

## **Randolph County Commissioners**

**August 18, 2025**

The Randolph County Commissioners met at their regular meeting at 9:00 AM in the Commissioners and Council Room in the Courthouse with the following members present: Board Vice President Tom Kerns and Missy Williams. Also present was Randolph County Auditor Laura Martin, Sheriff Art Moystner and County Attorney Meeks Cockerill.

### **Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance**

Tom said good morning everyone. We'll open this commissioners' meeting for August 18<sup>th</sup>, County Council. Larry. I think you're the only one here this morning.

### **Council's update**

Larry Preston said morning. Larry Preston from County Council. In our meeting on August the 5<sup>th</sup>, we passed all the additional appropriations. Some news out of the meeting, Hugh Caperton and Mr. Davis from the Ethanol and the Vault Company came, and they discussed their progress. Of course, their permits with the state and federal are pretty stringent. And they're probably 75% with that, but they requested that they will not ask for a tax abatement. That was news on that part. I joined Missy with the first meeting of the security of the courthouse. And I believe that's about it. Any questions?

Missy said we can give an update on that later if that's okay. I didn't, it was too late to get it on the agenda, so we can probably do it maybe the end.

Larry Preston said yeah, that's fine.

Tom said thank you, Larry. Bob, up next. Building commission update.

### **Bob Jessee – Building Commission update**

Bob Jessee said morning commissioners, Mrs. Martin. So, I was asked if there were any issues that I thought needed to be addressed with the building commissioner's office. Apparently, we don't have any minimum housing standards for houses that people live in. I've seen some that need a lot of attention. But without any ordinances or codes, not really nothing can be done about it. And I am researching other area minimum housing standards. So, hopefully, in the next 30 days, I'll have something to look at.

Tom said okay. Union City does, with their rentals, and they do inspections so, I don't know if you've got that information?

Bob Jessee said I have the guy's contact.

Tom said okay.

Bob Jessee said I had that one, I had one from Muncie. I don't know if Richmond has a minimum housing standard or not. I may check with them, just try and gather some information to go by.

Tom said this would give us a starting point for inspections.

Bob Jessee said give us a starting point.

Tom said for like the blight properties and such things also.

Bob Jessee said that and you know, we have, I've seen two incidents where people don't have furnaces working and they spent all winter with electric heaters. That's not acceptable means of heat. Inspections, I've been out on inspections multiple times for the same thing that won't pass. And we need to put in an ordinance where we can charge them for multiple trips, being 2<sup>nd</sup> trip, 3<sup>rd</sup> trip. I look at if you drive from here to the south end of the county, it takes 25, 30 minutes, use of your truck, your time. There needs to be like a \$50.00 charge or \$40.00 charge for that 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> trip if it doesn't pass inspection. It's just to me, that is eating up money for nothing. And maybe one way to help solve that would be electrical, plumbing, HVAC, should be, the permit needs to be pulled by a licensed individual if they opt to do it on their own, at least that licensed electrician, plumber, HVAC contractor can look at it and approve it, because it's got his name on it. I just think that's something that we need to look at doing, because I see a lot of individuals doing work that's not standard.

Missy said so if we pulled these electricians or whoever else in to do that, so, they would bill the person who's doing the contracting or the construction, correct?

Bob Jessee said the licensed contractor is a responsible party for being whatever, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, so he would pull the permit and if he wants to work something out with the homeowner for them to do the work, he still has to go out and look at it and make sure it's up to code. That would also help with multiple trips.

Tom said my only question is, if we would do that, require that, would that get people to avoid getting permits and do all on their own, without getting the actual permit if they have to pay additional.

Bob Jessee said I think that's happening anyway.

Tom said I know it is, especially with there's a lot of do-it-yourselfers.

Bob Jessee said yeah. I don't think it would push any more towards people not pulling a permit.

Tom said okay.

Bob Jessee said you know, the individuals are pulling permits. They're just not licensed to do it. And some of them aren't qualified to be doing it.

Missy said so, how many, when you go in to inspect, how many, like out of 10, how many are you saying this isn't acceptable, you've got to change this?

Bob Jessee said I tell them what they need to do to correct it.

Missy said yeah.

Bob Jessee said some people just don't get it.

Missy said yeah, but I mean, what's, like how many out of 10 are you having to?

Bob Jessee said out of 10, I'm going to tell you 3 or 4. I mean, it's just, we're throwing money away.

Tom said on the blight properties, so, if we would do ordinance for standards, then you would be willing to do the inspections if it's?

Bob Jessee said yeah, I would, and then if it.

Tom said so you have something to go by?

Bob Jessee said yeah. And if it became a major structural issue, we would probably have to have a structural engineer to verify.

Tom to truly condemn it.

Bob Jessee said it needs to be condemned. I don't think you run into that as much as you do, just as much as unfit housing.

Tom said I'm probably on, jumping back to you charging for going out, I probably wouldn't want to charge for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, but maybe anytime after that might be something as a consideration. I'd struggle with charging for a 2<sup>nd</sup> inspection, but for the 3<sup>rd</sup> inspection for the same thing.

Bob Jessee said well I just look at if you charge \$35.00 for electrical permit and you drive half an hour, you've ate that 2<sup>nd</sup> time out.

Tom said yeah.

Bob Jessee said I think most people charge.

Tom said other counties are charging?

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Bob Jessee said yeah.

Tom said for the extra trips for the new inspection?

Bob Jessee said yeah.

Tom said okay.

Bob Jessee said I'm just throwing that out there.

Tom said okay. Overall, everything then?

Bob Jessee said everything's fine.

Tom said is fine.

Bob Jessee said we have very well-versed people in the office which helps a lot.

Tom said good. Missy, do you have anything else?

Missy said no. Thanks for the info.

Tom said anything else, Bob?

Bob Jessee said no.

Tom said thank you.

**Debra Johnting – Ordinance 2025-05 Amended Unified Zoning ordinance 2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

Tom said Debra Johnting. Morning, Debra.

Debra Johnting said Debra Johnting, area plan director. Good morning.

