

Randolph County Council

August 4, 2026, 2026

The Randolph County Council met at their regular meeting at 9:00 AM in the Commissioners and Council Room in the Courthouse with the following members present: Board President Greg Cheesman, Beverly Fields, Todd Holaday, David Lenkensdofer and Larry Preston. Also present was Randolph County Auditor Laura Martin, Sheriff Art Moystner and County Attorney Meeks Cockerill.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner's update

Missy Williams gave an update on possibly having the county administrator, and so, I think that's something we may want to move forward with in the future, once we see what the budget might hold. And that's just a person who could, and this is my opinion of it, there're grants out there that that person could seek out, see what's available for our needs, and then work through that because right now there are a lot of big counties who have an administrator who seeks out any kind of grants and applies for them. And that's not put on the councilor, the commissioners or anybody in there to try to do that. Sherri Thompson is going to be up to talk to you. One big thing, Tony Jacobs from Argo came in to talk a little bit about the jail. It seems like it's taking a while to get some work going in there. So, kind of tried to maybe get that moved forward a little bit more. And then Jake, as always, Jake Donham, as always, is always looking at repair before it gets out of control. And so, he is always working at the hospital, the old hospital, the jail, the EMS, and he has some paving that's going to take place at those three areas. Not the jail, he'll seal that parking lot to preserve it for a couple more years because there's going to be construction there. Seems to be silly to want to pave and then tear it up. In my opinion, we are very lucky to have him taking care of our buildings and grounds. William Clarkson came with a re-entry and recovery program. We listened to that but made no commitments whatsoever. There seemed to be a lot of people who want to get involved in that, and while I think it's a good purpose and a good way to try to help people who have suffered from addiction, there just seems to be a lot of them out there and they're all seeking funding from the county. There is funding from the State, that in my opinion, they need to go after first, then have a strong plan on how that's going to work and what their facility is going to look like. Deb Johnting came in and I think several of us attended the last Area Planning on the solar, where is it going, what are our guidelines. We seem to be, we set some ordinances and then we seemed to want to revisit those often, how much, what's the set back now? I thought we just did the set back, and we're all agreed to that and now there's more discussion on the set back being further away. Screening was discussed. That's where they're putting these little pine trees, which, I've seen deer chewing on those trees, just personally, when I was driving somewhere. If we just want to make this as difficult for everybody as we can, I know we can come up with a lot of that. I'm hoping personally that we just simplify it and say here's the setback, you have to have screening if it's, if

the neighbor is you know, too close to you on the property line or whatever. But there's more discussion to happen with that on Area Planning. The rest I think you're going to have people here today that are going to give, Clyde Shaffer was here with the RCU discussion and I know he's back again today. I think that's it. I think the other people are going to be here for you to talk.

Greg said okay. Back to the jail, Missy, if you would.

Missy Williams said yeah.

Greg said you guys accepted the bid yesterday.

Missy Williams said yes, we did.

Greg said and who did we get?

Missy Williams said Carroll Electric.

Greg said Carroll Electric.

Missy Williams said yeah, the HVAC.

Greg said and that bid was for how much?

Missy Williams said I don't have it written down here. I'll have to look it up on my sheet.

Greg said it was near 6 ½ million or so.

Missy Williams said oh yeah, yeah.

Greg said I think one bid was 6 ½ and the other was 7 ½.

Missy Williams said yeah.

Greg said thereabouts.

Missy Williams said I was thinking one, it was 6.57 and then the other was about 200,000 higher than that if I had it correctly.

Greg said okay.

Missy Williams said I actually didn't bring that paper today.

David said and the bonding is only for 5 million.

Greg said the bonding is only for 5, yes. That's why I wanted to bring that up in council.

Missy Williams said yeah, yeah.

David said has anybody discussed where that extra money is coming from?

Missy Williams said no.

Greg said no that was not discussed yesterday. It was just let's go, let's go, let's go. Who do we need to talk to about that, David?

David said I don't know.

Laura said Gary made mention of asking if the bond can be extended out another million, but we do have the funding available so, he wasn't really in favor of extending the bond out. I sent Meeks the information to find out if that was possible. I don't think it is, but I sent it to Meeks.

David said so, where's the funding? What's he proposing?

Laura said Special LIT, or we have wind and solar.

David said that all needs to be discussed before this body.

Laura said they didn't approve anything for the extra funding, but this project has already been bonded and passed to go. Not one bid came in below that 5 million mark. Even the previous bids did not come in lower.

David said that should have been all brought back to this body here so we could all discuss it, so, to get the financing because some of that money is committed.

Laura said right.

Missy Williams said lots of projects.

Laura said and we looked at that. I think there was approximately 6 million uncommitted in wind and solar, and I did not look at the LIT to see where we were at with that.

David said 1.8 million yesterday was for the culverts, so, that's helped that.

Laura said right.

David said 6.2.

Laura said correct.

Todd said the spreadsheet that you had started, are keeping, I thought we had almost already committed all the Special LIT money out. We had that, we're using that for.

David said there's some left over yet, Todd.

Missy Williams said yeah.

Laura said yeah, I just don't know that amount.

Missy Williams said just a little over a million I think was left over. But there were going to be other things to come up also between now and the end of the year. We know that. I would like to recommend because it helped me a lot that we have another joint committee between the commissioners and the council where we can discuss some of these things together and all of us add our knowledge in or our input. We kind of said we would do that. And I got a lot out of that meeting. And then we just didn't set another meeting up. But I think it's very beneficial for us to communicate together so we know what everybody's doing.

Greg said as David just touched on, I wanted you to talk about the money that was taken out of Renewables for culverts.

Missy Williams said yeah, it was just another appropriation to try to cover the bills and get the job done.

Greg said that was, I wanted to get back to why we got to this point, because this contractor turned in bills a year late.

Missy Williams said exactly.

Greg said we were using, they were using the money appropriated for this year to pay for last year's stuff, which that money went back to the General Fund is my understanding. Is that right?

Laura said not necessarily General, because it's highway money.

Greg said okay, highway money. Excuse me.

Laura said but they had appropriated the money last year to pay this contractor and the contractor never submitted the bill.

Missy Williams said actually, the bills. They were multiple weren't there, Laura?

Laura said I don't know.

Missy Williams said three I thought. At least three bills I think.

Laura said Jay is back there saying two.

Greg said Jay is saying two, okay.

Laura said so, anyway, the money was spent on other projects. So, they didn't have that money in there. So, we're having to do an additional appropriation to get money this year to pay for last year.

Todd said so, that's the first time I heard someone say the money was spent on other projects.

Laura said yes.

Todd said so that money did not go, it didn't come back or it sit or not get spent. It got spent. It didn't get spent on the work that had been.

Laura said that's my understanding. They'll talk about it here in a little bit. Joe and Jay are both here to, because you guys will have to approve that money too.

Todd said well we're getting in a mess it sounds like, because you know, if we're not forecasting and holding on to that money that we know we're going to eventually get billed for and we go ahead spend that, now we've got to, you know, find the money for the work that was done. We're not keeping things, it doesn't look like we're keeping things very orderly from a timing and bookkeeping standpoint. I, what I heard at the commissioners' meeting yesterday, it sounded like that money never got spent because it was, you know, they never turned in the bill, but we found other projects, used that, you know, used that money up, now we've got to find some more. We need to get out, I think we, you know, we're now a million and a half over on the jail it sounds like. I think we did come under on the building that we looked at for the highway.

Laura said uh huh.

Todd said so, we probably need to starting truing some of this stuff up and just get a clear picture on where we stand, because we've got the 5 ½ million, there's whatever committed over the next 5 years for the bridges, now we've got another request for culverts. At some point, we may over extend ourselves if we're not careful, I think.

Laura said Meeks, can you weigh in on the bond situation Gary asked yesterday if we could extend our bond out a million dollars to cover that jail?

Meeks said I don't think so.

Laura said I didn't think so either.

Meeks said I think that's a firm figure.

Laura said I sent you an email. I didn't know if you.

Meeks said oh, I did not get that email.

Todd said all the work that went in that bond and I can't imagine that you could do something like that.

Meeks said no, you cannot. I can guarantee whatever that maximum amount is.

Laura said yeah, I don't think so either. He asked me and I'm like, I don't think so. Gary's like, I thought we set it up that way, and not that I'm aware of, but.

Meeks said it's not a, it's.

Laura said I pulled the bond paperwork out, looked through it.

Meeks said there's a maximum.

Laura said I did not see where it said we could do that.

Meeks said there's a maximum allowed that we it's not.

Laura said okay, that's what I thought so, we would have to re-bond, which is a big project to make.

Meeks said we'd have to do something else, either have to re-bond it or, yeah, re-bond it.

Greg said re-bond it or get the money elsewhere, right?

Laura said correct.

David said well for the next meeting, I'll have an updated report on all our projects with the monies available because I'm concerned too, Todd. We've got to make sure we don't over extend ourselves. I think we'll be okay, but.

Greg said well we got second floor coming up too.

David said well that's still part of that total. I always advise you guys to look at Nikki's reports every month because she does do a nice job of keeping exact monies we have available to use on our projects. To me, it's the projects amount that we need to discuss before we go ahead and agree to do the projects.

