

VIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
Sunshine Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 5:00 P.M.
Council Chambers, Vigo County Government Center

Pledge of Allegiance

Steve Ellis called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Calling of the Roll

Nancy Allsup – present; Vicki Weger – present; Steve Ellis – present; Randy Gentry – absent; Brenda Wilson – present; Brad Anderson – present; and David Thompson – present.

Communications from elected officials, other officials, or agencies of the County

Mike Morris approached the Council and expressed his disagreement with Councilperson Randy Gentry's request for a forensic audit. This request was on this meeting's agenda to be discussed. During discussion of this request, Mike wanted the Council to explain what a forensic audit was, why they thought this audit was necessary, and if they believed nefarious actions were being taken by the County government.

Vigo County Assessor Kevin Gardner approached the Council and explained the software the assessor's office uses for their operations' services have deteriorated in recent years and he is anticipating a necessary change in software providers. He said the cost of X-soft, his proposed replacement would cost \$390,090 and the provider has agreed to spread this cost over three years. Kevin said the yearly maintenance fee would be \$71,000. He said this yearly maintenance cost would be cheaper than the current provider, but the initial cost for three years would be an increase. Kevin said he would be putting together some sort of request for the council to make a commitment to budget the cost for replacement for 2027 at the next month's Council meeting.

Mark Collins with the Hamilton Center provided the Council with an annual report. The report was a synopsis of services provided in 2025. Mark said the center served 4,081 total patients in 2025, 2,125 of those patients received addiction treatment services, 3,995 of those patients received mental health services and 1,842 patients received both mental health and addiction treatment services. He said 2,901 of those patients were adults, and 1,180 of those patients were children. Mark went over common mental health diagnosis at the center for adults and children. He said the total number of clinical encounters was 27,269 for the year. He said an overwhelming majority of patients served in 2025 were below the poverty level. Mark said the center provided \$1.68 million in charity care for Vigo County residents. There was discussion about what was considered "other stimulants" in the date provided to Council. Mark said he could provide this information to Council in the future.

Council President Steve Ellis said there would be an effort to streamline Council meetings. He said he would be enforcing a three minute time limit for speakers. He said he would recommend grade changes, raises, and new positions for the County would be discussed by the budget committee.

a. Adopting the 2026 Vigo County Council Rules

Randy Gentry made a motion adopt Rules of the Vigo County Council, Vigo County Indiana, 2026. Nancy Allsup seconded the motion. In discussion, David Thompson made a motion to amend Rule 13 to add a subsection that "A Council member shall speak no longer than 3 minutes when questioning any presenter." Vicki Weger seconded David Thompson's motion to amend the proposed 2026 Vigo County Council Rules. Randy Gentry clarified that there was no limit on the amount of times Council members could speak, so the three minute limit would start anew each time. Upon a roll call vote for the pending amendment, voting was as follows: Brenda Wilson – aye; David Thompson – aye; Nancy Allsup – aye; Brad Anderson – aye; Randy Gentry – nay; Vicki Weger – aye; Steve Ellis – aye. With a vote of 6-1, the amendment passed. Upon a roll call

vote for Randy Gentry's pending motion, voting was as follows: Brenda Wilson – aye; David Thompson – aye; Nancy Allsup – aye; Brad Anderson – aye; Randy Gentry – aye; Vicki Weger – aye; Steve Ellis – aye. With a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

b. 2026 Council Appointments

Councilperson Steve Ellis said that a list of Council appointments for 2026 had been provided to the Council prior to the meeting. There was brief discussion on where the proposed appointed Council Attorney John Goth operated from. John Goth confirmed he was from Evansville. He also confirmed his retainer fee was \$2,500 absent other work Council allocates for him to perform. David Thompson asked why the Council Administrator position was absent from the list of 2026 Council appointments made by Council President Steve Ellis. Steve Ellis said Devan Gackle and her current position of Council Administrator was not listed in an effort to “lead by example.” There was a brief discussion about the Council Administrator position and the ability and ethics of the Council to eliminate this appointed position. Randy Gentry made a motion to approve the listed appointments. Nancy Allsup seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote for the pending motion, voting was as follows: Brenda Wilson – aye; David Thompson – aye; Nancy Allsup – aye; Brad Anderson – aye; Randy Gentry – aye; Vicki Weger – aye; Steve Ellis – aye. With a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

Steve Ellis confirmed the Council had received a copy of the Sheriff's Commissary Ledger.

Reports from Committees

There were none.