Tom said 2<sup>nd</sup> reading for Ordinance 2025-05 to amend the text of the Randolph County Unified Zoning ordinance, solar setbacks. I don't think there's anything we need to.

Debra Johnting said I haven't had any questions or calls.

Tom said nothing come through. Missy, do you have anything?

Missy said no.

Tom said do we want to, do you want to make a motion to approve to approve at this 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting?



Missy said yeah, I make a motion we approve ordinance 2025-05, amended unified zoning ordinance 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Tom said should we suspend or just?

Meeks said you can't because Gary's not here.

Tom said because Gary's not here.

Meeks said you have to vote on that one.

Tom said I'll 2<sup>nd</sup> that. All those in favor?

All aye votes.

Tom said apposed?

None.

Motion carried.

Debra Johnting said thank you.

**Mindy Peed – Checks for Conference hotel**

Tom said Mindy.

Mindy Peed said Mindy Peed, Randolph County Clerk. Good morning. I'm here today to ask that a check be written to our hotel for our conference expenses instead of having to use my personal credit card. I was here back in April to have that amended and I was asked to forward information from other counties to you all and then discussion would be had later. As far as I know, the discussion hasn't changed, so I'm just asking for each time.

Tom said yep, for a check to be cut.

Missy said would that be one total check or do you need more than one for each person?

Mindy Peed said I only need one, but the auditor's office said they needed one for each person.

Missy said okay, yeah.

Tom said so, we have 3 of them.

Missy said yeah.

Tom said correct?

Mindy Peed said yeah, I wrote 3 separate claims, yep because that's how they asked it to be done.

Missy said make a motion to approve that.

Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Ed Thornburg – utility agreement**

Tom said Ed, with utility agreement.

Ed Thornburg said good morning. Ed Thornburg, county surveyor. We've got AEP wants to bury some power lines out by the golf course sub-division.

Tom said everything look good?

Ed Thornburg said it's going to be fine. I'm going to be sending them a map with some drains on it when we send the approval back to them. Yeah, it'll be fine.

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Other Business:**

**Art Moystner, Randolph County Sheriff**

Tom said sheriff.

Art Moystner said Art Moystner, county sheriff. The only question I had this morning is I had sent out an email, and I know I've talked to Gary regarding the bonding issue. I'm very concerned.

Missy said Art, I'm sorry. Deb, could you ask Bob if he could stay, I've got, need some help, I need his input on some blight properties if he doesn't mind, if he has time. If not, it's okay. Sorry, Art.

Art Moystner said you're fine. I'm just getting very concerned with it, just kind of curious where we're at. I think there's been some mis-communication along the lines from some stuff, and I was just curious. Where are we at with the bonding? Do we know?

Meeks said Laura's has given.

Laura said I gave Baker Tilly the answers to the questions they sent me. I know it's in process but.

Meeks said yeah, you have to get bond rating, right.

Laura said we have not done that yet.

Meeks said we haven't done the S&P bond rating. I don't know when they'll schedule that. I did email them out last week to get a timeline. I haven't heard anything.

Laura said I haven't heard anything either.

Meeks said but I think Laura just got everything back to them what, last week sometime probably? Two weeks ago?

Laura said yeah, a week before last I sent them an email back with information they requested.

Art said and I guess my communication, I just want you guys to know, my communication with Argo is they're kind of on hold until somebody tells them yes, the bond's been approved, yes, we have the money, now we can go.

Meeks said well if there's an emergency, we can do a loan from someplace or we can do a bond anticipation note.

Art Moystner said okay.

Tom said you're concerned with the chiller?

Art Moystner said I am, very.

Tom said has Salyer Taylor or anybody put eyes on it or looked at it?

Art Moystner said we've had them in a few times. The problem is our system is old enough, I don't they have anybody that's there that's actually worked on a system that's that old. So, I think we're asking some questions to them and trying to get some things in place where we can get a different tech in there that can actually put some gauges on it and do some more in depth checking of that system. So, we're working on that.

Tom said so, somebody is going to come in and take a look, because that's kind of an emergency type situation?

Art Moystner said yes.

Tom said I know you communicated with us last week on that.

Art Moystner said so, we're trying to find somebody that's got some experience with a system that's this old, how that works, so, to make sure they can check that. So, I just wanted to make everyone kind of aware where we're at with everything. That way, we can move it along. I definitely don't want to try to go through next summer with this system.

Tom said I don't think we'll be into that. But we'll, kind of waiting for Baker Tilly on it.

Art Moystner said okay, perfect. Other than that, we've got budgets this week, so we'll see how some of that goes. I do still have, we ran a hiring process. I didn't have anybody get through that. I've still got one opening that we've had since November. So, probably going to have a 2<sup>nd</sup> one in December of this year. So, just so you guys are aware. Do you guys have any questions for me?

Tom said no. Thank you, Art.

### **Blight Discussion**

Missy said is it possible to get the blight discussion moved up right now?

Tom said sure.

Missy said any objections?

Tom said nope.

Missy said thanks. Bob, do you mind coming up again? Sorry to, I just want your input on this.

Tom said do you want Bob McCoy too?

Missy said yeah, Bob McCoy, do you want to come up too? Do you mind?

Bob McCoy said Bob McCoy, Winchester mayor. Haven't met you before Bob. Nice to meet you.

Missy said I did some research and I talked to Bob quite a bit and actually went out and did some driving around. I know we're all concerned about blighted homes around communities in Randolph County, so, I'm hoping that you can give me some insight on this. I've done a lot of research on it. So, I met with, or I talked to Sydnee over at RCU and asked for her to help on this because she's doing Brownfields and we can add that right in with that, blighted properties. I have concern, and I know you guys all have concerns about as you drive around every city and town and Winchester and probably outside of Randolph County, we're all struggling with this same situation, properties that are dangerous that are infringing on other lots or other houses. They're having to live beside that stuff. So, I've been talking with the state just a little bit on what we can do. And there are some blight grants out there. But the first thing they gave me an incentive to do was set up a program and we'll, we don't want to do any of this until Gary gets back, but this is where I need your input, that we give them a citation for having an unfit property. There's one that I was, just asked some friends, so I went and looked at, they bought a lot. They bought actually, 4 lots. They're going to build a home. Then they had it surveyed and figured out that their survey goes about 10 feet into a camper that's laying on it's side, trash all over the place, front door is broken in. It's been that way for many, many years according to the neighbors. So, I guess I, maybe, Bob, I'm asking if you, do you, where are the teeth to get some of these things? Do you have any advice for me?



