

July 21, 2025

The Wabash County Board of Commissioners met in regular session in the Wabash County Courthouse on Monday, July 21, 2025. Chairman Jeff D. Dawes called the meeting to order at 9:00a.m. with Dawes, Tyler Niccum, and Cheryl Ross present. The proceedings were recorded by Wabash County Auditor Shelly Bauccho.

The minutes of the July 7, 2025, meeting was reviewed. Niccum made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ross seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.

Farmer Group – Ditch Spraying/Crop Losses: Brian Ranck spoke on behalf of the group in regards to the spraying of the side ditches and right-of ways. The farmers have been noticing that some of the crops are being damaged by the spraying. He indicated that the County Highway have been spraying the roadsides for various invasive species and the chemicals being used are harmful to soybeans. The chemicals being used, per Brad Bolinger of The Daltons, have a three-year setback once in a soybean field. Their concerns are that this is the second year in a row where they have seen the damage. The group has reached out to Brad at The Daltons and indicated that he was very helpful and had come out to the fields to look at the damage and admitted that yes, the damage is coming from the chemicals that they applied and that the rain carried those chemicals out into the field and done some damage. Brad from The Daltons, indicated that his company has been spraying road sides for 50 years plus and using the herbicide for 25 years plus and indicated that it can have some effect on soybeans that could happen with heavy rain. Cole Wyatt, Highway Superintendent, indicated that the spraying for the year is finished. Dawes indicated that as soon as they get a new Superintendent in place, they will be discussing this issue with them. Ranck indicated that the group would like to see the Highway to stop damaging their crops and to look at what they are spraying. The Commissioners took this under advisement.

Kevin Smith, The Salamonie River Project, presented a proposal to convert the Salamonie Forest into Salamonie State Park, to re-open the Lost Bridge East, and to minimize the water levels. He noted that doing the three things it would increase tourism within five years and up the revenue to 56 million in the Wabash County and Huntington County area. Ross indicated that she wants to see the pros and cons of changing to the State Park. Smith indicated that the biggest thing would be that the State Park would possibly put lodging in the park and the federal dollars would come to the area. Smith noted that there are no State Parks close to the area. Dave Terflinger asked Smith if he had been in contact with the Army Corp of Engineers and he state yes and that is going to be the toughest. Amanda Smith, the property manager of the Salamonie River State Forest and she indicated that this idea had been brought up to the DNR in 2021 and it was decided against changing it into a State Park and they did not support it. She indicated that the State Forest is owned by the State of Indiana and the Salamonie Lake State Park property is considered a State Park. Smith indicated he is just looking for an endorsement from the County so that they can move forward with the proposal. Dawes indicated that the Commissioners will take this under advisement.

Rick Anderson, Veregy, indicated that his company helps County and Cities with guaranteed savings projects and proposed helping the County with cutting the utility costs of the County and upgrading the infrastructure. He is currently working with Wabash City and would offer an assessment to the County free of charge. Dawes indicated they would take this under advisement.

Rich Mofield, Director of the Wabash County Health Department, presented a contract renewal for the Health First Indiana and Town of North Manchester Parks & Recreation Department for \$1,800.00 for one year. The funding would be used for chronic disease prevention programming. Niccum made a motion to renew the contract. Ross seconded the motion; it passed by 3-0 vote.

Dawes presented a recommendation of appointing Marsha Haffner to the Roann Public Library Board of Trustees. Niccum made a motion to appoint Haffner. Ross seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.

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Next, Dawes presented a recommendation to appoint Chris Hickman to the Plan Commission. Hickman will be replacing Christian Rosen. Niccum made a motion to appoint Hickman. Ross seconded the motion; it pass by a 3-0 vote.

Tyler Guenin, Wabash County Sheriff's Department, gave the monthly Jail report for June, 2025. Dawes asked Guenin to report on staffing for the Jail. He indicated that within the last month to month and a half, approximately ten new employees had been hired bringing them to a total of 25 Jail staff. He indicated that ultimately, they would like to have 34 Jail staff consistently. Ross asked him to update everyone on the Opiod money, which is being used for the JCAP (Jail Chemical Addictions Program). He indicated that the program in is the trial period and that they have hired someone to run the program. He reported that it is a 16-week program to get inmates back on track and get them clean and sober while they are incarcerated.

Marcie Shepherd, County Coordinator/HR Director:

1. Received a notice from group health insurance that some wording had been changed in the health insurance plan. She reported that Counsel has approved the updated plan. Shepherd indicated that they just needed a signature from the Commissioners.
2. Shepherd gave an update on the phone system. She indicated that the system is dying. She reported that in 2023, the Commissioners had approved a new contract with Metronet to update the phone system. Metronet has since decided that it is not a feasible solution for them to update. Metronet indicated that they are going to ignore the contract. She received two new quotes for new phone system. The first one is from Level 365, the one-time cost would be \$8,839.00 and then \$2,014.00 per month. The second quote is from ESI and the one-time cost would be \$2,488.00 and then \$966.70 for sixty months. Both systems are internet based. Niccum made a motion to accept the ESI quote pending Counsel approval. Ross seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.

Shelly Bauccho, Wabash County Auditor presented:

1. Accounts payable claims and allowances for docket ending 07/14/2025, and 07/21/2025. Niccum made a motion to approve the claims and allowances as presented. Ross seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.
2. Payroll claims and allowances, including withholdings, for pay period ending 07/05/2025. Ross made a motion to accept the payroll claims, allowances including withholdings. Niccum seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.
3. LIT monthly distribution in the amount of \$1,431,323.76. Niccum made a motion to approve the LIT distribution. Ross seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.

Dawes asked if there were any ADA or Title VI concerns. Dave Terflinger indicated that he came before the Commissioners in June to make them aware of signage issues around the Courthouse and asked for an update. Ross indicated that they are holding on making any changes until the Health Department has moved and they will then address the issues.

Niccum made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ross seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote. The Commissioners will next meet on Monday, August 4, 2025, at 9:00am.

Also present: *In person:* Dave Terflinger, Cheryl Ridgeway, Nicky Burnsworth, Bill Burnsworth, Dave Nelson, Louella Krom, Rex Grossman, Gary Kratzer, Brian Ranck, Tim Ranck, Dan Metzger, Chase Enyeart, Steve Koehne, Brad Bolinger, C. Airgood, Aaron Matterson, Charles Enyeart, Jerry S, Amber Smith, and Kandy Barker. *Via zoom:* Connie, Theda Metzger, Suzanne Peebles, Amanda Shambarger, CFWC, akline, ghegel, Mike Rehak, Igrandstaff, Alex Downard, and Lavonne Sparling and Beth Gillespie.

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Attest: Shelly Baucro
Shelly Baucro, Wabash County Auditor