**WHEREAS**, The Parke County Council ("Council") is empowered with the duty to fix the annual the compensation of all appointed officers, deputies and employees under its jurisdiction, pursuant to I.C. 36-2-5-3; and

**WHEREAS,** The Council has determined that it is in the best interests of Parke County and its citizens to compensate employees of the Parke County Units of Government with longevity pay to compensate them for years of service to the County and its citizens; and

**WHEREAS,** The Council desires to adopt this Resolution to establish a policy to compensate employees of the Parke County Units of Government for longevity and years of service.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** by the Parke County Council that the following policy is approved for compensating any officer, deputy or employee ("Employee") for years of service to Parke County ("longevity pay") as follows:

1. Only full-time Employees are eligible to receive longevity pay under this resolution.
2. Upon completion of one year of full-time employment with Parke County, the eligible employee shall receive additional compensation in the amount of the product of the employee's years of service multiplied by \$300.
3. Any years of service accumulated by Elected Officials or Part-Time Employees would be counted should the affected Employee become an otherwise eligible Full-Time Employee of Parke County.
4. Otherwise, ineligible employees who become eligible for additional compensation under this resolution shall receive the appropriate amount of additional compensation upon becoming eligible.
5. Elected Officials, Probation Officers, and Part-Time Employees are not eligible to receive longevity pay under this resolution.
6. The longevity pay may only be awarded for continuous, uninterrupted years of service as an Employee of Parke County Units of Government.
7. Longevity pay shall be awarded on the first day of the calendar year in which the eligible Employee's hire date makes him/her eligible to receive it.

Longevity pay distributions will be effective as of January 1, 2026 and will be disbursed in equal amounts bi-weekly as part of the regular county payroll schedule

Duly adopted on the 11h day of September, 2025.

Budget Form No. 4

Approved by State Board of Accounts, 2015 Submitted on 9/11/2025 12:31:16 PM

Prescribed by the Department of Local Government Finance

Ordinance / Resolution Number: 2025-06

It is ordained / resolved by the Parke County Council that for the expenses of Parke County for the year ending December 31, 2026 the sums specified are hereby appropriated and ordered set apart out of the several funds herein named and for the purposes herein specified, in accordance with the laws governing the same. Such sums herein appropriated shall be held to include all expenditures authorized to be made during the year, unless otherwise expressly stipulated and provided for by law. In addition, for the purposes of raising revenue to meet the necessary expenses of Parke County, the property tax levies and property tax rates as herein specified are hereby adopted. The budget Form 4-B for all funds must be completed and submitted in the manner prescribed by the Department of Government Finance.

This ordinance/resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval by the County Council.

Name of Adopting / Fiscal Body

Parke County Council

Type of Adopting / Fiscal Body

County Council

Date of Adoption

9/11/2025

DLGF-Reviewed Funds

The following values automatically populate for Form 4B's adopted column: "Adopted Budget" from Line 15, "Adopted Tax Levy" from Line 11, and "Adopted Tax Rate" from the Property Tax Rate field.

Fund Name	Adopted Budget	Adopted Tax Levy	Adopted Tax Rate
CASINO/RIVERBOAT	\$0	\$0	0.0000
RAINY DAY	\$0	\$0	0.0000
GENERAL	\$11,621,322	\$4,000,000	0.3136
2015 REASSESSMENT	\$170,000	\$174,747	0.0137
DEBT SERVICE	\$226,844	\$250,000	0.0196
LOCAL INCOME TAX	\$806,500	\$0	0.0000

HIGHWAY	\$4,631,164	\$0	0.0000
LOCAL ROAD & STREET	\$150,000	\$0	0.0000
CUMULATIVE BRIDGE	\$643,528	\$419,647	0.0329
HEALTH	\$203,749	\$22,960	0.0018
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SYSTEM	\$315,686	\$0	0.0000
PARK & RECREATION	\$265,151	\$51,021	0.0040
CUMULATIVE CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT	\$243,500	\$408,167	0.0320
ECONOMIC DEV INCOME TAX CEDIT	\$926,615	\$0	0.0000
	<b>Total: \$20,204,059</b>	<b>Total: \$5,326,542</b>	<b>Total: 0.4176</b>