Missy Williams said again, I would suggest that we have a joint meeting and just discuss and see where everybody's at, that we, it's easy to, you know, to lose concept of what we're working together for all the time. And I just think dialogue and communication with the council and commissioners is a very good idea. At least for me, I got a lot of knowledge out of that, our meeting that we had jointly together in the evening. I would just recommend somehow, if we could do that again, or set those. I was hoping we were going to do them you know, maybe trimesters or something.

Bev said periodically.

Greg said have the commissioners heard any report on how things are going with the Rescue 911 out at the 911 PSAP Center, as far as training and all that? Are we getting, are we coming along on that or?

Missy Williams said a little I think. I don't get, we get little, I've gotten small emails about you know, couple you know, concerns, not concerns about anyone, just that always trying to keep employees there and that would be another one I think would be good to have the company who is doing that for us come in again and say how long do we stay with that, because it's an expensive bill. That's what I'm saying.

Greg said that's what I was trying to get to. Are we getting training done quick enough, where we can get away before the end of the 6 months is what I'm getting at?

Missy Williams said I know, I don't know. Barry would have to answer that one I guess.

Greg said okay.

Missy Williams said and the biggest thing we need.

Meeks said I think Barry's going to say no, from the emails I got.

Missy Williams said yeah, yeah.

Greg said okay. See, I've not heard a thing, so, I did not know.

Missy Williams said well I have, and I'm glad you said that because you know, I didn't know if those emails were, he wanted them to be held confidential.

Meeks said I just going to assume he's going to say no. At least that's the distinction I got from his emails.

Greg said okay. Well thank you for that.

Missy Williams said yeah, me to. The one last Wednesday, I think particularly.

Todd said has he completed his analyses of the department and made all the recommendations he's going to make and all that?

Missy Williams said no.

Todd said no.

Missy Williams said I assume he's working with that department and letting the director say here's what we need to work on.

Greg said I am not, yeah, what he does, I'm not concerned about the time, I'm worried, I was concerned about just getting people trained where we can get away from the Rescue 911.

Missy Williams said yeah. Right. And have low turnover, so we keep our people.

Todd said well, where I was going with that is, I thought he was going to come back with, we've put quite a bit of money into that, with some recommendation about how that possibly might involve a re-organization of that whole department.

Greg said, well, that'll be the commissioners' job.

Todd said yeah.

Greg said alright. Anybody else got anything for Missy?

Missy Williams said thank you.

Clyde Shaffer, RCU 2028 funding

Greg said alright, next on the list, Clyde Shaffer, RCU funding.

Clyde Shaffer said Clyde Shaffer, RCU president, 7963 North Delaware County Line Road.

Ruthie Rhoades said Ruthie Rhoades, Randolph County United office administrator.

Greg said very good.

Clyde Shaffer said so, I handed out budgets, the details, really not here to go through the details, but I wanted you guys to at least have them. The commissioners give us direction and we had spoke to some of the council that we needed to bring our budget like, way down, period. And so, what we're doing is, we're going from 242,000 to 150,000 as our ask from the commissioners. Yesterday, we presented to them and I asked if we should come to the council. They said yes. So, we wanted to come to you guys, lay out, so, the commissioners are going to put a contract, well, Meeks is going to put a contract together for one-year, correct Meeks?

Meeks said so, that's what they voted on.

Clyde said that's what they said. So, for one year, at the 150,000, okay. So, for us, that's a 39% cut in our budget. So, when you look at some of the details, we're still trying to pull them together. Bottom line is the numbers at the bottom is what matters. That's what we're going to stay within. And so, you'll see us doing quite a bit of restructuring. We'll also be moving the office down to the first floor, to the old movie theater and getting off the second floor, so we'll have better access. That will benefit Tourism and the Chamber the most, to be down on the first floor. So, we proposed a 28 and a 29, but they want to wait, let us put a year under our belt and 29, you guys just don't know. That's the biggest problem there. So, we're fine with that. So, basically, once we get the contract, it'll be for 150,000 if you guys, I guess appropriate it properly. So, questions for us?

Larry said not questions, Clyde. I just wanted to make, for the record, I talked to Scott this week. Obviously, he's in Alaska. He told me he was coming with a presentation and told me a lot about it, so, I just wanted to let you know that Scott did communicate that he was there.

Clyde Shaffer said okay good. Yeah. So, the process was instead of us bringing budgets that get voted down, bring another budget, our deal was we had Tom Kerns from commissioners, Scott from you guys. We just met with them and we hammered it out to where everyone felt it was a doable, workable situation. I wanted Ruthie up here because as it looks right now, we're the, we'll be taking the lead for us, as an organization and you know, all that, we still have to work through. But that's the most likely course. And while we're up here, Dave asked a question yesterday, because it is been an issue. Dave asked hey, are you guys going to have someone in the office every day and be open every day? Our people will be at work every day, but we're different than the courthouse. The courthouse, if you need something from the recorder, you come to the courthouse and you get it. Economic Development, we have to go out. We've got to be in Losantville, Parker, Farmland, Union City. Our staff has to leave the office to go visit customers, visit businesses to help them grow and do things. And so, it becomes difficult for us to have someone sitting in that office every day, all day. Now they're all at work. And the way we've been doing it, if anybody walks up to the office, there's a sign that says hey, here's a number you can call, Ruthie, Kerry, somebody will answer that and say hey, we're in Union City, or we put when we're going to be back. But, we just don't think it's good use of our money to hire someone to sit in there all day, just to wait for someone to walk in the door. And business is different today. There's, I couldn't imagine, I don't even think of a single business of a single business that is new to Randolph County that's walked into our door, out of the blue without a phone call or an appointment. Things are just different. The way things are today. If a business is coming, wants to meet with us, they're going to call us. And they're going to say, hey, we're going to be in Randolph County next week, can we meet. And of course, we'll accommodate, absolutely accommodate. So, but I just want to be really clear with that because it's an issue. Dave is correct. It's a criticism we've took a lot of. Our Tourism director is 20 hours a week. And then you've got Kerry and Ruthie, which are full time. But you know, our commitment is Ruthie is going to be coming to your meetings. She's going to come to the commissioner meetings. We are going to do a better job of communicating, which we have not done, and we need to. So, we're going to be changing the way we do things to be more accommodating. But, with a limited staff, it's difficult for us to run quote, office hours. Anything else?

Bev said sounds like a plan.

Clyde Shaffer said sort of. We're working on it. So, alright. Any, nothing, we're good, Greg?

Greg said so far as I can tell, nobody else has questions. Do we need to vote on something today then? This is just a presentation.

Clyde Shaffer said yeah. We just want you guys.

Greg said appreciate the information.

Clyde Shaffer said well we wanted you guys to be informed, you know, because I mean, the way the government works, it's complicated. You go to the commissioners, if the council doesn't know, then they're in the dark and they have no idea what's going on, or vice versa, so.

Greg said we spend a lot of time there in the dark.

Clyde Shaffer said in the dark?

Greg said yeah.

Clyde Shaffer said I know. I noticed in the last conversation. So, we just want to try to be really open and keep you guys informed.

Bev said appreciate the information.

Bethany Sibert – Overtime appropriation

Greg said okay, next on the agenda, Bethany Sibert, overtime appropriation.

Bethany Sibert said Bethany Sibert.

Greg said Sibert, okay, excuse me.

Bethany Sibert said it's okay. You're not the first, you're not the only one.

Greg said and who do you represent?

Bethany Sibert said Veteran Service Office.

Greg said okay, Veteran Service.

Bethany Sibert said yeah. So, we're asking for a little more for this year because we got hit with a 4-day training this year that we did not know about last year when we did our budget. So, we're already out of overtime because of it. So, we were told to request a little bit more to cover. We have 2 more trainings this year that we have to go to. The next one is actually in Pokagon. So, we have that and then we did a couple more hours of overtime, just for the office, because sometimes we have veterans who come in over lunch break if we're still there, or they're at the end of the day. So, we're just requesting a little bit extra to cover for the rest of the year, and then next year we ask for more because they said the 4-day trainings are probably going to be a yearly thing now.

Bev said how much are you requesting?

Bethany Sibert said 300 for this year.

Laura said it's in your additional appropriations at the bottom.

Greg said oh, okay.

Laura said I think she just wanted to come in and explain to you why she's asking for that.

Bethany Sibert said yeah.

Larry said if I looked at it right, you had \$560.00 worth of overtime appropriated for this year?

Bethany Sibert said uh huh.

Larry said and next year, you're putting in 900, so that would cover this 300?

Bethany Sibert said yeah. It would, yeah, yeah. And then just a little extra, because like I said, sometimes we have veterans who, they come in and they go over our lunch break or they come in towards the end of the day, and we go, usually, it's only about 15 minutes, so, it's not like we're there for an hour after you know, the shift ends or anything. Generally, it's just they're asking questions and we set up appointments for them to come in later.

Todd said thanks for coming in and explaining it. It seems like a lot of times we get appropriations without any explanation. So, appreciate it.

Bethany Sibert said you're welcome.

Greg said I've heard some complaints about the office being closed during the day.

Bethany Sibert said has that been lately? So, my co-worker has been out for 3 weeks.

Greg said for illness?

Bethany Sibert said she had surgery.

Greg said okay.

