

VIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
Special Call Meeting Minutes
Tuesday September 2, 2025 at 3:30 P.M.
Council Chambers, Vigo County Government Center

Pledge of Allegiance

President David Thompson called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Calling of the Roll

Randy Gentry – present, Nancy Allsup – present, Brenda Wilson – present, Steve Ellis, - present, Vicki Weger – present, Brad Anderson – present, David Thompson – present.

Council President David Thompson explained this special call meeting of the Council was for the Vigo County School Corporation and other elected officials to provide information on future plans for the School Corporation and the school facilities in the County. David said this was purely an information gathering meeting, and there would be no public comment. He said if a decision from Council was necessary on any issue related to School Corporation plans, the decisions would be made in a future public Council meeting with public comments.

Vigo County Commissioner Mark Clinkenbeard gave an overview of local schools and the need for upgrades to the facilities and an action plan. He noted SB 382 was new legislation empowering Indiana counties to transfer or gift funds to school corporations.

Kristen Craig with the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce took the podium and went over business opportunities, new talent, and investments in the area she says were lost due to the status of local schools.

Vigo County School Corporation Superintendent Chris Himsel gave a summary of Vigo County School Corporation's proposed reorganization plan.

He outlined a drop in forecasted enrollment. Himsel said in the 2029-2030 school year, Vigo County Schools are forecasted to have less than 12,500 students. He said the forecasted amount of students will need half of the space Vigo County is currently maintaining and outlined potential reasons and causes for the enrollment drop.

Himsel said the amount of money needed to preventatively maintain Vigo County schools was close to \$23 million per year. He said due to how various laws allow tax revenue to be distributed to schools in Indiana, \$9 million is available per year to preventatively maintain the schools. He said the underfunding of preventative maintenance has the potential to create a snowballing impact on the status of area schools.

Himsel then went over the additional needs of the school corporation. This list included expanding the number of full-day Pre-K, additional Alternative School opportunities, and consolidating programs to prevent cuts to student opportunities.

Himsel said the proposed plan tackles the need to reduce the amount of buildings to maintain. This plan would reduce the elementary schools to 10, 4 middle schools, and two high schools. He said North and South high schools would be renovated into Middle Schools. West Vigo would be renovated and a new high school would be built east of the Wabash River. Himsel noted Deming Early Learning Center, Dixie Bee, Sugar Grove, and Farrington Grove would become early learning/alternative learning center. He briefly discussed the logistics of where students would attend during the construction process. He said the construction process would take 2-3 years if started in 2026.

Himsel said the corporation's ask from the Council would be to come up with public/private partnerships to help fund parts of the proposed project. He outlined three "groups" of the project which need completed. Group 1: Construct a new high school east of the Wabash River. Group 2: Modernize West Vigo High School, DeVaney Elementary, Fayette Elementary, Franklin Elementary. Group 3: Renovate and modernize North, South, and Consolidated into Middle Schools alongside modernizing Woodrow Wilson Middle School.

Chris Switzer took the podium and explained Senate Bill 382 again. He said the legislation authorized the creation of an oversight board to monitor the use of funds. The board will monitor the use of funds and will have appointees from various government bodies. He said the Commissioners will come before the Council to ask for \$100,000 to be appropriated to help establish and fund the oversight Board.

The floor was then opened to questions.

Brenda Wilson asked what the size of the potential new High School would be. Himsel said the new high school would be large enough to teach 2600-2700 students. He said the career center will be utilized to manage space.

Steve Ellis asked why the Corporation was not renovating the old schools instead of building new ones while moving all students to one of the schools. Himsel said the Corporation considered this option, but was unsure if the infrastructure of either of the high schools could handle the amount of students even for a short time. Himsel discussed various issues he said were related to not building a new School or Career Center. He said the plan would bring Terre Haute Schools more in line with the rest of the state. Steve asked how many properties were potentially going to be closed. Himsel said at least four. Ellis expressed concerns with the potential cost of the project and creating a situation where parents remove children from the corporation due to seeking a smaller school experience. Himsel noted the concerns and reiterated this project would create less buildings to maintain and allow the corporation to live within their means more effectively due to the limited ways schools can capture revenue in Indiana.

Randy Gentry asked about the potential cost of the project. Himsel said there were a large amount of variables which would impact cost, one being when the construction started. Himsel said the School Corporation's current funding capacity was about a \$10.5-11 million levy spread out over 20 years to pay back. He said in hard construction costs that was about \$150 million. Randy asked how much the county would need to contribute. Himsel said it would depend on the Council's willingness to cooperate with the plan. Randy also expressed his trepidation with the

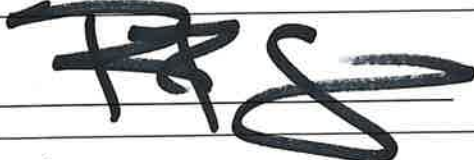
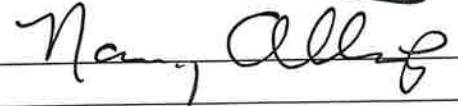
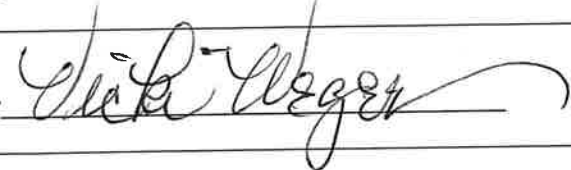
creation of an oversight board. Himsel said the oversight board would allow for partnership. Chris Switzer said the oversight board would recommend appropriations to the Council to make related to this project. Randy asked about amount of properties vacated after the plan. Himsel said a minimum of four and potentially up to seven. Randy asked about the potential of the Corporation leveraging the value of the vacated properties to help fund the proposed plan.

Vicki Weger and Brad Anderson expressed thanks to Himsel for appearing before Council and answering questions.

Steve Ellis reiterated his concerns about the proposed plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47PM.

Presented to the Vigo County Council, read in full and adopted as written this 14th day of October, 2025.

Aye	☒	Absent	☐	Randy Gentry	
Nay	☐	Abstain	☐		
Aye	☐	Absent	☐	Nancy Allsup	
Nay	☐	Abstain	☐		
Aye	☐	Absent	☐	Brenda Wilson	
Nay	☐	Abstain	☐		
Aye	☐	Absent	☐	Steve Ellis	
Nay	☐	Abstain	☐		
Aye	☐	Absent	☐	Vicki Weger	
Nay	☐	Abstain	☐		
Aye	☐	Absent	☐	Brad Anderson	
Nay	☐	Abstain	☐		
Aye	☐	Absent	☐	David Thompson	
Nay	☐	Abstain	☐		

Attest:


 Larry T. Hutchings, II
 Auditor