Bob Jesse said when I was with the other department, in the minimum housing standards that we had covered blighted properties. And what we actually had a court they would go before. And most of the time, when we would tag a property, we would give them 30 days to get it cleaned up. If it didn't happen, then they went to a court hearing. At that point, the board could elect to charge them a fee. If they didn't take care of it at that point, the city would actually clean it up and put a lien against the property. At that point, they can't sell it, they can't really do anything with it until they take care of that lien. And that same thing went with mowing properties, you know, people have a bad habit of letting their yard grow 2 feet high, which becomes bug infested. They would, the city would mow it, send them a bill, if not, put a lien on it.

Missy said yeah. Well, I was hoping that's what you would say. I knew you had to have had some experience with that. And do you want to talk about that later, or can we talk about now?

Tom said well I think he's going to come up with some minimum housing standards. That's the first step, getting that in place and getting an ordinance in place where we have a minimum housing standard.

Missy said yeah, yeah.

Meeks said what the city does now is they give them a citation on the nuisance ordinance. Then when they don't clean up the property, they get cited in actual court.

Missy said yes.

Meeks said I think other communities go to the board of works.

Missy said yes.

Meeks said but the City of Winchester.

Missy said they don't have to.

Meeks said well you sometimes get sued, like one of the cities here got sued because of it.

Missy said right.

Meeks said you don't have to, but if you go to court, you've got an actual judge giving you a court order to tear it down and then it gets added back onto their property taxes.

Missy said yeah.

Meeks said the issue is then you don't recover that money because those empty lots are not worth, how much does it cost, about 15,000?



Bob McCoy said I've got one down on south Main now it's going to cost 6,000 just to do abatement for the asbestos and then I've got another 12,000 in tear down, plus acquiring the property. So, we're about, we're going to be 20,000 in to have an empty lot that's worth less than 5 grand. And it'll end up going to the neighbor.

Meeks said it'll end up going to tax sale.

Bob McCoy said yeah. I mean it cleans up the area, but it's not, we don't make money by any means.

Missy said right and I don't think we should.

Bob McCoy said and recovering what we have in it was, it's 20 years later. But that's just a fact of life when it comes down to it.

Meeks said like I told Bob, going through actual court as opposed to board of works, does cost you probably 60 days more.

Tom said you have a judge ruling.

Meeks said you have a judge ruling. He can appeal it, go to the Appellate court. If he doesn't appeal it within 30 days, it's done. Like, you know, the board of works problem is, well, you can appeal that to the board. The board of works, you can appeal it to the, we just cut that section out.

Bob McCoy said but back to kind of where the problem not necessarily starts, but where we experience a lot of this is tax sales.

Meeks said yes.

Bob McCoy said and I guess my question is we know what houses are going to go to tax sale for the most part, is there any way we can get those houses looked at prior to them being sold because what happens is they're bought at a tax sale. And I've got one down on Short Street right now. It was sold to a couple, bought and sold to a couple, they pay so much down, they won't sell it, they want to buy it on contract. The house, the floors were rotten, the wiring was all gone, no plumbing, and they just ended up in this house, because for one thing, they're taking advantage of people that have very little or have bad credit. But that house should have never, that buyer should have had to repair it before it's ever sold.

Missy said right.

Bob McCoy said I mean, when you're a realtor, you've got to have you know, the disclosure, although that's very vague sometimes.

Tom said sure.

Bob McCoy said but you've got to have a disclosure stating is the wiring good, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And so, to stop it right there would be a benefit.

Missy said so, what.

Laura said can I just say that the property is still owned by the property owner until it goes to tax sale.

Bob McCoy said and that's a problem getting in to even looking at it.

Laura said so, I don't understand how anybody thinks we can take it before tax sale.

Meeks said well I think that, well the answer to that question is you know what the list is, then there you go. You have the inspector make, go down that list.

Missy said I'm not saying we take it before the tax sale. I'm saying.

Meeks said well you still do the tax sale.

Bob McCoy said not necessarily take it.

Tom said inspect it.

Bob McCoy said inspect it.

Missy said inspect it.

Laura said okay. Well we do have the tax list. I mean, that's not an issue. It's just not our property. So, how do you get somebody on?

Meeks said well you do the inspection then and then if it doesn't meet the standards.

Bob McCoy said technically, you can't be on the property.

Laura said that's what I was saying.

Missy said right.

Laura said so, I don't know how you could go inspect someone's property. They own it.

Missy said first of all, you've got cities and towns have to purchase it. And that can be at a lower rate than letting somebody else come in and make a bid on it.

Bob McCoy said at a certificate sale, yes.

Missy said right.

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Laura said not a tax sale.

Bob McCoy said at a tax sale, we could be in 10 grand just in back taxes and mowing liens and everything else, which the mowing liens, we put on.

Missy said could the county relieve that, I mean, knowing you're not going to collect on it anyway, a lot of times?

Laura said no way.

Missy said no? The answer is no?

Bob McCoy said huh uh.

Missy said so, could we come up with a fund to award to cities and towns and they have to come in and present it. So, could we award them funding so they can? Can cities or towns purchase it?

Meeks said well, anybody can purchase it.

Missy said right.

Meeks said the problem is you cannot forgive the taxes because the taxes aren't all, all the taxes do not go to Randolph County.

Missy said yeah.

Meeks said it goes all the, and there's a state statute that's very specific.

Bob Jessee said in order to inspect it, you'd have to have the owner's permission to enter it, or some type of court order stating that we have the right to do that. I don't think you could just go up to a property and open that door and go in it.

Missy said no.

Tom said so, if put a minimum housing standard in and Bob calls Bob and says we want this property, is there anything we do, do we have to go to court first?