#### Home-Ruled Funds (Not Reviewed by DLGF)

Fund Code	Fund Name	Adopted Budget
9500	Adult Probation	\$124,229
9501	Juvenile Probation	\$8,500
9502	Cornerstone Perpetuation	\$15,250
9503	Sales Disclosure	\$3,000
9504	Public Safety	\$866,194
9505	Recorders Perpetuation	\$25,000
9506	Law Enforcement Education	\$1,000
9507	Covered Bridge	\$75,000
9508	C.A.S.A.	\$44,474
9509	Local Health Maintenance	\$12,336
9510	Innkeepers Commission	\$415,000

9511	Innkeepers Tax Fund	\$130,000
9512	Clerks Perpetuation	\$12,400
9513	Park & Rec Concession	\$47,000
9514	Identification Security Protection (ISP)	\$3,100
9515	Probation Administration	\$15,000
9516	Pre-Trial Diversion	\$58,904
9517	National Night Out	\$10,000
9518	S.C.R.A.M. (Secure Continuous Remote Monitoring)	\$12,000
9519	Auditor's Ineligible Homestead Deduction	\$1,500
9520	Accident Reports	\$2,000
9521	Misdemeanant	\$12,000
9522	County Elected Officials Training	\$5,000
9523	93.563 Prosecutor Incentive	\$11,312
9524	LCC Mini Grant - LEO Training	\$3,000
9525	RDC Operations	\$2,000
9526	RDC Revolving Loan	\$40,000
9527	Firearms Training	\$10,000
9528	Police Pension Trust	\$7,000
9529	Sex & Violent Offender	\$3,000
9530	West Central TIF	\$675,000
9531	Central Parke TIF	\$840,000
9532	Plat Book	\$18,200

9533	K-9 Equipment Donation	\$4,000
9534	Sheriff Meth Overtime Grant	\$5,000
9535	Bulletproof Vest Fund	\$5,000
9536	Local Public Health Services	\$106,747
9538	Marine Patrol Grant	\$7,500
9539	EMS Training Institution	\$38,500
9540	Vermillion County EMS Non-Rvrt	\$1,624,171
9543	Local Health Trust	\$16,159
9544	Drug Free Community	\$7,999
9545	Emergency Planning & Right To Know	\$11,150
9546	Problem Solving Court	\$52,920
9547	Problem Solving Crt Prog. Income	\$7,473
9548	Drug Court Vending Machine	\$1,800
9549	93.074 L.H.Emer Prepared	\$20,000
9552	Sheriff Dept Forfeited Asset	\$5,000
		<b>Total: \$5,421,818</b>



## 2026 Budget Letter to the Parke County Taxpayers

To: Parke County Taxpayers

From: Parke County Council

Re: 2026 Parke County Budget

Date: September 11, 2025

Greetings:

The Parke County Council wishes to provide an update on the review and adoption of the county budget for 2026.

The Parke County Council remains committed to being diligent with the taxpayer's dollars. We continuously look at spending levels, trying to make prudent decisions to efficiently operate the county government, while maintaining and improving the needed services to the county's taxpayers. We remain committed to keeping the tax burden as low as possible to enable taxpayers to keep as much of their hard-earned dollars as possible, knowing that we all have limited means with which to operate.

In 2025, there have been several areas of focus as we continue to look to the future. In this year's legislative session, the state legislature passed SEA 1, which made very significant changes to local government funding across the state. This bill, dubbed the "property tax bill", will have wide ranging impacts for all units of local government. While much of this bill will take effect over the next few years, local government must be diligent to its impacts. The council has been engaging our resources to understand the future impacts of the legislation and to prepare for them to the best of our ability. This bill will impact future property and income tax rates in Parke County, as well as everywhere across the state. What those impacts will be is somewhat uncertain at this time, but the County Council has already begun to prepare for those changes and make prudent decisions to address those changes.