Bethany Sibert said so, she has not been cleared to come back yet. She was hoping this week, last week she was hoping to be back, but they said no, we're going to go for another week. So, she has a final evaluation on Friday. So, she's hoping next week.

Greg said okay.

Bethany Sibert said and I was telling veterans, I am here by myself, my phone's ringing, both my doors are being knocked and pulled on, I've got appointments already in there, I've got walk ins, I can't handle everything by myself. So, I did put notes on the doors saying due to staff shortages, you know, please call and schedule an appointment. So, that's the way I'm trying to handle it right now, all by myself.

Greg said okay. So, it's just you and one other person there in the office?

Bethany Sibert said yeah, and she's not there for I think, going on 4 weeks.

Bev said are you both considered full time?

Bethany Sibert said yes.

Bev said well, those things do happen.

Greg said okay. Anybody else have any questions? Hearing none, we thank you.

Missy Williams said I've got a question.

Greg said yep, yes Missy.

Missy Williams said do I need to come up there?

Greg said yeah. Yeah, if you're going to talk, we need to have you here.

Missy Williams said I guess I just have a question. I came to visit and it was closed, and I did get in and was able to give them my information to sometime in the future to help me research some things. Somebody can be driving from Ft. Wayne and they get here and they can't get in. I think we need to find an alternative to shutting that down and saying you can't come in, you know. I don't know what the answer is.

Bethany Sibert said it's not that they, I don't want to let them in.

Missy Williams said I know.

Bethany Sibert said it's just, if I have an appointment and my phone's ringing or somebody is at my door, I'd have to stop mid appointment you know, talking to that person or having them tell me their story of what's going on and what they want to do, to go, you know, talk to somebody else. And I've done that before, but then sometimes these people, even if you're like okay, I have an appointment, they still want to tell you their story. And then, even sometimes if an appointment just started, they can take anywhere from 10 minutes if it's something short like getting the property tax to, I've had veterans who their paperwork has taken over an hour. And you know, sometimes these people are like oh well I'm not waiting, or I'll go do something else and come back later. I have more appointments later. I have other walk-ins later.

Missy Williams said and I understand that. If they could just leave some information like I did, for the future, I just, well, if we could get somebody to cover over there for, you know, I don't know. I don't know an answer to it.

Bethany Sibert said it's hard.

Missy Williams said but I just hate to see you drive a distance and then you can't get in. So, I don't know how we can help her out to, you know, I don't know. But, I'd be frustrated if I drove

from a distance and, because you guys do, do a great job on coming up with information for people for head stones and everything else. There was a person who I think came in close after me who just wanted the marker, to order the marker to go on the back of a tombstone, and said that they, you know, they read the sign and then thought oh shoot, and they came from Muncie. I don't know, but just, I don't know what an alternative is but we want to.

David said it would be nice if people would call ahead.

Missy Williams said yes it would.

David said I've worked with Bethany quite a bit the last year on a veteran issue that was close to myself and they are a busy group.

Missy Williams said oh, I know, they are.

David said appointments are just one right after another, and I always, from now on I would place a call, just because of that busyness.

Missy Williams said I mean, just wonder if we could get her a little, I don't know, I don't know who we'd have do that, but if there was anybody who can just help out over there a little bit, whatever.

Todd said we've got a budget that only really allows for two people right now.

Missy Williams said right.

Todd said and those two positions are filled. One of them is out, so, it's all fallen on you and that's kind of tough.

Bethany Sibert said like I said, hopefully, she'll be cleared by the end of this week and she can come back.

Greg said okay, appreciate, and your training, do both of you go to the training?

Bethany Sibert said we do.

Greg said so that office is closed during that time then too?

Bethany Sibert said right. And we always put up a sign on the door stating you know, closed for training.

Greg said could you put, possibly put that on your recording on your phone so people call in, maybe calling in ahead of time, that way they'd have more notice.

Bethany Sibert said we could yeah. Yeah.

Todd said is there any opportunity for you to take that training separately or is it only offered once?

Bethany Sibert said so, the State of Indiana is divided into districts and they actually just reorganized them, and they want you to go with your district if you can, if possible. But if not, if for some reason you miss it, you can go to another district and do theirs. It just might be farther.

Todd said well that might be better.

Bethany Sibert said and they don't cover the same training either. They go over different trainings, so.

Greg said anything else? We'll get to the appropriation here in a little bit.

Bethany Sibert said okay, thank you.

Greg said thanks for explaining it to us. Appreciate you coming.

Bethany Sibert said oh yeah. Thank you.

Sherri Thompson – Grant request

Greg said Sherri Thompson, grant request.

Sherri Thompson said good morning. Sherri Thompson, Health Department coordinator. The reason that I'm here today is to ask permission to apply for the Naloxone grant, which is Narcan. We do usually apply for this every year and the Narcan is distributed to the schools and police, whoever would need that. I think there's a list there that shows.

Greg said and it says here your amount's requesting for 300 kits?

Sherri Thompson said yes.

Greg said and at what price are we talking on that?

Sherri Thompson said there is no price.

Greg said oh, there is no price.

Sherri Thompson said yeah, no. We do not pay for it.

Greg said you just apply for the grant and then you get it?

Sherri Thompson said yes.

Greg said okay. So, the county is not involved monetarily?

Sherri Thompson said no. There's no expense to us or the county.

Todd made a motion to approve. Bev seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Greg said very good.

Sherri Thompson said did anyone have any questions for me?

Greg said not today.

Sherri Thompson said okay. Thank you.

Laura Martin – The County Fiscal body shall review at its first meeting in August the estimated property tax levy limits and the estimated reductions due to circuit breakers.

Greg said okay, Laura Martin is next on the agenda.

Laura said based off of IC code, I'm supposed to present to you the estimated property tax levy limits and the estimated reduction due to circuit breaker at your first meeting in August. I do not have that. And most counties are in the same boat, that everybody was pushing to get their process finished by August 1st, which is our due date. We did get ours submitted on Friday, but the State then sends me the certifications and I have not received those from the State yet. The hold up was basically, our utility rail files that we get from the State. The State assesses the utilities, which is basically our Wind and Solar, and those, the first report that came in was wrong. And so, we contacted them and the second report, although we processed it, was not quite right either. We still have not received the corrected from the State, but we went ahead and processed based off of our vendor's recommendation. And Baker Tilly is looking at our numbers and just wanted to let you know that the reason I don't have what I'm supposed to present to you today. I will tell you that our proposed budget for 2027 is \$29,545,938 and our proposed levy is 9,106,794.

Todd said is that before credits?

Laura said I believe so, yes.

Todd said so about 6% of that goes back to the homeowner. So, 9 million is what we would roughly expect to receive from property tax?

Laura said yes. Yes, and we did submit our budget to the state and they approved it as is. We did not have to cut anything per the State's guidelines. So, we are within our max levy with the State on what was requested.

Todd said right. So, I didn't realize that's the State of Indiana places an assessed value on the Wind Farm properties.

Laura said uh huh.

Todd said and we, isn't this the first year we have one come off?

Laura said the abatement, yes.

Todd said and so this will be the first year where their assessments actually matters, is that true? I mean, it'll be interesting to see the effect of that.

Laura said well it's not going to give us more money because.

Todd said but it should decrease the amount of money collected from the other property taxpayers in those townships?

Laura said yes, correct.

Todd said it would be nice to see you know, we have the projections that show what it's likely to do, now when the abatement comes off, it would be nice to see what actually happened as a result of that. Was it the first Wind Farm?

Laura said uh huh.

Todd said it would be nice to see what that actually did to the townships' rates. Is there a way for us to see that?

Laura said I can look at it.

Meeks said you'd have to hire Baker Tilly to do an analysis because they'd have to be able to compare it to what it would have been.

Todd said there's no way for us to do that math ourselves?

Laura said good luck with that. You're the mathematician.

Todd said well, I'll try. I'd like to take a look, because it, I mean, those are the kinds of things that people would like, you know, they say there's not benefit to having these wind farms, you know, some would say that.

Meeks said you could look at last year's and this year's.

Todd said I mean, I could figure it personally.

Meeks said well just look at the last year's rate and this year's rate. I mean, there's no development really gone in there.

Todd said sure.

Meeks said so, give you a pretty good idea.

Todd said okay. Thank you.

Greg said any other questions for Laura on this?

Joe Copeland – Large culvert funding

Greg said okay, moving on, Joe Copeland and Jay, large culvert funding.

Joe Copeland said good morning.

Jay Long said morning.

Joe Copeland said Joe Copeland, highway engineer.

Jay Long said Jay Long, Randolph County highway.

Joe Copeland said culverts, we've got several, several large culverts to replace. The list is pretty long. The problem is, just an estimate, it's not quite 1.8 million dollars, \$1,765,552.00. Just an estimate, okay, of the ones that. And I went through and sized these. Most all these except one, currently has a load limit on it. I put that in the third column. Goes anywhere from 6 ton to 14 tons. And some of these are in pretty sad shape. They'd estimated that we replace those in 2025. So, we're behind.

Greg said we're behind, you're saying we're behind.