Meeks said well you have to see if it's a violation of the ordinance and so you have to go to court and get an order to get into it.

Missy said would that go before city court or county court?

Meeks said county. I wouldn't do it in front of city. I don't know that the city has the jurisdiction for it.

Missy said no.

Tom said so, no matter what, it's going to be a tough process.

Meeks said we have a whole year. You have a year from the tax sale to the certificate.

Missy said yeah, but eventually, we've got to get moving somewhere.

Tom said we do.

Meeks said I mean, it's not like you don't have time. Once that tax sale hits, you have a whole year before they can get possession of it. So, you have, so, if you can identify those properties, then you have plenty of time before that person can sell that to the next person.

Bob McCoy said right, but you still would have to have the owner's permission to enter it to inspect it.

Meeks said not if you had a court order for it.

Bob McCoy said now I did do some, I actually hired somebody with a drone and actually inspected one here in town, because the outside, it was obvious. I mean, you could see through the house, but yet it sold.

Tom said so, once again, basically the starting point is the minimum housing standard. We need to get that in place first.

Bob Jessee said you've got to have some kind of standard set up.

Tom said yep, so.

Meeks said we have an unsafe building standard already.

Bob McCoy said and that's the, well, we adopted state code, right, 36-79, which is unsafe buildings.

Meeks said the county has that too right now.

Missy said it isn't just cities and towns. It could be property out in the county also. There's a house up on 27 that.

Bob McCoy said oh, yeah, exactly. I think the county's adopted the same statute.

Meeks said they had to, to get the grant.

Bob McCoy said but I think it still comes down to well, his time, enforcing it, once it gets to him, whether he's got staffing, whether we've got attorney to, you know, there's just a lot to it.



Missy said there's a lot to it, but there's a lot of those houses around that are making our communities look horrible.

Bob McCoy said oh, you're exactly right. I mean, we've, we've got somewhere with it, but it's took me 6 years to get 15 of them down, and there's a lot more to go.

Missy said and other cities and towns are the same way. I mean, whether it's down in Modoc in a house that burnt, and they just you know, couldn't repair and it's sitting there and then what's Modoc doing for it?

Bob McCoy and then funding on top of it, I mean you don't just, just money.

Missy said and we have to appropriate money, so much money per year to try to take care of some of those.

Tom said so, since we already have the unsafe housing standard, we can already.

Meeks said got to look at it. I'm not a building commissioner if you're looking at me. I don't know what that.

Tom said what it entails, whether you know, we can already send you know, there's something that is definitely unsafe, send it to court, or send it to a judge.

Missy said and Bob, I'm not talking about right now, and anymore in the future, of trying to go into a house that people are occupying. I'm talking about houses that have been deserted for 20 years, and that.

Bob Jessee said even at that, it still belongs to somebody.

Missy said right.

Bob Jessee said if you want to walk around the house and look in the windows, you might get by with that.

Tom said we can't do that either.

Bob McCoy said other than from an alley, from a street, technically.

Meeks said you have to stay on the street.

Bob McCoy said yeah, it's got to be within public view. And that's how we address nuisances is the same way. I mean, if it's not within public view, we technically, won't know it's there unless we trespass. The problem we have with nuisance, we can see most of them because.

Missy said yeah, you can see them from the sidewalk. You can see them from the road.

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Bob McCoy said exactly.

Missy said well, I'm going to meet with her, and my thought was that we put so much money in a funding process and when we get permission to do so, that the cities and towns, they have to buy the property at a tax sale. The county's not going to be involved in that. It cost you a 100 bucks. You buy the property in a tax sale. And then, at that point, come forward and ask for funding for teardowns. And, I've just talked to one company who takes down houses and does that kind of stuff. And saying they even are to the point they've talked to other excavating companies who said we're willing to jump in and start at a reduced rate to tear some of this stuff down like happened just north of the cemetery there. And that would help greatly. And then tear down dumpsters and.

Bob McCoy said yeah, that and working with solid waste and Best Way to get a better rate.

Missy said that was the other thing.

Bob McCoy said and I know Union City has already, we've talked about it. We've all got, I just got actually, I got one right now ready for demo and probably one right after that. I think Union City is probably sitting on 5 or 6 right now, and it's a matter of cost.

Missy said yeah. And what, a lot of people, you don't understand in town, until you go and you really get looking at it with the person who is living beside it, it can be 12 feet between those houses. So, if a dilapidated house happens to get caught on fire, if you're 12 feet away, it's 12 feet away from your property and the chances of you losing your property too are pretty bad.

Bob McCoy said then throw in rodents and everything else that go with it. I mean, groundhogs climbing.

Missy said skunks in that one area now are terrible. That's that neighborhood's issue is all the skunks that have decided to take, make their home in a couple of those houses. And then cat fights with the skunks, and it's kind of gotten, I mean it's really gotten out of, you know what I'm talking about in that area.

Bob McCoy said oh yeah, exactly.

Missy said they're the ones, well I'm going to meet with her next week. And she's going to try some, she thinks there's, along with that, there can be some grants that Randolph County can get because we would decide on what we would appropriate the fund, they would come, the cities would come, cities and towns, this is what we've got, and we have purchased it at tax sale, we need funding to do the tear down.

Bob McCoy said and we've pushed like ICDA. No luck getting anything. And then they'll do, but they'll do a building, but they won't do a house.

Missy said they won't do a home.

Bob McCoy said they need to get the program back to the homes and start taking care of it that way. I mean, we've got a few buildings that we could go that route, but overall, it's mostly just blighted homes that need to come down. And they've been blighted for many, many years. A lot of people say well you could rehab that. I've been in plenty of them and they're not, you can't rehab them.

Missy said no, no.

Tom said I think we've all agreed that we'd put some funding in it. Has this been brought before the council about any potential funding in the future, from the county point of view?

Bob McCoy said I think we've talked more to the commissioners about it than anything. But I know I think it's even back on the agenda for RCU Tuesday?

Missy said I think it is. Yeah, it is.

Bob McCoy said well yeah, I mean, if we could tap in a little funding, it would be great.

Tom said funding, EDIT funding? What funding would?