Resolutions and Ordinances Other than Appropriations – First Reading

a. Resolution of Re-Allocation of Existing Appropriation 2026-1: Health Department – Transfer for Griffin Bike Park Building Costs

Health Department Administrator Joni Wise approached the Council and explained this request to transfer \$13,000 from the “Contractual Services” line in the Local Public Health Service Fund to the “Building Renovation” line in the same fund. She said the Vigo county Parks Department incurred overage building costs at Griffin Bike Park in 2025 and the Health Department is requesting this transfer for the additional cost. There were no questions.

Ordinances Related to Appropriations – First Reading

a. Additional Appropriation 2026-1: Parks Department – Griffin Bike Park: Building Bikes (B2) Program

Parks Superintendent Adam Grossman approached the Council and explained this request for an appropriation of \$14,739 for the “contractual services” line in the Parks and Recreation Fund. He said this appropriation would be used for Griffin Bike Park Building Bikes (B2) Program. Adam gave a brief overview of programming and services provided by Griffin Bike Park. There were no questions.

b. Additional Appropriation 2026-2: Health Department – Crossroads Care Clinic Funding Request

Joni took the podium once more and explained this request for \$77,700 to be appropriated to the “Contractual Services” line in the Local Public Health Service Fund would be used to provide funding to the Crossroads Care Clinic. Joni gave an overview of services provided at the Crossroads Care Clinic. Sharon Carey said due to this funding last year, all testing was free to the public. There were no further questions.

c. Additional Appropriation 2026-3: Health Department – New Life Fellowship Compassion Ministries Food Pantry Funding Request

Joni then explained this request for \$25,000 to be appropriated to the "Contractual Services" line in the Local Public Health Services Fund in order to provide funding the New Life Fellowship Compassion Ministries Food Pantry. Angie and Bill Treadway from the Food Pantry provided an explanation of services given by the food pantry and the impact on the community. Bill explained Meijer Supermarket would provide a 160% matching donations on funds provided to the food pantry. There were no further questions from Council.

d. Additional Appropriation 2026-4: Health Department – Thrive West Central Funding Request

Joni then explained this request for \$100,000 to be appropriated to the "Contractual Services" line in the Local Public Health Services Fund to provide funding to Thrive West Central. Ryan Keller with Thrive West Central explained these funds would contribute to a regional rural transportation network. Ryan gave an overview of services provided by Thrive, the transportation provided to the community in 2025, and the impacts this funding had on the program in 2025. There were no further questions.

e. Amended Salary Ordinance 2026-1: Community Corrections – Pre-Trial Screener Salary Request

Director of Court Services Bill Watson approached the Council and explained this request to amend the salary ordinance for two pre-trial screeners was to make the Salary for the Court Pre-Trial Screeners equal with the Grant Pre-Trial Screener positions for the calendar year 2026. He said the estimated costs for this change would be \$2,982.46. Bill said he has to learn from the department of court services near the end of the previous year what the grant funded positions will be compensated and he has to come before Council to adjust the County funded positions to match the grant funded positions doing the exact same duties. He said he did not want to come before the budget committee in 2025 to negotiate what the salaries of these positions would be for 2026 before learning the compensation rate at the end of 2025. Bill confirmed this request would be for the 2026 budget year and did not want to wait for the budget committee for budget year 2027. Randy asked if modifying the salary ordinance to keep these four pre-trial screener's positions compensated identically was typical for these positions. Bill Watson confirmed this was true. Steve Ellis said he would try to schedule an Annual Budget Committee Hearing to discuss this request further.

f. Additional Appropriation 2026-5: Community Corrections – Pre-Trial Screener Salary Request

This request for an additional appropriation of \$2,447.64 in the "payroll salaries" line, \$187.25 in the "FICA" line, and \$347.57 in the "PERF" line in the County General Fund would fund the salary ordinance amendment outlined above.

g. Additional Appropriation 2026-6: Community Corrections – Employee Benefits Funding Request

Bill Watson then explained this request for \$407,962.72 to be appropriated in the "Group Insurance" line, \$186,350.75 to be appropriated to the "PERF" line, and \$100,393.19 to be appropriated in the "FICA" line in the County General Fund. He said this requested funding is necessary to meet statutory and contractual obligations associated with employee compensation and to ensure the continued provision of essential benefits. Bill said the fund used to pay these benefits can no longer sustain the cost. Randy Gentry asked Bill to confirm if the Community Corrections Board had made efforts to get ahead of this issue and if the money received by the state is budgeted by the County like other departments. Bill confirmed the funds provided to Community Corrections are handled like any other department in County government. He noted a majority of the fund is collected from offender population paying fees. He said rates for these had recently been significantly increased. Bill said the Community Corrections Board has been proactive about addressing this problem in the past, but the Board had not anticipated significant funding cuts from the state of Indiana for the year and expected cuts the next year alongside a significant health insurance cost increase. There was discussion about how much longer this fund can sustain these benefit costs. Bill said the fund can no longer sustain these costs at the time of this meeting. He noted there had been nearly a 50% increase in fees across the Board for the programs. There was discussion about the difficulty in collecting fees from the population typically in need of

community corrections' services. Bill said with the County covering benefit costs, then Community Corrections could focus on the health of the Fund going forward. There was brief discussion on Community Corrections' ability to charge private insurance, Medicaid, and medicare.