Joe Copeland said the problem is money. We don't have enough to quickly get these replaced. It's going to take years at the rate that we're, we've got our money now with bridge and motor vehicle highway. So, what I'm here to ask for is additional money from maybe Solar or Wind to help us move through these quicker. Some of these are pretty good size. I mean, you're talking 18-foot spans on a couple of these. And it's, some of this is going to take some real time to do. We've got aerial power pretty much I think, over every one of them. And then, that doesn't include what's buried under ground. And then the crane to set some of these bigger ones, especially those 18-footers, it's going to take a large crane. And the crane, when it sets there on the road, the road's not wide enough to handle the crane. So, we've got to build a platform for that crane to sit and put his outriggers out so he can get in there and set those concrete pieces. And they weigh quite a bit. So, we went to the commissioners yesterday and they didn't have a problem with it, so, I'm here today to see if we could get some additional money to start replacing several of these. I'm hoping to get a lot of these done in hopefully 3 years.

Greg said I was getting ready to ask how long a time span you think about getting to complete this?

Joe Copeland said I'm hoping, and of course, a lot of it depends on utilities. You know, if they shut power off over head for us, that would help tremendously. But, if they can't, you know, they may have to move the power lines or we may have to purchase right-of-way. I hate to think that we have to do that, but you never know.

Todd said do we contract these out or?

Joe Copeland said yes.

Todd said okay, this isn't something we can. That one that's on Arba Pike that's got, is that inches, is that why it's such a weird, it's not very expensive, the 5th or 6th one down, that's the size.

Joe Copeland said yeah, that's a, that's a corrugated metal pipe arch.

Todd said so it's just a small?

Joe Copeland said yeah, it's smaller, 66 by 51. That's in inches. Yeah, Ed caught me on that yesterday.

Larry said Joe, due to the fact that you know, we're kind of getting a little bit worried about the wind and solar money, so on and so forth if it's a 3-year project, could we appropriate the money in 3 years, like say 1.8, could you do 6 this year, 6 next year, and 6, or is that the way that it would work?

Joe Copeland said we can try. We can pick which ones we're going to do and get an idea of how much per year we're going to need and split them up and get a schedule.

Larry said that's kind of the way we do on the bridges, isn't it? Kind of, sort of?

Joe Copeland said yeah. Yeah, we can put together a schedule. That's not a problem, try to go after those lower load limits first, get those out of the way, and ones with more traffic.

Todd said in the scheme of things, the total of this is less than the cost of one bridge, isn't it, roughly?

Joe Copeland said yeah, a good-sized bridge, yeah. Hopefully, we keep asking for Federal aid money at 80% from the Feds and State, so that helps a lot. But they won't give us money for culverts.

David said this definitely has to be done. And that was the original intent of Wind and Solar monies, a long time ago, was for roads, bridges and drainage.

Greg said correct.

David said this definitely follows the guidelines for that. I'd be in favor of letting them get a report back to us on which ones we need and allocating so much per year.

Greg said okay.

Bev said that sounds like a start of a plan anyway that we could.

Greg said I'd much rather do that because in three years, the cost of that stuff may be.

Todd said yeah, and I'd like to go ahead and add it to our list of projects so we can kind of see how it fits into the picture.

Larry said that's what I was thinking. In 3 years, you'll probably have another spreadsheet for the next 3, I would assume.

Greg said yeah, you can bring this to the next meeting next month and bring us an estimate of what you're wanting to do right away.

Joe Copeland said yes. I thought I would also put together a list of all the bridges that we have that we're working on, and how much we're obligated, and whether it's coming out of Wind and Solar or whether it's coming out of your MVH or Bridge. I mean, one or the other.

Bev said that would be great information, yeah.

Greg said yeah.

Joe Copeland said yeah, so we have an idea of what total, Gary has asked for that, but what our total obligation is at this point in time.

Greg said very good. That would be excellent.

Joe Copeland said alright. Here's the next thing, is November, the State's taking applications for Federal funding projects and bridges is the thing. So, do we want to, the question is do we want to put in for 2 more bridges paid at 80% from the Feds or not? And hopefully, that would help get an idea of what our obligation is.

Greg said my personal opinion is we need to get these bridges done too. They're just as important as the culverts and for 80% funding, that's, we got to try to find the 20% somewhere.

Joe Copeland said the only problem with the Feds in the State with the 80% funding is all, the design, the right-of-way and the inspection, we have to pay up front and then get reimbursed our 80%. Construction is different. We pay 20%, our 20% right up front before they'll even award it to the contractor. So, yeah, we have to have some money in the fund to be able to pay that up front and then we will get reimbursed.

Greg said yeah, we'll get reimbursed for the initial, for the design and all that, won't we?

Joe Copeland said uh huh.

Greg said and that can go back to the Renewables if that's what we use, but then the 20,000, we've just got to pay that out of MVH or something then don't we?

Joe Copeland said bridge or wind, solar, whatever it may be, yeah.

Todd said I think, Nikki, didn't you say something yesterday about having just gotten some money back on the?

Nikki Clevenger said yeah, it comes in slowly.

Todd said was it a couple years after the project?

Nikki Clevenger said yes.

Joe Copeland said some of the problem with when we finish out a project with the State, and I've had a talk with our consultant on change orders, but if we have money coming back, say that the job ran under okay, for a particular project, say bridge 32, they just finished up, they will not give us our reimbursement on what's left until they do a full audit on the project, okay. So, once the project has been audited, then they'll give us our money back. So, that includes change orders and I had a little discussion with our consultant, you know, we don't want to see change orders and if you do, you put a positive and you put a negative in there so the amount of the change order is small, because if we have to pay that, we're not going to get our 80% back until a few years down the road. So, I'll get that information together for your next meeting.

Greg said appreciate that, Joe, Jay. You guys, I understand you've got an awful big job to do. So, yeah, get that together and we'll try to get something appropriated for you so, get your stuff ordered and get it done.

Jay Long said yeah, we've got the guardrail quotes if you want to?

Greg said yes that would be neat.

Jay Long said now this is just basically for new guardrail. We didn't have enough time to get it used.

Greg said didn't have enough time to get a used?

Jay Long said yes.

Todd said so, the one they approved yesterday, without knowing the cost of it, at most was around \$8,000.00?

Jay Long said yeah.

Greg said yes, that's for new.

Jay Long said yeah.

David said and that's installed?

Jay Long said yeah. Which we're going to try to find some used, but we had to start somewhere with, you know, with this, so.

Greg said well this gives everybody an idea where, 40, \$35.00 a foot. Okay, thank you. Appreciate it.

Jay Long said appreciate it.

Greg said take care, Joe.

JD Prescott – Repeal and Replace property tax discussion

Greg said okay, JD Prescott.

JD Prescott said Mr. Chair, members of the council. JD Prescott serving house district 33, Randolph, Blackford, portions of Jay, Delaware, Henry counties. Here before you for a couple reasons. Original reason on the calendar was to talk about the property tax discussion. Going into next session, I've got a repeal and replacement proposal that I'm working on. I was also going to give kind of an overview of some of the other options that are being discussed as we move into next session. But, if it pleases the chair and the council, before we get into that, I also have a request to make for the council on a road re-naming. Is it okay if I go right into that Mr. chair?

Greg said go ahead.

JD Prescott said obviously, we had Brad Fisher tragically pass away here recently, just last week. And our road re-naming process before the General Assembly as we go through a summer study committee, and then legislator files a bill after it's been approved through the summer study. And, I've talked with the families, spoke with the family, spoken with Sheriff Moystner, as well, and I think we'd be appropriate to rename a section of State Road 36 right in front of Randolph Southern School Corporation, Brad Fisher Memorial Mile. We've got permission, so, normally, these requests would have had to have been done in June. The road and transportation committee actually meets today. I've gotten permission from the speaker to go ahead and do a late request and get it in today. But, to do so, I do need a blessing of the local elected body. So, with that, I would like to ask your permission to proceed with a road naming resolution to honor Marshall Brad Fisher.

Bev said I make a motion that we accept the request, move forward.

Greg said got a motion.

Todd said second.

Greg said Todd's second. All in favor?

All aye votes. Motion carried.