Inflation and tight workforce conditions continue to be a challenge to county government. We continue to work through increased costs of goods and services in this inflationary environment. From fuel to equipment, asphalt to office supplies, the costs of these items continue to go up and put strains on limited resources. Department heads have worked hard to find opportunities to keep costs under control, and we are confident that everyone will continue to do so. Employee attraction and retention continues to be a challenge, not only in county government, but in the business sector overall. This budget takes another step to address this situation in salaries paid to dedicated county employees.

The county council has made several significant investments in the highway department during the year. There have been several equipment upgrades as well as significant investments into road and bridge projects. The highway department applied for and received the maximum amount of \$1.5 million dollars from the Community Crossings grant program, which the council exceeded with additional matching funds, to do several important paving projects. The highway superintendent, Matt Romalia, has hit the ground running and has made several positive changes in the department as a whole. They continue to work every day on improving the county's roads and the county council continues to be committed to making positive improvements to our infrastructure.

The ambulance service has now completed a year operating in Vermillion County. This has been a positive collaboration between the counties and we have fully supported this agreement. This was a major undertaking by our ambulance service to support our neighboring county in need and has proven to be quite successful. It is important to

note that the taxpayers of Parke County bear no burden for this service. The billing revenue, plus contributions by Vermillion County, fully fund this operation. Finally, there is significant collaboration happening due to the larger scale of the service which benefits both counties.

Today, the council held a public hearing regarding adjustments to the local income tax rates. This adjustment will reassign the rates to shift more funding to where it can be better utilized. This change will result in no net change in the local income tax rate paid by the taxpayer. By making this change we will free up additional funds to improve county services.

In 2026, the county will make the last payment on the debt for the courthouse roof project. This will bring the county government back to a zero-debt situation, lowering the taxpayer burden.

In 2025, revenues to the county government have continued to increase. As a result, the council has made it a priority to maintain reserves at healthy levels, as well as make needed investments in county government. The increased revenues and attention to reserves will allow the council to make several significant investments in this budget. Assessed values on property continue to increase, but the rate of increase has slowed. This is due in part to changes already taking effect from SEA 1, as well as an improving inflationary environment. These increases should continue to slow as the full implementation of SEA 1 takes effect and this will have an impact on future revenues and tax rates.

On August 16th the council reviewed the budget requests for 2026. It is important to note that many department heads came to the council with flat or lower budget requests than they currently receive. Considering the inflationary environment this was specifically noted and appreciated by the council. After careful review and consideration, the council anticipates the following highlights in the 2025 budget:

- A. The total anticipated county budget for 2025 is \$23,995,032. This is a 2.36% increase over the 2025 budget.
- B. The county government total property tax rate is estimated to increase by \$0.0034.
- C. Salaried full and part-time employees, with the exception of County Commissioners and County Councilmen, can expect a salary increase of 5%. Full-Time hourly employees can expect an increase of \$1.00 per hour. Hourly part-time employees can expect an increase of \$0.50 per hour. This is a significant investment in our valuable employees and accounts for a large portion of the increase in the 2026 budget. Many other county governments are foregoing or providing lower salary increases this year. County commissioners and council members will not receive an increase in 2026.
- D. Change to the longevity stipend for civilian employees, making it an annual award and removing the cap. This will better reward our loyal public employees for their service to the taxpayers of Parke County.
- E. County highway funding of \$6,069,690. This is over 25% of the total county budget. The council continues to use funding from other sources to supplement gas tax revenues while holding a reasonable reserve in the highway department funds. The county highway department continues to apply for and secure matching funding from the Community Crossings Matching Grant Program allowing them to accomplish more work on the county roadway system with less impact to local taxpayers.
- F. Several investments in equipment, including a new dispatch system, updates to election equipment, and highway equipment upgrades. These are all needed and necessary investments to keep these important services functioning well.
- G. A maximum of 5% increase in county employee health insurance costs. Employee health insurance costs amount to \$4,432,985, and this is over 18% of the total budget. The Board of County Commissioners will be responsible for any needed adjustments to the plan to maintain this 5% increase in cost.
- H. Continued utilization of user-fee supported funds to help offset the burden on tax supported funds.

- I. The county continues to maintain a cash balance in all funds, as well as a rainy-day fund and other funds that are available for unforeseen circumstances. As we have seen in the recent past, it is imperative and responsible that the council continues to hold a reserve to be utilized as appropriate.

