

## WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

April 8, 2025

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. The members in attendance were Chair Thor Hodges, Vice Chair Nicholas Brewer, Thomas Warner, Kim Wheeler, Joan Western, Timothy Longenbaugh and John Barrett. Others in attendance were Commissioners Banks, Schuman and Baysinger, Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Health Director Scott Wagner, Assessor Kim Erdly, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Sheriff Jason Spencer, Engineer Brad Allen, Chief Probation Officer Ed Beber, Dale Buuck, Michael Ashby, Chad Whetstone and Dawn McDevitt.

Chairman Hodges called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATE:** Councilman Hodges began the meeting by calling on each department head to give a quick update on their department.

**PEABODY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD APPOINTMENT:** Micheal Ashby from Peabody Library was present to seek re-appointment for Mark Parker to the Peabody Public Library Board, stating that he has done a great job and would like to have him serve another 4-years. Councilman Hodges stated that he is in favor of this. Councilwomen Western stated that she has had conversations with individuals stating they would like to be considered, and that it was under the assumption that the appointment would be voted on at the May Council meeting. Council members are in favor of waiting until the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to ensure that all interested parties can put their names in. Waner made a motion to table until the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, seconded by Western, passing with a 7/0 vote.

**REDEVELOPMENT 2024 ANNUAL REPORT:** Planning Director Nathan Bilger was present and gave the 2024 Redevelopment Annual report to the Council. This is now a statutory requirement that the report be given to the County Council annually.

**JDAI OUT OF SERIES TRANSFER:** JDAI is requesting an out of series transfer be approved. Barrett made a motion to approve, seconded by Longenbaugh, passing with a 7/0 vote.

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**ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUEST & APPROPRIATION REQUEST:** Health Director Scott Wagner was present with an additional appropriation request and a check that he would like to be put back into his line item.

- Funding was received for another Women's Health Fund in the amount of \$2,800. Commissioners approved the creation of Women's Health Fund 2 at their last meeting. Brewer made a motion to approve the additional in the amount of \$2,800, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- A refund check was issued for the overpayment of insurance for one of the nurses within the Health Department in the amount of \$131. Scott would like to have those funds put back into the account it was paid from. Wheeler made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Warner, passing with a 7/0 vote.

**ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUESTS:** The Council reviewed and approved several additional appropriation requests as well as an updated salary ordinance.

- Commissioner Banks presented the already approved increase for the Commissioners' Assistant position in the amount of \$3,885. Longenbaugh made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Barrett, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- Auditor Deakins stated that when the salary ordinance was presented there was a position that was left at the 2024 salary, so there needs to be an additional appropriation to reflect the 2025 approved salary. That dollar amount is \$1,496. Warner made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- Maintenance has two requests for additional appropriations. The first request is for the purchase of a truck that was approved by Council in November of 2024. Brewer made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Warner, passing with a 7/0 vote. The second request is for the overtime account. \$10,000 was budgeted at the beginning of the year and that has already been expended. Mark is asking for an additional \$20,000. Commissioner Banks spoke on behalf of the request as well, stating that maintenance has done a great job navigating all the additional jobs that have been put on them and Commissioners agree with the request. Western made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 vote.

**SALARY ORDINANCE AMMENDMENT:** The Council reviewed the updated salary ordinance, this reflects the Commissioners' Assistant and Field Officer increases, as well as a change in verbiage for longevity. Barrett made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-08 as presented, seconded by Longenbaugh, passing with a 7/0 vote.

**GOVERNMENT CENTER LEASE FUND TRANSFER REQUEST:** Auditor Deakins presented a transfer request for the remaining funds that are in the fund that was created for the bond payments of the government center. There was a balance of \$103,627.10 left after the final payment, Deakins stated that she checked with State Board of Accounts, the County Attorney, and BakerTilly and it was decided that the remaining funds could be placed into county general. Longenbaugh made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Brewer, passing with a 7/0 vote.

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:** Commissioner Banks gave the Council a commissioner's report.

- The jail came under budget by \$7,905. With \$853,786.67 of contingency funds left over that were able to be applied to the final pay app. The Jail LIT fund as of today has a balance of \$7,339,984.32. The fund is very healthy, and for the budget process possibly looking at paying for operational expenses which is allowed up to 20% .
- Commissioner Banks also stated that for clarification the new jail is being paid for with LIT dollars, not property taxes. LIT is Local Income Taxes.

**IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES:** The Council reviewed the March 4, 2025, regular meeting minutes, Councilman Wheeler made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Western, passing with a 7/0 vote.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Auditor Deakins stated that the 2024 audit is about to start. The Council decided on June 10<sup>th</sup> to be the department head/elected officials budget meetings for the 2026 budget. Councilman Warner stated that he would like to know why the Sheriff's Department/Dispatch would not be paying for the move of the VHF system.

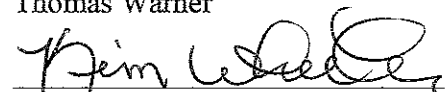
There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Hodges adjourned the meeting at 9:06 AM.

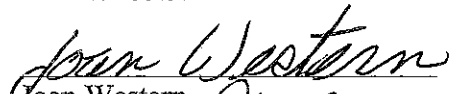
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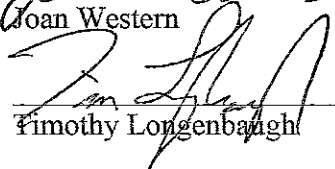
  
Chair Thor Hodges

Vice Chair Nicholas Brewer

  
Thomas Warner

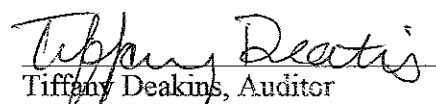
  
Kim Wheeler

  
Joan Western

  
Timothy Longenbaugh

John Barrett

Attest:

  
Tiffany Deakins, Auditor