JD Prescott said thank you all. And if we could get the letter in at a later date, Senator Alexander is actually at the State House today for another road naming resolution, so we've kind of divided the task of getting this accomplished today. So, I'll give him the affirmative that you guys have approved that. And I appreciate that, and I know the family's very appreciative of everything going forward. That will roll right into the property tax session. Obviously, Senate Enrolled Act 1 is, got a lot of, lot of counties, lot of cities, communities all across the state, kind of scratching the head as we go forward here over the next few years on how we fund local units of government. I think there're a couple different options on the table that's being discussed as we go into the next property or next session of the General Assembly in terms of property taxes. Obviously, assessments are being looked at on one side of things with the assessment system being inconsistent, at best, just the way it's structured. Not quite all due to the assessor's or local assessors, as I was talking to ours here locally prior to the meeting but just based on the rules that they have to go by based from the state, processed the way it's structured and set up, the assessment system, at best is very inconsistent. So, I know that's one option that's being looked at. Chairman Thompson of our House Ways and Means committee who is really the chief architect of Senate Enrolled Act 1 alongside of Senator Holdman. He's got a proposal to kind of continue to go down the path of Senate Bill 1, which would be having that, moving towards a rate-based system versus a levy-based system, which would be a rate cap type system that would be put in place in the future, similar to the rate caps that's in the LIT portion of the change that was in Senate Bill 1, but a similar process to that with the property tax system, so each unit of government would have their own rate cap. Quite frankly, if we'd go down that path, I think it's going to continue to tighten your budgets even more and especially when you have the increased deductions and exemptions growing on the flip side of that too. I honestly don't know that that's the best strategy, long term, when it comes to funding our local units of government. What I try to remind my colleagues is not all units of government are the same. They don't all have, some are operating on much tighter margins than others. We're not all Hamilton County in that area. So, I am aware of the constraints that you're under here as a rural county and keeping that in mind. Another option that's on the table, Senator Mishler has a proposal to essentially give a 100% homestead deduction on the homeowner's side. I'm sure he's had that proposal for the last couple budget cycles as well. So, there's discussion there. He was planning on backfilling that with the Pre96 pension liability fund that's going to be rolling off once that liability is paid off of the debt. That fund would not entirely offset the 100% homestead deduction now. But, so, I believe the way his proposal was is through the General Assembly basically backfilling the rest of that through a credit of sort, and then also, there could be losses at the local level from that too. The alternative proposal that I've put forward and I've been working on over the last couple of years is 100% repeal of the property tax system and replace it with an entirely new system. And there's multiple reasons for that. I think the property tax system is broken beyond repair from the political standpoint. I think the property tax system is fixable, but I think it's politically suicide to fix it, to be honest with you, because the solution to the property tax system is honestly, you've got to get rid of all the exemptions and deductions, broaden your tax base, lower your rate. One of the major problems of the property tax system when we keep adding all these exemptions and deductions in place, shrink your assessed valuation base, but those who remain paying, pay a larger share of the tax burden year after year, right. And so, as your budgets are growing, as your expenditures are increasing due to inflations, your budgets are being constrained due to the circuit breaker loss, the increased deductions, you've got your NLGQ caps, but yet those that do pay into the property tax system, their bills keep going up. So,

we're in this situation now where homeowners aren't happy, business owners aren't happy, because they're seeing increased property taxes, but yet local units of government aren't happy because you're still seeing losses too, based on the way the system's structured and set up. So, I do think it's possible to fix it, like I said, but the system operating in arrears, you'd have to get rid of the exemptions and deductions and I think most people explaining that, to try and do it in a 30 second to a minute sound bite, like the political climate we're in, I think that would be difficult. I don't see that being politically viable. So, what I've come up with is a, a fix to the system would be a replacement with a system that is a broad tax base system that taxes everybody, but at a low liability, relatively speaking, compared to the property tax system. And that would be a 7% sales tax on the services. So, my original proposal would be to eliminate the property tax system between the ones, twos and three percents, and for those listening, when I refer to the one percents, residentials, your two percent, your rentals, your agricultures, three percents, everything else, your commercial properties. And eliminate that over a two-year period. And by doing so, we're looking at bringing in roughly 10.6 billion dollars in property taxes next year, following year, roughly 11.6 billion. That goes, that's statewide and not a penny goes to the state. It all goes to local units of government as you all know here before the council. But the replacement, if we did a 7% sales tax on services, that would bring between 13 and 15 billion dollars-worth of revenue with a few key exemptions. And those exemptions would be healthcare and social services. So, your doctors' visits, your nursing home visits, assisted living, that would also include daycare, that would all be sales tax exempt. Education, most education would already be sales tax exempt and non-profit, that way you're treating public and private education on a level playing field. And then, the last category would be any category that's already sales tax exempt on goods would remain sales tax exempt on services. So, your non-profits, your churches, with the exception of data centers. That's something that's come up. Data centers are sales tax exempt on goods, if we eliminate commercial property taxes, they wouldn't have property taxes. They would need to pay sales tax on goods and services at that point to pay their fair share along the way as well. So, again, if you keep that tax base broad at a 7%, you can actually bring in more revenue, enough to replace both your net levy's, plus your circuit breaker losses in most cases. Now, this would have to be collected statewide, right, because here in Randolph County, we hire a lot of our services out of county, and the same thing with other rural counties across the state. So, that would be collected statewide and sent back on a distribution formula. That, first off, 10% would go into a reserve account, build up a healthy reserve. I should mention too, if this system were to go in place, it would have to be phased, it would have to be 2027 would be the last year of assessments, 2028 would be the last year of property tax payable. You'd start paying out in 29. So, you'd have to operate on the property tax system for a 2-year period before you switched to the new system. Property tax operates in arrears. Sales tax on services, you're going to have to collect in advance. You'd start collecting on July 1st of 28. There would be a 6 month overlap where you're paying your last year, or your last half of property tax payments, but you're starting to pay sales tax on services. It's important, because you have to build up a healthy reserve account from the start. Property tax is a very stable tax in structure. Sales tax on services is very variable. So, you want to have it starting off with a 6-month reserve account. But you're going to continue to build that up. So, 10% would go into a, the reserve account. And then let's take the other 90% out, now let's put that into a bucket that's a 100. So, I'm going, as I say, the next amount I'm dividing of what's left in the 90%. 45% of that would go to school corporations. Roughly 45% of property tax dollars statewide go to schools for operations, debt services. So, we're mirroring where it goes with the

property taxes. I get that that's going to be a little bit different county to county on these ratios. But statewide average is 45%. Those dollars would follow the student just like we do on the education fund. That was very easy to figure out. The formula is already there, so you just mirror the education fund formula. 20% would go to county government and we'd follow a formula of 75% emphasis on population, 25% emphasis on miles of roadway, which rural versus an urban community. What that means for Randolph County specifically, you would see a, with based on that formula and distribution model, and this is a, I'm referring to a fiscal analysis put together by LSA or Legislative Services Agency, this is off last year's bill, so there's going to be changes to it that I'm going to discuss in a minute. But, just from an overall standpoint to show that the numbers work with the system, you would end up seeing a General Fund budget with the system of between 13.6 to 15.9 million, depending on the low or the high side of that estimates, in 2029, based on that proposal. Or, I'm sorry, based on 2028, because this was last year's bill, so it would have been a year behind. So, that would be a, a 5.4 to 7.7 million dollar increase in your General Fund budget with that funding formula. City governments would be the next bucket at 20% as well. They'd follow a similar formula, 75% emphasis on population, 25% on miles of roadway. Township government, fire districts, fire territories, and library boards, all your other smaller, really none of those of any formula I ran worked out great because they're so inconsistently funded across the state, especially looking at township government. You know, some have their own fire protection. Others have mutual aid agreements, are part of a fire district or a fire territory, so, because they're inconsistently funded, really none of the formulas worked great. So, what I ended up doing is a 5-year look back, averaged the net levy's, rate of inflation adjustments moving forward. To be honest, that's kind of a place holder for that. I think there needs to be more of a discussion on township government, fire districts, fire territories on how you're funding those. The, what would probably work out the best or make the most mathematical sense is to take the portions that was going towards township government, fire districts, take that and send it to the counties, have the counties, county councils then allocate back to the townships based on the needs locally, out of that total bucket, or have the conversation does the county take on those services themselves. But, to be honest, I didn't want to take on the township battle at the same time I was trying to take on the property tax discussion. But honestly, that would make the most sense as part of a discussion. And then TIF districts would be the last category. So, TIF districts would eventually go away, but you fund, you pay off the debt and the bond obligations through the revenue coming in with sales tax on services. Once the bonds are paid off, then that TIF would be dissolved and the funds that were going to pay off the TIF bonds would end up going back to the counties, well, into the funding formula to be split back up amongst all the other units of government. So, that's kind of the original proposal I've been working on since my, as I've been going on to this session. But I do want to give, I've been doing this kind of a statewide listening tour that's brought a lot of attention to us trying to sell this, trying to build support for it. And in those discussions, it's come up, speaking with some bond attorneys, that I was unaware of a contractual obligation a lot of your local unit of governments bonds which prohibits refinancing the bonds for periods up to 10 years, depending on the length of the bond. And due to that, that means you have to have a portion of the property tax system in place to back to, to legally back those bonds that you're contractually entered into for that 10-year period. So, I'm looking at doing is, is modifying this proposal to focus on the homeowners first, so a full repeal and elimination of the homeowners' property taxes within the 2-year period that I had previously outlined. But then, on the 2 and the 3% properties, they would still be paying into the property tax system to back the bonds, to have