Meeks said you'll have a hard time with EDIT, right? And that's going to go away.

Tom said that's going to go away. I know we can use renewable. That's pretty much.

Meeks said EDIT right now, is what I would say. And you'd probably need to get, talk to RCU and get a program that's some sort of matching. You know, you put in 10,000, we'll put in 2,500 or, you know, you put in 2,500, we're putting 2,500, something like that, you know.

Missy said the city of Columbus.

Meeks said up to a certain amount because you're limited on funding too, right?

Missy said I mean, not the city, in the city of Columbus, Jacob Sipe is there now. He's with the change in government in Indianapolis, he's the economic development director, or community director there, no economic development. Anyway, their community development, like ours over here, they use some funding for that realizing that's the best thing for, I mean, for all things, but they have supported a blight program.

Bob McCoy said well we've put back money out of EDIT every year for blight and sidewalks that.

Missy said think there're other entities that if they would step in and help out, that are, quite frankly, more able to financially do it.

Bob McCoy said but the process, like Meeks said, you buy a tax sale property, you're going to wait a year. You buy a certificate sale property four or five months. I mean, and it already had been on the tax, you know, so, it's a very long process.

Missy said I know it is, but at some point, I know you agree with me, that we've got to start it.

Bob McCoy said right.

Missy said we've got to do something.

Bob McCoy said and then there's been instances where we've had people that actually know that we'd like to see some of this stuff go and actually approach us and say hey I would like, I've got one right now, I would like to move away. My house is falling down and I can't afford to pay the taxes anymore, and basically say, it needs demoed and we work that route too. And that works really well because although, we had to pay for it, but it cleans it up.

Missy said it's unfortunate that we have to pay for a mess that somebody else leaves behind, but I think we're going to have to or we're going to continue to see this grow.

Bob McCoy said and most of these are probably not insured to top it all off. So, you have a house sitting beside you that's falling down and potential to burn, and then if the neighbor's house would burn, they're like oh, I don't have insurance. I mean it's a bad situation.

Missy said Bob, can you think of anything else?

Bob Jessee said we could go on and on and on.

Missy said I know. I know. I guess that I see the advantage of Randolph County is we have smaller communities and I think we can attack our problems maybe a little better than cities that have 50,000 population and more bureaucracy I call it.

Bob Jessee said where is the city with homeless people? Does anybody deal with that or has that been an issue?

Meeks said that's not been an issue.

Bob McCoy said I mean, we do have homeless people but I think a lot of it is homeless by choice because you try to help them, you try to get them in the Muncie Mission or wherever, and.

Bob Jessee said 80% of them is that way. They don't want help.

Bob McCoy said yeah, and it's, a lot of it's drugs. I mean, there are a few.

Missy said and mental health issues.



Bob McCoy said yeah. There are a few that actually are, you know, hard down on their luck and we've tried to get them places, but, it's just, and we see it here because we're small.

Missy said and we're not used to, you know, we're not, we haven't got.

Bob McCoy said even getting somebody into a shelter, you've got to get into a bigger city like Richmond or Muncie, and they struggle to provide housing too.

Missy said okay, thanks. I appreciate both of your input.

Tom said you're going to look into unsafe housing standard that's already in place also to see if we can start some of that?

Bob Jessee said yeah.

Missy said thanks Bob. Appreciate it.

Tom said thank you.

**Minutes of July 7, 2025 & July 21, 2025**

Tom said minutes. We've looked at the minutes from July 7<sup>th</sup> and July 21<sup>st</sup>.

Missy said motion to accept.

Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Payroll Claims \$353,209.36**

Tom said we have payroll claims of \$353,209.36.

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Regular Claims \$2,680,572.63**

Tom said regular claims of \$2,680,572.63.

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Randolph County Tourism July Claim \$2,365.66**

**Randolph County Tourism August Claim \$2,365.66**

Tom said have a tourism claims for July and August for 2,365.66 each month.

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Randolph County United Claim \$16,245.45**

Tom said Randolph County United claim for \$16,245.45.

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Leap email back up quote**

Tom said we have an email from Leap about a quote, a back up quote in the amount of 1,164.80 per month.

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Old Hwy barn maintenance**

Tom said okay, the old highway barn maintenance. Jay, Jake, you also want to come up? State your name.

Jay Long said Jay Long, Randolph County highway superintendent.

Jake Donham said Jake Donham building coordinator.

Tom said I think we've, well, I met with the other day, Gary, Missy's been out there, looking at different solutions of where to go. I know there's, I think we want to keep the building.

Missy said uh huh.

Tom said so, we think we need to maintain it. So, have you come up with some starting points?

Jay Long said I have come up with some. I don't know if you, did you get to look at anything out there or not?

Jake Donham said I was just emailed about looking at the chimney and I just had questions on how far we go with it, below the roofline, all the way out, you know, wasn't sure which direction you wanted to go. And so, I had contacted Jay to see if he had any other input on it or what, if there was anymore discussion. And then he said there was a handful of other things that he was looking at as well.

Tom said I think we just take it, leave it above the roofline with that new roof so we don't have to get into the new roof and just cap it, take it down just right above the roofline so the water, we won't have any water problems, and seal around it and put a cap on there.

Missy said that's exactly what I was thinking.

Tom said the roof is in really good shape and we'll have to get into the roof otherwise, just to make it safe.

Jake Donham said okay, yeah.

Jay Long said I just made a small list. Both the garage doors need to be replaced. They work now, but they're not very operable.

Tom said yeah, they're rough.



Jay Long said there're 3 window panels in there that need to be replaced. Right now, they've got tape and stuff on them. It would be nice just to fix them. It'd be pretty cheap to do it.

Jake Donham said do you want to keep the windows or just want to have them blanked in? Depending on what we do with the building, if we don't need windows, it's less to look in and see what's in there.

Tom said my thoughts are, well in looking what windows we want to keep and not, because to clean up the outside, I think we just reskin the whole building, and we stay, because we looked, talked about painting it and then looked around and you're going to have 60% of the cost in that when there's a lot of damaged metal already, the main building.

