

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

March 4, 2025

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Tuesday, March 4, 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 Schuman and Baysinger, Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Health Director Scott Wagner, HR Director Jennifer Shinabery, Judge Matthew Rentschler and Karli Hendry from Circuit Court, Assessor Kim Erdly, Highway Director Ryan Getts, Commissioners' Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Community Corrections Director Paula Worden, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Sheriff Jason Spencer, Engineer Brad Allen, Dale Buuck and Abbey Anthony from the EDC, Janelle Schmitt with Dispatch and Jim Johnson with Whitley County Council on Aging.

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.

- E911 Director Janelle Schmitt stated they moved into the new Jail building.
- Sheriff Spencer stated they are still currently moving over to the new jail.
- Community Corrections Director Paula Worden reported the kitchen upgrades are coming along.
- Assessor Kim Erdly stated her new employee is doing very well and is a good fit.
- Health Director Scott Wagner stated there's still a lot of sickness around and to be sure to wash your hands.
- Engineer Brad Allen reported that they are working on bridge/drain projects, and they recently adopted their Safety Action Plan.
- Auditor Tiffany Deakins stated they are working on getting the tax bills sent out.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUESTS: The Council reviewed and approved several additional appropriation requests.

- Judge Rentschler presented an additional appropriation request for \$4,000 for supplies in fund 1000 County General for Circuit Court as well as an additional \$2000 for supplies in fund 1000 County General for Supreme Court. This will be used to provide office equipment/supplies in the courtroom at the new jail. Barrett made a motion to approve, seconded by Longenbaugh, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- Scott Wagner presented two additional requests in the amount of \$1,500 and \$3,000 for grants received for suicide awareness and women's health. Warner made a motion to approve, seconded by Brewer, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- **LIT TRANSFER REQUEST:** Commissioner's Assistant Cami Hippenhammer presented a request to transfer funds in Jail LIT from Tax Revenue Bonds to Contracted Services in the amount of \$1,046,294.13 to cover the pay app payment. Brewer made a motion to approve, seconded by Warner, passing with a 7/0 vote.

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE COMMISSION BOARD APPOINTMENT: A couple of Council members found a good fit to fill the 4-year term of the board. Council Woman Western has spoken with Michael Venable who previously managed two liquor stores and is a Whitley County native. He can move around his schedule to attend the meetings. Councilman Brewer spoke with Tina Houser who is also from Whitley County and owns part of LT Real Estate as well as other businesses in town. She is also able to attend meetings. The Council took a roll call vote to select Michael Venable or Tina Houser. Michael Venable was selected with a 6/7 vote with Brewer for Tina Houser.

PAYLOCITY HR REQUEST: HR Jennifer Shinabery presented a request to use Paylocity for HR and onboarding use. Shinabery stated the money was already in the Commissioner's budget, but they would add it to the 2026 budget as a line item when the time comes. The contract is monthly and can be canceled anytime. Paylocity currently charges \$6.61 per employee, and this could be used to not only onboard new employees, but help with ongoing trainings, employee evaluations and more. Brewer made a motion to approve, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 vote. Councilman Hodges requested Shinabery to give a report on Paylocity at budget time.

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

- The jail move is almost completed. There's 35 years of stuff that needs to be moved and gone through.
- The Extension office will be moving into the basement of the Government Center building and the Probation Department will be moving into the old Extension Building. Updates will need to be made for the office to work for the Extension office.

- The Bakertilly agreement was signed to update the financial compensation report. They are also working on the 3-year growth quotient.
- The ARPA funds are almost all spent, and the County is awaiting an email to report on the funds.
- Tire Amnesty Days is coming up. Whitley County residents can drop off old tires for no fee on April 8th– May 10 during normal business hours.

COUNCIL COMPUTER DISCUSSION: Councilman Hodges requested a discussion on getting the Councilmembers a computer to use for meetings. Each council member took turns sharing their opinions on the matter. The members are open to getting a quote and see what it would cost.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Councilman Brewer presented the Personnel Committee requests.

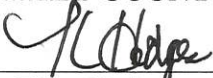
- Highway is requesting the on-call pay be increased from \$55 to \$100. This has a favorable pass from the personnel committee. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 vote. Councilman Barrett made a new motion to approve the on call pay request effective March 16th, seconded by Longenbaugh, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- Longevity pay is being requested to be increased, and this comes to Council with a favorable pass from the personnel committee. Longevity pay has not been increased as far back as they can see. This was also a recommendation from WIS in 2019. Western was concerned about how this would affect PERF. Commissioner Schuman stated the city did research and increased this as well. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve, seconded by Longenbaugh, passing with a 4/3 vote with Western, Warner and Wheeler against.
- The Commissioner Assistant position was sent to WIS to be reclassified after making some modifications. WIS came back recommending a change from PAT IV to PAT III which would take the pay from \$51,139 to \$55,024. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve effective March 16th, seconded by Longenbaugh, passing with a 7/0 vote.

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

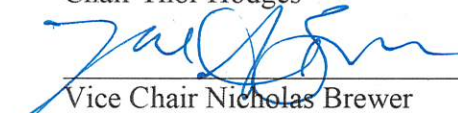
OTHER BUSINESS: Chair Hodges introduced Jim Johnson who took over the Executive Director position at Whitley County Council on Aging for Leslie Blakely. Councilman Barrett would like to request that the board listen to the committee recommendations.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Hodges adjourned the meeting at 9:10 AM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL



 Chair Thor Hodges



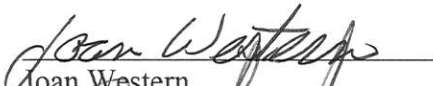
 Vice Chair Nicholas Brewer



 Thomas Warner




 Kim Wheeler



 Joan Western

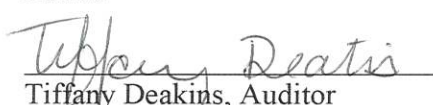


 Timothy Longenbaugh



 John Barrett

Attest:



 Tiffany Deakins, Auditor