that bond backing and assurity. A couple things, it gives us a little bit longer one way on building up that surplus in which you actually build up to a bigger surplus, a larger surplus to have some more bond stability for going forward. Takes care of that issue of meeting our contractual obligations and not putting any, or bond rating in jeopardy. But then it also gives us the ability to kind of phase this in to where you're not got to get hit with a big shock at once of switching from one system to a new system on funding local units of government. The way the math works out on that is, out of that 10.6 billion that I mentioned, of property taxes for next year that's going to be collected statewide, roughly 3.4 billion is your 1% property taxes, your homestead properties. And so, if we would add a sales tax exemption to business to business transactions on to the list of exemptions that I previously mentioned with the sales tax on services, that would drop that revenue to about 7, roughly 7 billion dollars. So, more than double what you need to replace your homestead property taxes but still be able to provide some additional revenue coming in to local units' government as you're facing some of these tighter constraints and inflation, but also, able to build up those healthy reserves more slowly over time as you're, until you eliminate the 2s and the 3 percents. And then also have reductions for property taxes on the 2s and the 3 percents as well. If we did that, I think you would have to put a rate cap type structure in as well, so you don't just see both systems continuing to grow over time. We would also make sure upon passage of the bill that there could be no new bonds tied to the property tax system as you're trying to phase off that system on to the new system. And then once you've met that threshold to where the bonds could be refinanced, you're past those contractual obligations, then we could move forward with the full repeal of the entire property tax system. Once that's done, there's also savings to local units' government and the state as well. Once you've eliminated the entirety of the property tax system, saving is between roughly 150 and 200 million dollars a year in expenditure and just collecting and remitting the tax versus sales tax on services. I mean, you eventually eliminate the assessor's office. You eliminate about half of DLGF. DLGF would still be there, but it would just be more of that budget oversight. From a transparency standpoint, you wouldn't have this back and forth problem right now where you're waiting on DLGF. And then it would also have some additional savings at some of your county office reduction and workload. Wouldn't eliminate any of the other offices, but it would be reduction in workload on some. And then from a revenue and a budgeting standpoint right now, you get your property tax disbursement twice a year. By moving with this system, it would be the same as your LIT and your Tourism tax, your Innkeepers tax and food and beverage that you get monthly distributions versus twice-a-year distributions. So, with that, I mean, I could go on, on this, but with that, I think I'd better just stop and talk about you want to if anybody has questions.

Greg said threw a lot at us.

JD Prescott said I did.

Larry said JD, for me JD, that was a good presentation because there're some figures that I kind of understand that I didn't understand before. And Greg and I went to a meeting about a month ago and I didn't understand too much, but, that was a good presentation for the figures.

JD Prescott said thank you.

Todd said I agree. I was anxious about the repeal because I didn't think the replacement would be a very good idea, but I liked your ideas on the replacement side. What are the major categories of service that would provide that revenue since you have cut out health care, I mean?

JD Prescott said yeah, yeah.

Todd said entertainment, what are the other, utilities?

JD Prescott said so, utilities are already taxed. So, there wouldn't be a new tax on utilities because they're already taxes. Same thing with hotel tax, innkeeper's tax. You already have an innkeeper's tax. You wouldn't have another service tax there. But really, any labor-type service that's not already taxed would be in that category. Your larger.

Todd said personal services.

JD Prescott said yeah, so, your larger expenditures that would be taxed would be your attorney's fees. I'm sorry Meeks. And attorney fees, construction costs would be on the labor piece. So, but let's think through that for a second on the construction costs. Yes, that's going to be one of your higher expenditures. Well let's think a \$300,000.00 house for example. \$300,000.00 house, roughly half of that cost is going to be the labor, half of it is the material. You're already paying sales tax on the material. So, 150,000 for the labor. So, take that times 7%, that comes out to 10,500. And then, so, yeah, that would be an additional 10,500 on top of the cost of a \$300,000.00 house. But you no longer have the property tax system with this system. So, if you're up against a 1% tax cap, that's \$3,000.00 a year plus. Well, because you know that assessment is going to continue to go up each year, so it's not going to stay at 3,000. It's going to continue to go up. But let's say static at 3,000 for conversation, that would be 3 1/2 year break even. So, my argument to homeowners on that or people that are thinking about building a home, would you rather pay that 10,500 up front and be done with it or would you rather pay 3,000 plus for the life of the home? So, that would be one of your big, larger expenditures. Realtor fees, this question comes up quite a bit. Realtor fees would be a service tax. It wouldn't be on the sales price of the home. It would be on the, just on the commission. So, again, let's use the \$300,000.00 house for example. If they're charging a 7% commission, now you're at 21,000 is your commission for selling that property. You're taxed on the 21,000, not on the \$300,000.00 sale. So, it would be some of your, so, what you're doing with this system is you're broadening your base out. Everybody is paying into it. And that's how you're able to generate more revenue. Plus, non-citizens, anybody coming across our state line and buying services within our state, they're going to be paying into it.

Todd said are other states already doing this as far as on services? I saw Missouri was switching off of a, they're the most recent state to drop their income tax. The more you do consumer-based taxes, and the less you put on ownership of property and so on, I know there're pluses and minuses, but I would assume it would probably encourage the economic more to have, more the consumer tax versus the property tax.

JD Prescott said yeah, so, there're a few other states that have sales tax on services. I think there are 4 states that have sales tax on services, just in that sales tax on services. There're a few

others that have a gross-receipts tax. But, no state has completely eliminated the property tax system and you know, switched to sales tax on services. This would be a first in the nation if we did this. There are a few other states that have proposals to eliminate property taxes, some of which don't have proposals to back fill. They've got you know, ballot referendum or ballot initiatives to, it's been basically citizen led to put it on the, to eliminate property taxes, but they don't have a, they don't have a replacement, if those ballot initiatives are passed, those General Assemblies would have to figure out what they're going to from a replacement.

Todd said what would you do if out of state investors in property, do you have anything to try to gain revenue from that, because that's, I mean here, obviously, that's a big thing?

JD Prescott said right.

Todd said you have a lot of Ohio ownership of Randolph County property.

JD Prescott said yeah, so, they would still be, I mean, if they're buying services of their property, they would still be paying into the system. They're just going to be paying in on the service side now versus the property tax system. So, when you're looking at interstate commerce, you've got to treat everybody, you know, fairly, as best you can. But they would still be paying in. I mean, if you are a you know, absent, I guess absentee landowner, I mean, those are going to be the ones that are hiring more of their services done, their landscaping services, their mowing services. They would still be paying on the service side, just not on the property tax side. I would say this, I think the LSA estimates are actually low, because the way the legislative services agency, any time they put a fiscal analysis for us, they have to use static scoring. They can't use dynamic scoring. If we were the first state in the nation to repeal the property tax system for the homeowners, then with that, you now, that long-term plan of eliminating for all property tax types, and I failed to mention earlier, this would also eliminate business personal property as well, tax, once it's fully phased in. But that would, I think would be tremendous economic growth to our state and home construction coming in, bringing people into our state to be able to actually own your home and not continue to make those monthly payments on your property and then from the business. I think it would be a huge economic development tool for the state and each of our counties, as well.

David said JD you mentioned there would be several entities that would not be, they would be exempt from this, health care doctors. So, they will not be paying into that. So, technically, they'll not be paying into any services rendered to them. Right now, Randolph County has 894 parcels that nobody pays property tax on. To me, everybody should pay a minimum amount due to services provided by police, EMS, that would not happen on either case. So, especially for not-for-profits and the exemptions we currently have in place.

JD Prescott said yeah, so, let me clarify like on the medical for example, if it's a for profit health care provider. If you went to the, if you went to a doctor's visit, you would not have to pay sales tax on services. But if that's for-profit hospital, if they hired a construction company to build a, they would still have to pay, it's the actual, if it's a healthcare service, that would be what's sales tax exempt, not the, so, I do want to clarify that. But if it's a non-profit, you are correct, they would not be. And I think that's, that's one thing that we could look at, right, you could limit

those deductions or exemptions and not you know, tighten that up even further, and then have a lower rate. I understand your point. And let me add onto that just a little bit too, because that's one of the, as I've been going around the state doing these listening tours, a question that comes up quite a bit is why we're bringing in more revenue than we're replacing with the property tax system? Are we just growing government? Well, there's a couple reasons for that. One, you have to have that very healthy revenue reserve account because you've got to have stability for the bonding markets when you're moving to a variable tax system. But, the other part of that is I know how the General Assembly systems work. I've been in a few years now. Any bill that goes through, it's very rare that a bill goes through unamended. I want to keep that tax base broad and have your rate lower. Really, what's truly needed is 5 ½ to 6 per cent for the replacement and still have increases to local unit government build up the reserve account. So, if you could actually keep that base broad or even broaden it further, and you could really do this at a lower rate, but I want to have enough buffer in case an exemption gets added to the bill that I might not necessarily want, but that's the will of the body. I want to make sure to have enough buffer that the math would still work if an unexpected exemption comes in. So, I did want to just make note of that.

Greg said along the lines of what you just spoke, I cannot imagine your bill getting through without, as you're presenting it, without a bunch of stuff attached to it.

JD Prescott said I completely agree. There're going to be amendments to a proposal like this. The funding formula itself, I know, would be heavily negotiated, right, because each community is going to want to make sure that it's fair for them. But yes, I agree.

Meeks said I just want to know if Michael Hicks is still on your Christmas card list? Your Christmas card list, not his.

JD Prescott said I don't think we're on either. I will say, for an economist, I think he needs to do a better job at his math, because he's put some figures out there that are completely incorrect, that I could dispel within a matter of minutes. And if he want's to ever have a discussion, I'd be happy to do that.

Meeks said send him the recording.

JD Prescott said I wish him well as he moves to Virginia. I'm thankful to see him leaving Ball State.

Greg said anybody else have any questions?

Bev said it is interesting.

Greg said yeah, it is interesting. It would be interesting to see what it would end up looking like if it actually went through. I just can't imagine how much different it would look than your presentation.