Jay Long said yes.

Tom said talking about the main. So, with that, we can look at windows and if there're some of them we don't need, that you know, we could, that would be a good time to go over and closing them.

Jake Donham said yeah, I mean if we're going to just do a storage facility, I would, my suggestion would be to eliminate windows altogether. That way, you don't have the opportunity for people to peek in there and see what's going on or see what's in there to mess with. And if we're going to reskin the whole thing, just skin the whole thing, is do away with windows altogether. Same thing with the garage door. Do you want windows in it so people can see in or not? I mean, how much natural light do we need in a storage facility?

Jay Long said not really. There're lights inside.

Jake Donham said a garage door without windows would probably be cheaper than with.

Jay Long said uh huh.

Jake Donham said just throwing thoughts out there. I don't know exactly what our intentions are or what we want to do with it or if we need natural light. I don't know all the logistics of it I suppose.

Missy said the other thing I thought about natural, the windows don't necessarily have to be where somebody can see in. Could we go up about 15, 20 feet, just to allow some natural light in there during times?

Jake Donham said that's whatever you guys want to do. What you're using it for, I don't know.

Missy said yeah, well, I want your opinion.

Jake Donham said I mean, it's whatever you want to do. I just, well, when I call a contractor in, I want to know what we're doing so, like if I'm ordering a garage door, do you want insulated, do

you want steel? Do you need a handheld opener, do a keypad? Just a lot of the details, I mean, instead of them putting a huge package together with all the options.

Missy said right. I don't think we need all those windows.

Jake Donham said what we want. Do you need both garage doors? Can you just operate with one in and one out?

Tom said you need both garage doors.

Jay Long said yeah, both garage doors.

Tom said because it would just depend on what, I hate to close a garage door, because it could be divided, you know, the sheriff's department has talked about storing stuff out there and the highway department. So, if we would have to eventually divide the inside, we could come from both directions.

Jay Long said yeah, sure.

Tom said alright, well, you know, who knows, down the road so, I don't think you want to do away with the garage door. And I would, that building was heated in the past, so, I would think that we'd want to go with insulated garage doors while we're going to do that. I'm either way on the windows. I kind of agree that somebody not looking in. If you want some natural light, you could go ahead and put lights in the garage door and raise them up so it's above a panel or two higher.

Jake Donham said sure.

Tom said either way, I don't know what you would think on that.

Jay Long said it doesn't really matter.

Tom said if it doesn't matter, then don't spend the extra money.

Jake Donham said that's what I'm looking at. I'm a tightwad. I'm going to save money if we can. If we're just using it for storage, I mean, just make it look pretty from the outside and go with it.

Jay Long said and I'm with you. I mean, we don't really need people looking in the windows and things of that nature or anything. There was one safety thing out there. One of the, the metal grate on the west side of the building.

Tom said yes.

Jay Long said it was actually falling in. It was pretty bad. We actually had a company out of Union City make it so, we actually replaced that last week. So, it does have a brand new grate on it. Just for safety concerns and things like that.

Tom said if someone would have stepped on that after dark.

Jay Long said yeah, and the only other thing I seen was the gutters, looked like the gutters were in good shape. They just need to be back up. A couple of them are coming down.

Tom said yeah, on the south side, some of them are missing, aren't they? I was thinking some ice took part of them down or maybe they're just hanging a little bit?

Jay Long said I think they were just hanging down.

Tom said okay. Do we need, well, while we're doing that, do we need to put ice guards on that roof?

Jay Long said yeah, yeah.

Tom said because I think that's what happened to the gutters to begin with. There's no ice, on that metal roof, you get ice in the winter time, it's just going to happen again.

Jay Long said other than that, I think the fencing looked really good and I mean, that's about it.

Tom said then what about the other building? Is it salvageable or would we be better off just take it down?

Jay Long said it's still a nice building for storage.

Jake Donham said I just seen the chimney. I didn't know that we were looking at another building.

Tom said well there're 2 buildings there.

Jay Long said he's talking to the north.

Tom said the building to the north and it has a dirt floor in it. It's an old, an old building.

Jay Long said I mean, it's got some board and stuff that are missing on the inside, but I mean, other than that, structurally, it's still a good building. I mean, I think.

Tom said a solid building. You think you could utilize it for storage?

Jay Long said yeah, and then Jake, if you want to go look at it this afternoon, we can.

Tom said okay. Anything else?



Jay Long said no, that's it?

Tom said so, do you have pretty much a starting point? You could go out there and maybe we'll come back and talk about it next month about what we want to for sure actually do, we'll all visit it again, look at it again?

Jake Donham said do you want us to get some pricing on all that stuff we just discussed then? Is that what you're thinking, or what do you want to do?

Missy said I think we do.

Jake Donham said okay.

Tom said yep. Do you want me, I'll go out there with you after, if you have time, after this meeting, I can run out there.

Jake Donham said whatever you want to do, because my thought was with as much stuff as Jay had on his list and then me and the chimney and the roof, whatever, you know, some of this stuff, we may be able to use one contractor. Get pricing for all of it versus having multiples.

Tom said I think we'd be better off.

Tom said and that way we know what we're pricing as well. So, I think we've got a pretty good idea now, so, we can get the ball rolling and try to get some numbers.

Jay Long said you're pretty familiar with working with people with the garage doors and stuff like that. I mean, if he's wanting to do all that, I'm okay with that.

Jake Donham said okay.

Jay Long said whatever makes it easiest.

Jake Donham said yeah.

Tom said and you guys took the boom out to look at that chimney, so you think it's stable enough right now that it's not going to, because it looks a little rough.

Jake Donham said so, Lonnie sent me pictures and contacted me after I'd looked at you know, from the ground, and he said it's, physically, it's not going to fall.

Tom said there's a liner that's holding it all in place?

Jake Donham said yeah. It's solid. He said what we're seeing is just the outer bricks have just frozen, and popped, and they're cracked, but they're not loose.

Tom said okay.

Jake Donham said but it's just a matter of time before, it's not going to get any better.

Tom said I was afraid it was going to come through the roof if we had the wrong weather.