Our work will continue as the budget is submitted to the state for approval. Once we receive our response from the Department of Local Government Finance and firmer revenue forecasts, we may have to make adjustments, so none of this is final until that time.

Through the last few years, the council has worked to ensure that no services were interrupted and that continued investments were made in the county government. This was possible due to the fiscal responsibility of the council and county government employees leading up to the pandemic and the inflationary environment following it. This has also enabled the council to be prepared for any upcoming downturns or surprises that may arise. The future remains uncertain, particularly with the current economic environment and changes coming from SEA1, but through the efforts of dedicated county employees, we believe we can weather this current situation and come out of it better than before. The overall fiscal condition of the county government continues to be good and the county council is committed to maintaining that condition.

The council wishes to thank the employees of the county government for their hard work, efficiency, and diligence in living within their means. Your efforts are noticed and much appreciated by the council and the taxpayers of Parke County.

In closing, we remain very committed to operating a county government that is responsible to the taxpayers of the county and efficient in providing the services with which we are responsible in these challenging times.

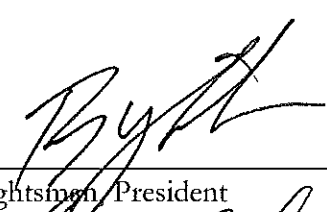
Sincerely,

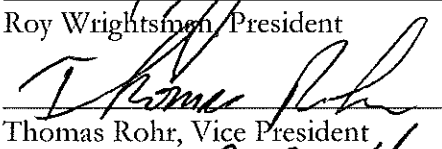
Parke County Council

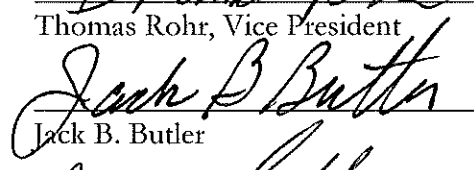
**XII. OLD BUSINESS:** None Presented

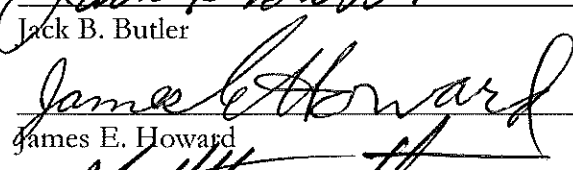
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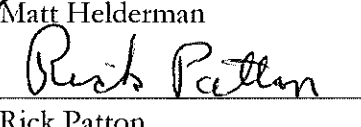
  
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Roy Wrightsman, President

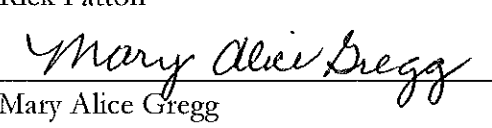
  
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Thomas Rohr, Vice President

  
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Jack B. Butler

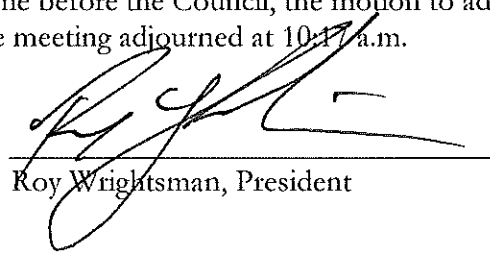
  
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James E. Howard

  
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Matt Helderman

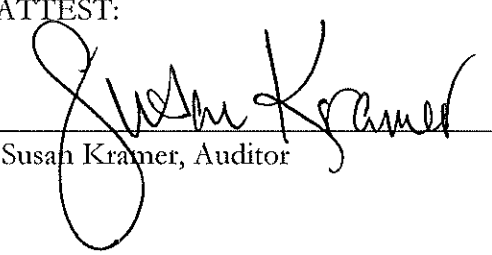
  
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Rick Patton

  
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Mary Alice Gregg

**ADJOURNMENT:** Having no further business to come before the Council, the motion to adjourn was made by Tom Rohr and seconded by Jack B Butler. The meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Roy Wrightsman, President

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Kramer, Auditor