JD Prescott said it would, I'm sure it would change as it goes through. But when you think about the system that we operate under, the property tax system was established when the state was established, the initial base of it. The main rules that we're under are really about 150 years old with, you know, bandages put in place every 10, 20 years, and then you know, smaller bandages put in place every year or two. But, really, we're operating on a 150-year-old system with the guts of it. Just think about what our economy was like when the property tax system was established. It was, you know, most people had an 80-acre homestead and they had pretty consistent across the state on what they owned, so it was a fair taxed system at that time, in that day and age. Now, we're under a service-based economy. Our economy has changed. And I think our taxing structure and how we fund local units of government needs to modernize as well.

Greg said okay, hearing no other questions, thank you for your time and the designation on the highway and your presentation.

JD Prescott said thank you all. If you ever need anything, feel free to reach out.

Steve Justice, Senator Banks – Brief intro

Greg said Steve Justice.

Steve Justice said greetings councilmen and councilwomen. Steve Justice. I'm with the United States Senator Jim Banks office. I'm his, serve as his regional director. Basically, my roll is just to be the eyes and ears on behalf of the senators. So, if you guys have any questions on legislative or services, you know, I'd be happy to assist you in those areas. If you guys every take a trip to Washington DC, please let me know and we'd help you assisting with your trip to Washington DC by chance maybe and possibly meet Senator Banks there at the nation's Capital. If you do want to go to the White House, please let us know that too. Obviously, due to security reasons over the years, it takes several months for individuals to be able to enter the White House here. So, basically, I was just here for good will greetings on behalf of the senator. We obviously are part of the Federal Government. And so, I'm today here talking about some of the dealings with the Federal Government. In our offices, we do a constituent services. A basic event with individuals but also with government utilities at the local level, state level and sometimes we'll be able to assist those who have a question with the Federal agency, just like for example, one time when I worked in the office, like say someone filed for disability and social security, that's just one example with Federal Government. If they contact our office, we will contact social security on their behalf, fill out private release form. And what that would do would speed the process of you know, having their hearing taking place there. So, instead of being way low at the end, because they contact our office, we contact social security, say hey, please place us on the Senator Banks interests, and it speeds the process up on stuff like that. So, sometimes, obviously you know, the government can be slow, but please contact us here in case you have a Federal question, you know, Federal issues, you know. We'd love to be able to assist you in those matters. On constituent services, our individuals have been in there for many years and so, they're well trained. They get questions possibly hey, is there a Federal grant out there? We have an individual in our office that you know specializes in those areas as well. So, I appreciate your time. I do have my business card, so I'll pass that along here. And like I said,

you feel free to contact us if you every have a need on the Federal side of things. So, thank you very much.

Greg said thank you, sir. Anybody got any questions for Mr. Banks?

Steve Justice said he's on a couple, I forgot to mention the committees there. He's on the health education labor pension committee and he's also on the banking housing and urban affairs. He is a veteran himself, so, he's on the veteran affairs committee and armed service committee as well. Just to let you know the committees that he serves in the US Senate. Thank you.

Greg said thank you, sir.

Other Business:

Art Moystner, Randolph County Sheriff

Greg said okay, other business. Art Moystner, Randolph County Sheriff.

Art Moystner said good morning. I'd come up yesterday with the commissioners and I wanted to do the same thing with council today. Obviously, as Greg had stated earlier, we had lost Marshall Fisher last week, and quite a tragedy. I just wanted to commend the first responders that were on scene and the job that they did. They all, very professional, doing their job. We've had a tough time Sunday with the services. But I think it's a tribute to the county that our first responders came together very well, did their job professionally. Obviously, Marshall Fisher made the ultimate sacrifice, but also, the community we live in, and the way they've kind of surrounded the first responder community and the Fisher family, as well, in coming together. So, there's going to be some of that and some tough times, so if you run into any of your local first responders, they're going through a pretty hard time right now. We have some things set up that we're going to deal with that locally, as a group, and then any individuals that need that, we're going to take care of them also and continue to take care of Brad's wife and children and his family. So, I just, really blessed to serve in a community like this. And it, unfortunately, these tragedies remind us what's important and what we need to look at and focus on, and as far as family and friends and community. But I just, I wanted to come up and let you guys know I'm very proud of this community and specifically, the first responders involved in this. We've got a great group of people here. And I have the distinct honor of working with them. So, I just wanted to say that publicly and put that out to you guys. And if you see any of them, just, some of them could sure use a hug this week. So, with that, that's all I have unless you guys have anything for me as the sheriff? And I thank you very much.

Greg said thank you.

Minutes of June 18 Joint meeting

Greg said okay, next is approving the minutes of the June 18th joint meeting.

David made a motion to approve. Todd seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Ordinance 2026-12 Salary Jail Maintenance

Greg said okay, on the jail maintenance Ordinance 2026-12, salary jail maintenance. This is for the amendment for the young man that applied to be the maintenance person at the jail.

Bev said I move that council pass Ordinance 2016-12, salary jail maintenance after the first reading.

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

Bev said I move that the rules be suspended and have the 2nd and 3rd reading by title only and adopted the same day.

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

Bev said I move that the council adopt Ordinance 2016-12, salary jail maintenance.

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

MUST Committee decision to move forward and Council appointment

Greg said okay, next on the agenda other business is the MUST committee decision to move forward and Council appointment. We did have our first MUST committee, or not committee, but MUST meeting. It was very informational. The lady from Baker Tilly presented everything. We had a decent turnout. I was hoping for more, especially of town clerks and whatnot. But she did, I think she did a really good job of presenting what they needed to, and what information they needed to bring back. And we need to make the decision here as to how many more meetings we're going to do and also choose someone to represent all the Council to represent the MUST meetings later on, as for approval and everything.

Larry said I'll make a motion to have Greg Cheesman represent us as Council, the MUST committee.

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

Greg said you've got input on this Laura, what?

Laura said you just need to say if you want to move forward or not, and then we'll get the meeting dates set with Baker Tilly.

Greg said we're looking at two more meetings?

Laura said we don't know that yet.

Greg said we don't know that yet.

Laura said yeah.

Greg said okay, so.

Laura said at least, I'm going to say at least two more.

Greg said yes. Now, the 30,000, is that per meeting?

Laura said no.

Greg said that was for the total package?

Laura said yeah, yeah.

Greg said so, if we have three or four, it's going to be the same?

Laura said correct.

Greg said okay. I wanted to get that clear.

Laura said yeah. So, you just need to say if you want to move forward with the MUST. I'm guessing since you just approved.

Larry said I make a motion to move forward with the MUST committee as Greg Cheesman as our representative.

Todd seconded the motion.

Greg said Todd seconded, so, we will move forward with our meetings and try to get everyone educated as best we can.

David said do we need to approve Baker Tilly as the MUST?

Laura said you've already done that.

Greg said we've already done that.

David said okay.

Laura said you've already contracted with them. So, I'll just let Susan know that you voted to move forward and that Greg's our rep and then we'll get another meeting set. And all of you can come to the meeting. It's a public meeting. Greg will just be the person.

Greg said yeah, there won't be any decisions made until the end, and then you guys won't even be involved in that. I'll be the only one involved since you've elected me to be the committee representative. Just to give basic information, I think was kind of talked about that we would have at least two more, this third one being our final meeting. But, we'll see how we get along on the second one, because the second meeting, they're going, the people that attended that will

re-attend, will bring figures and Susan some kind of spreadsheet thing that they can start plugging in numbers and start seeing how all this is going to fit together and work allegedly.

Laura said so, the representatives will be Greg and any city and town clerk that wants to. I've had two or three and I cannot tell you which ones, that have said they want to be involved. I'll let Susan know we're moving forward. I may re-send that email that we sent out asking who wanted to do it, because basically, the way she explained it is whoever is here on that committee will be involved in making decisions, but the ones that are not here, they're going to get what they get. So, if they're not here to put in their input as to what their town or city needs, then that's their fault. The only people that are by Statute, one council and, council or representative of the council's choice, which you've chosen Greg, and then each city and town clerk are the only ones on the committee. But anybody can attend and listen.

Greg said and this exercise we're going through is not binding in any way for next year's taxes. It's basically, an information gathering. We're doing all the work to get the legislature and senate the figures of what the towns want.

Todd said so, it doesn't have any impact on the next one or the next one?

Greg said right. This will be a two-year exercise before the actual.

Todd said we did a move and a second, but we didn't do a vote. Just procedurally, should we do a vote on that last motion?

Greg said thought we did.

Bev said no, I also noticed that, yeah.

Greg said oh, okay. I'm sorry.

Laura said decision to move forward.

Greg said decision to move forward, okay. I thought we did. A vote on the decision to move forward. All in favor?

All aye votes. Motion carried.

Todd said sorry, I didn't mean to be a pain.

Greg said that's alright, nope. I want it done right. I just thought I did it.

Larry said just little bit to expand on what Greg and Laura were saying, when we had the meeting the other night, we had some towns and clerks or treasurers, but we didn't have them all.

Greg said no, we did not. Not near all. So, it was, like I said, I wish it was better attended, but we'll deal with what we have. Okay, moving on, if there's nothing else on that subject. Todd.

Todd said one question.

Greg said go ahead.

Todd said I missed the invite and that's my fault, but how did other towns, clerks and so on, how were they notified? Was it email or what was the?