Jake Donham said it's pretty chunky once he, because he had an aerial of it and it's pretty thick. I mean, it's got another layer inside yet and then the main center chimney as well. So, it's pretty solid yet. It's not a risk of, the wind is not going to blow it over or anything like that right now. So, we've got time to.

Tom said you think we're alright to wait, and that is part of the overall project?

Jake Donham said yeah, yeah, because it's going to be, man that thing's, that's a lot of brick up there.

Tom said it is a lot of brick up there.

Jake Donham said I'll get with Jay and kind of compile our list and make some calls and try to get some numbers for our next meeting.

Jay Long said one other thing, Tom. That old tower that's out there. We, there's nothing being used with that tower, do we need that tower, or is it, what are you thinking on that? Leave that tower or?

Jake Donham said are we talking about the one they had the radio equipment stuff on?

Jay Long said yeah, yeah.

Jake Donham said it's whatever you want to do. I mean, whether it comes down or.

Tom said if we're not using it and it's eventually going to be an issue, structurally-wise, because it's not a new tower by any means. Then we probably should just consider taking it down while we're doing this.

Jake Donham said okay, yeah.

Tom said we don't want to fix the building up and then it falls across or across the road, because it's right there, 10 feet from the road.

Missy said it is a good location, good facility. I mean, they talked about selling it, but I think it's maybe something we definitely want to hang onto, make it right. Do you guys agree with that?

Jake Donham said I want to get rid of as many buildings as we can to be honest with you. I want to save the taxpayers of Randolph County as much as I can to liquidate buildings and that's less I've got to take care of. So, you're not talking to the guy about saving buildings.



Missy said I know that the sheriff had talked about doing some training out there and it would be a good place for that. Is that lumber still out there?

Jay Long said yes, yep.

Missy said I thought they were going to clear everything out.

Jay Long said there's a tag on it but I can't seem to figure out what that tag goes to. It just says save and I would have thought we'd have used it, or you know what I mean, donated it or something by now.

Jake Donham said I know they'd had an auction and liquidated most of the relief items out of there. I don't know if it sold and didn't get gone or I don't know.

Jay Long said I'm not a 100% sure. I've been trying to dig around to figure out what, you know.

Missy said so, would a good thing for us to do would say hey, we would, if you want to give that lumber to the county, we'd take it? Yes or no?

Jake Donham said well if the tornado people are done with it, it's ours, the way I look at it. I mean if it's in there, let's use it if it can be used in a project. I'll get ahold of Tarter first, that had the auction, and see if that was on their sale bill beforehand to see if it is. If it went through the auction, obviously it belonged to somebody. Maybe they can track it down.

Tom said there is a skid of screws and nails and such there also.

Jay Long said yeah.

Jake Donham said yeah. Or, is Ceann still in charge of the tornado relief stuff?

Missy said I don't know who's doing what.

Jake Donham said because they still have an office at the old hospital with a bunch of stuff in it too. Is that still something they're using? I'll reach out to Ceann for you guys too.

Tom said thank you, Jake.

Missy said I can call her if you want me to. Do you want me to call her? I can call her.

Jake Donham said it's whatever you want to do. It doesn't matter to me. I can call her.

Missy said good, you can do it.

Jake Donham said you opened up the door and I shut it didn't I? No, I'll get ahold of her and see where they're at with that building and if there's any more material stuff, I'll check with Tarter.

Tom said anything else? Thank you.

**Health Department employee reduction**

Tom said Missy, Health Department employee reduction. Is there anybody here from the health department?

Missy said anybody, do you mind coming up real quick? I read through the proposal of doing part-time people. I guess I've never been throughout my teaching career, part-time people, you don't know when they're coming. You don't know, they can change. I don't like the idea of part-time people. I'd rather go with one person and I hate to reduce another person, but, I don't know if there're any thoughts Tom, you have on that or not?

Tom said I think the budget's going to take care of it, you get down to it, but I would agree. When we added the positions, we received the extra funding. We talked about there could be temporary positions.

Missy said yeah.

Tom said so, you know, whatever is, but yeah, to keep part-time people just to try to keep part-time people it, you know, is going to be tough.

Sherri Thompson said the reason that we did the part-time is because prior to all of this, we did have a part-time clinic nurse, and we did have a part-time vital records person. The school liaison is something that the HFI money and the governor wants us to keep. So, that is the explanation of why we put in those, the part-time.

Missy said yeah, I'd like to do away with the part-time and have full time people only. They don't get any insurance, so I think that the likelihood that they're going to resign at some point to take a better job is going to put you in that, we're going to keep doing that over and over again.

Sherri Thompson said so, would you want us, I guess my question is are you, do you want a full-time school liaison health?

Missy said no.

Sherri Thompson said you just want to do away with all of them?

Missy said I've talked to the schools and while they really appreciate the supplies that are come and dropped off to them, they could find, I haven't talked to all of them. I've talked to 2 of the 5. But they feel like they could either have somebody pick those up and bring them, you know, get them there, or maybe, I don't know. But for a full-time person to drop off you know, hygiene and stuff. I know she does more than that, but.

Sherri Thompson said yes, she does. She, I won't get into all that, but yes, she does do a lot more than that. Okay, so you're thinking more of what, only our essential full-time people, no extra help anywhere?

Missy said well I think we need to wait until Gary's back to discuss that.

Tom said well and that's up to, the health officer what you guys come back with.

Missy said right.

Tom said I mean, we don't run your department.

Sherri Thompson said right.

Tom said but once again, yeah, it's having 3 full-time people, I would rather you combine the positions and have 1 full-time instead of 3 part-time, to try to cover those jobs. I know that's kind of hard because they're completely different jobs, especially with the health nurse.

Sherri Thompson said yes.

Tom said you know, the clinic nurse would be tough for the others. So, just thought on how, if you could potentially work just all three need to be eliminated.

Sherri Thompson said okay. Okay, I'll take that to Dr. Sowinski and go from there.

Missy said anything else you need us to?

Sherri Thompson said no.

Missy said does your time clock work over there, so people are clocking in and clocking out?