Laura said email.

Todd said okay.

Laura said by Baker Tilly and then we also reached out.

Todd said okay.

Greg said but, and the reason we met, the council wasn't, we didn't get notified until late because Baker Tilly.

Laura said yeah, I, they didn't include the council's email on their invite so I had Nikki just go ahead and forward that to you guys too.

Greg said and so, that's why I wanted.

Todd said I just didn't look in time so it's my fault.

Greg said but we got a later notice than everybody else did.

Todd said okay.

Additional Appropriations:

General	Building Administrator	\$3557.40
General	Telecommunicator	\$35,481.60
General	Jail Maintenance	\$2701.60
General	VSO – Overtime	\$300.00
1222	E911 – Payroll	\$23,205.60
General	Area Planning – Overtime	\$1000.00
Land Host	Hwy – Bridge repairs	\$700,000.00
Riverstart	5 Bridge bundle	\$30,000.00

Greg said okay, moving on, additional appropriations. Can we throw all the Generals together?

Laura said yes. You can actually do them all together because you're going to sign one form.

Greg said okay. Additional appropriations, the General fund, the building administrator, \$3,557.40. General telecommunicator, at \$35,481.60. Jail maintenance, \$2,701.60. The VSO overtime at \$300.00. Emergency 911 payroll at \$23,205.60. The General, Area Planning overtime, \$1,000.00. Land what?

Laura said Land Host. That's a highway fund.

Greg said okay. Land Host, highway bridge repairs, 700,000. And Riverstart, 5 bridge bundle at 30,000. Do I hear a motion to approve these?

Larry said I have one question, Greg.

Greg said yes, go ahead Larry.

Larry said is the telecommunicator, is that LEAP or is that?

Laura said no, that's the 911 raises that was approved. So, we're just appropriating money to cover the additional for the rest of this year.

Larry said did we get any explanation from Deb on the APC overtime?

Laura said Deb's here if you have a question.

Larry said I thought she was here yesterday.

Greg said she's here now.

Laura said so, you can call her up and ask her if you want.

Larry said where is she at?

Greg said she's sitting over behind, you can't see behind Sherri.

Larry said was your overtime due to ordinance changes Deb or is Kristi out of the office or all of the above?

Debra Johnting said yes, all of the above. We have in addition to our 35-hour week, we have 22 meetings scheduled throughout the year. We don't have to have them but we have had, I think every single one this year, plus long solar meetings in the evenings and it just, the week that we incurred the overtime was the hardest week to get out of the office. So, when we had comp time, it was so much easier to use it when we weren't busy. But we can't do that now, so. With Kristi out, Bev and Kristi and I tag team every week to make sure the office is covered and we try to, we do see overtime. But just got away from us.

Larry said well, I wanted to assume but I didn't want to assume for everybody, so. Thank you.

Debra Johnting said you're welcome.

Greg said any other questions?

Todd said yeah, the 700,000, that's not the item we've been talking about yesterday and today is it, related to the late bill? Or is it, is that what it is? Okay. No, I heard it yesterday. Thank you.

Greg said anybody else? Alright, I need a motion to approve.

Todd made a motion to approve. Bev seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Next meeting date:

Budget Hearings Tuesday August 25 at 8:30 am

Budget Hearings Wednesday August 26 at 8:30 am

Regular Council meeting Wednesday September 9 at 9:00 am

Greg said okay, as you can see, our budget hearings will be our next meetings' dates at Tuesday, starting at Tuesday, August the 25th at 8:30 and again Wednesday, August the 26th at 8:30 in the morning. Our next regular council meeting will be Wednesday, on a Wednesday this time, September 9th.

Citizen Comments (3 minutes)

Greg said next is citizen comments. Does anybody want to come forward and have anything to say to council? We've got a brand new 3-minute clock, so, anybody's interested in trying it out for the first time?

Greg said okay, nobody, hearing nothing from the citizens, need a motion to adjourn. Or no, need to go around the table, yes. Meeks, do you have anything to add to us?

Meeks said no.

Greg said David?

David said I don't think I'll have any. I'll need to sit down with Nikki to update this report on courthouse project, or all our projects.

Greg said Bev?

Bev said nothing.

Greg said Larry?

Larry said I've got a couple things Greg.

Greg said okay.

Larry said a couple things happened in the county as improvements and I'd just like to bring them to the public for people to see, and as I travel around. And one of them is in my neighborhood, so I guess I'm kind of partial. But if everyone's aware of behind Willard School is what they call the Geyer Circle, okay. And since I, we've been there about 2 ½ years, it's kind of funny to think that like other places in Randolph County, if somebody's looking for directions,

like everybody's looking for the Gaslight Addition, I could just tell them to go to Geyer's Circle behind Willard School and that's Gaslight. Well, there's a real nice gazebo there and thanks go out to the city, to the mayor. I went to him a couple months ago and the gazebo has been there for a while and they repainted the roof and put a couple nice park benches in front of it. And it really makes a difference. And another great improvement I thought, of course, there again, I'm kind of partial because way back when, I was on the cemetery board for Fountain Park Cemetery for the City Council, but they've most recently got all the front fence fixed from the tornado, and they have, the drives were gravel, dusty. They've put asphalt on about half of the drives in the Fountain Park Cemetery. And it really looks nice. I mean, for 20 years, 25 years, when I was on the board, they tried to get monetary donations for the drives and it finally happened. So, there're two points of interest that really, I think, improve Randolph County. And the only other thing is as everybody knows, we had last year's budget was about 2.6 and the request for this year is 2.9, so we've obviously got a little bit of work to do. So, that's all I got.

Greg said thank you. Appreciate the information on the improvements. Todd?

Todd said the salary committee has met a couple of times and most recently, we looked at projections based off of two rate possibilities and compared those to the past three years and the ordinances that were put into place in 2025. We got our budget books here just recently. Between now and August 25th, we're going to try to get something to all the council so that they have sort of the results of the salary committee meeting on hand when we sit down here in August and we start going, you know, on day two through all the salaries. Is it the second day that we do the salaries? So, that we have you know, some perspective. Although if you look at, one thing that is useful, if you look at the sheet that Dave gave you, you guys all still have these somewhere, there's a page in here that shows about 10-years-worth of year by year history. So, what we did only goes back 2 years, but you can see on here, kind of what's happened over the last several years, which is helpful to know the pattern, which there really hasn't been a strong pattern. It's been a lot of fluctuation in what we've done. We'd like to see some more consistency actually, and that's one of the recommendations we'll make as a committee. So, we'll give our spreadsheet that we're working on to Danita, if that works for you. And she, I think she has put that number in the packet in some way in the past. It's probably too late for that now isn't it, since we've got the?

Laura said yeah, I don't know. I don't know if she has time to add that or not, but we can see.

Todd said right. Some way or the other, we'll make sure we're not just coming into it cold on that second day. And I'd like for everybody to take a look at these numbers so that you know, you're prepared to talk about number of people and rates and that's sort of thing.

Laura said and every year Danita requests that the salary study start meeting earlier and that would help her in her job to get that information all accumulated.

Todd said yeah.

Laura said every year it ends up last minute before we get it. So, just keep that in mind for next year.

Todd said sure.

Greg said Laura, do you have anything to add?

Laura said I do not.

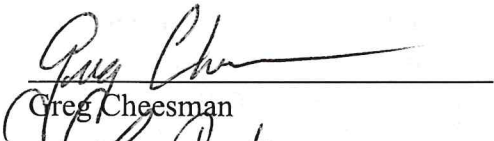
Greg said I don't have anything.

Adjournment

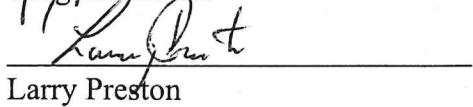
Greg said need a motion to adjourn.

Larry made a motion to adjourn. Todd seconded the motion. All aye votes. Meeting adjourned.

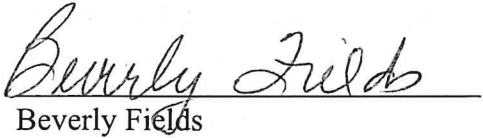
Reviewed and accepted this 9 day of September, 2026



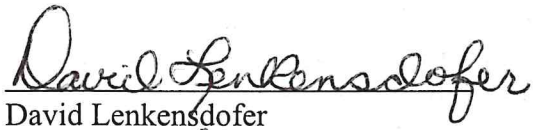
Greg Cheesman



Larry Preston



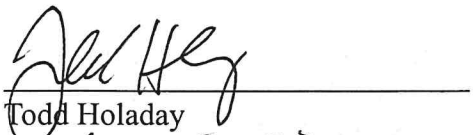
Beverly Fields



David Lenkensdofer



Mike Stine

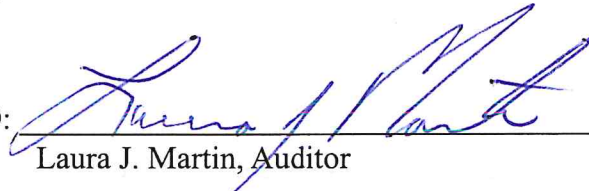


Todd Holaday



Scott Fisher

ATTESTED:



Laura J. Martin, Auditor