Sherri Thompson said yes. I will tell you that I, personally, it worked better on the old one. My fingerprint on the new one doesn't want to work as well, but yes, it seems to be working just fine. A lot of times if people start.

Missy said and everybody is clocking in and clocking out?

Sherri Thompson said when, yes, that's what I was going to say. If they start in a different place or they're not able to clock in, you know, some people have meetings in Jay County and they'll be there whatever, then we.

Missy said but don't they have an app on their phone that they can clock in?

Laura said no.

Sherri Thompson said no.

Laura said I don't think anybody in the county does.

Missy said okay. I just wondered.



Laura said I don't know if it's an option. We would have to check into that, but.

Missy said yeah, it would probably cost and I'm not sure that's worth it.

Meeks said there was an option for their computer. I never thought there was an app.

Sherri Thompson said so, even with the cuts that we, in our pay, and I say, just the full-time people, even with those cuts, you still want us to try to just do?

Tom said well, it's, you have to present your budget your budget to the council. We don't handle the budget side, so it'll be presented to the council.

Sherri Thompson said okay.

Laura said and I will say that the budgets have been advertised so we can't go up. We can go down. We can't go up.

Sherri Thompson said okay. Anything else?

Missy said can't think of anything. Thank you.

Tom said thank you, Sherri.

Missy said you know, we all hate to do these cuts, but face it, the state government has issued that we are going to have to make cuts in the near future.

Tom said yep.

#### **Union City Emergency Services contract**

Tom said Union City Emergency Services contract. Meeks, I think you.

Meeks said I made some changes. I sent it out. I haven't heard back from Union City. I don't know if you want to bring it up at the next meeting when Gary's here? I used their numbers and the only thing I really changed was to clarify that if they're out of those 2 townships, then you know, Brad's the director.

Tom said Brad is the director?

Meeks said yeah. I don't think that was clear at all in that thing. And the other thing is I don't know why service, like there's three of these contracting there, and it was 2 county entities and 1 Union City, so, I just took that out. It was historical from the old, old, old contracts that I didn't do, so, I kind of cleaned that up.

Tom said just cleaned up a little bit.

Meeks said yeah. So, I did send it out. I think, asked them their comments on it.



Tom said we'll just table it until next month?

Meeks said that would be, I don't think it, yeah.

Tom said it's for 26, 27, 28, so we're not in any.

Meeks said yeah, I didn't know if they had any ideas about it.

Tom said until we hear back from them, hopefully, we will.

Meeks said I think we just put it on the calendar next thing and if we don't hear back from them, we pass it.

Tom said okay.

Meeks said more than happy to shoot out an email and tell them you're going to put it on your agenda.

Tom said and I can give the fire chief a call too.

Meeks said and I emailed it to him too.

Tom said yeah, I saw that. Do we need to table that?

Meeks said I think you just bring it up at the next meeting.

Tom said okay. Well that's the bottom of the agenda. Missy, do you have anything?

Missy said nope, I don't.

**Citizen Comments (3 minutes)**

Tom said citizen comments? Anybody have anything?

Larry Preston said Tom, I just want to say that I went to the Health Board meeting with Sherri and Ken the other night. And they made a concerted effort to detail their budget they showed, and they put a lot of effort in it. And there was another thing, Missy, I might have told you, the sanitarian deemed 8 houses in Randolph County uninhabitable. So, there's a start for your start.

Tom said thank you Larry.

Missy said should we bring people up to date on our meeting last Friday?

Larry Preston said you can if you want.

Missy said why don't you come up and you can add to it. One thing that's going to be, Meeks, should we?

Meeks said it's about the security.

Larry Preston said courthouse security.

Meeks said I can briefly say it. Yeah, the committee met. Two judges and the sheriff are going to present tomorrow to see how many more deputies that we believe is needed. I think that's the first part is the budgetary process. And then the, the judge is going to call the judge of Blackford County, because apparently, there are a lot of grants out there for the actual equipment, not necessarily for the deputies. So, it is progressing. If we did this, you're probably going to have to get somebody to redesign the front foyer. So, we might have to get a contractor. We're going to have to do something, because I'm not sure why, we had the doors, and then we had the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of doors. I think that was all heat loss. Well, I know it is, because if you look at the, I remember, discussing a lot back then. I don't know what needs to be then redesigned. So, we might have to get some redesign, but the east and west doors would definitely be closed. In case of a fire, you can leave. And then there's going to be questions about who do you scan? Do you scan everybody? Do you scan visitors? Do you scan the employees that actually work here and the attorneys that work here? Who do you kind of, you know. Some counties will scan everybody. I go to Richmond and they don't scan me at all. I can walk right in as an attorney. So, I assume they don't scan the employees either, but anybody else, so. Delaware County doesn't either. I give them an ID. So, it's, I think it's going to happen. I think it needs to happen. I was in court on Friday. You had people just, you know, people getting kicked out of their house. Literally, 3 of them got kicked out of their house. Some of them were crying, you know, you don't know how, you know, they're emotional. People get their kids taken away. We heard a kid crying. I don't know why the kid was crying up here. But you know, it's just very emotional when you get up here. So, really need to think about security.

Tom said anyone else?

Missy said nope, that's it.

Tom said Larry, have you got anything to add to that?

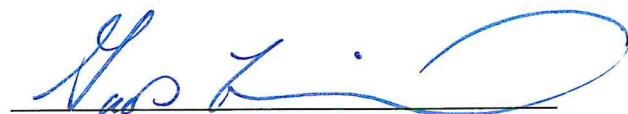
Larry Preston said no.

### **Adjournment**

Tom said okay. Motion to adjourn?

Missy made a motion to adjourn. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Meeting adjourned.

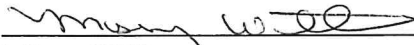
Reviewed and accepted this 2 day of September, 2025



Gary Friend

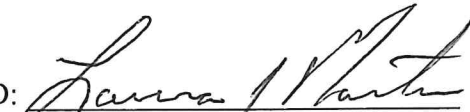


Tom Kerns



Missy Williams

ATTESTED:

  
Laura J Martin, Auditor