h. Additional Appropriation 2026-7: Family Court Project Funding Request

Judge Lakshmi Reddy approached the Council and explained her request for \$250,000 to be appropriated to the "Indigent Crim Appeals & Civ Mat" line in the Opioid Restricted Fund. She said this appropriation would be used to fund the Family Court project. She gave an extended presentation discussing the need for early intervention in maintaining parent/child relationships in children's lives. This presentation included data on the current state of the criminal justice system in Vigo County, and the status of unemployment, food security, and poverty in relation to other counties in the state. Elementary Principal Susan Mardis discussed benefits of the Family Court Program and gave a testimony of benefits to the community. She provided Council with letters of support. Two beneficiaries of the project took the podium and explained the benefits of the program. Director of Victim Assistance in the Prosecutor's Office Brittany Quance then took the podium and expressed her support for this project and described the benefits of the program in regards to the Prosecutor's Office and assisting children who need to go through the court system for a variety of reasons. Commissioner Mike Morris approached the Council and expressed the Commissioners' support for the Family Court project. There was discussion on how many children can be helped by the Family Court Project in a year. Judge Reddy confirmed approximately 300 children were assisted in the first year and this \$250,000 request would cover a year. Steve Ellis asked about \$150,000 appropriated to Chances and Services for Youth and if those funds were used to assist with this project. Judge Reddy said those were separate, and used for other purposes by another program.

i. Additional Appropriation 2026-8: Veteran's Court – Salary Adjustment Request

Judge Charles Johnson Veteran's Court Coordinator Taylor Trinkle approached the Council and Charles explained this request to appropriate ~~\$31,28~~ from the Veteran's Court Fund to make the Case Manager salary even with the previous year due to a gap created by receiving less grant funding. Randy Gentry asked if this request had been made during the annual budgeting process in 2025. Judge Johnson confirmed this request had been made to the Annual Budget Committee, these funds had not been budgeted for 2026 and had been denied by the committee.

j. Additional Appropriation 2026-9: Prosecutor's Office – Victim Assistance Assistant Director Salary Adjustment Request

Chief Deputy Prosecutor Rob Roberts approached the Council and explained this request was for \$12,761 to be appropriated in the "Payroll Salaries" line, \$977 in the "FICA" line, and \$1,812 in the "PERF" line in the User Fee Infraction Deferral Fund to supplement the VOCA grant funding that pays for the Assistant Director of Victim Assistance salary. Rob said this request was made from the General Fund during the annual budgeting process for the County in 2025, but it was not approved. Rob cited an increased income in the User Fee Infraction Deferral Fund for 2025, this request was being made again, to retroactively cover the salary costs for the Assistant Director of Victim Assistance for 2026.

k. Additional Appropriation 2026-10: Council – Forensic Audit Request

Randy Gentry explained this request for \$150,000 to be appropriated to the "Legal Services" line to hire a legal firm for a forensic audit of the County's financial well-being, and to supplement currently budgeted funds for the Vigo County Council. He said this request is a result of some Council members' confusion at the County's financial position based on information received at various Council meetings. Randy read into the record a draft of his request:

"\$150,000 shall be appropriated initially from the Vigo County General fund to County Council line item 30700, legal services for the Vigo County Council to directly retain the services of special legal representation to manage and oversee a thorough forensic accounting of Vigo County current and future financial fitness. The Council may serve as or may designate a member of the County Council to serve as a point person/liaison to

oversee any portion of the County Accounting Review Project. The Council President shall identify and retain a law firm to perform or oversee the performance of the services requested to conduct the County Accounting Review Project; The Council President or designee shall provide monthly reports to the Council at the Council regular public meeting as to the status of the County Accounting Review Project to provide public transparency of the process; and the Council President or designee shall provide to the Council at a regular public meeting the final findings of the County Accounting Review Project. Any and all funds associated with this transfer may be used for any legal expenses for any purpose or need incurred by the Vigo County Council with approval of the majority of the County Council. The County Accounting Review Project shall conclude with a presentation and report of the project's final findings to the Council at a regular public meeting of the Council."

There was discussion about the length of time an audit like this would require. Commissioner Mike Morris approached the Council and questioned the motivations behind this request. There was discussion about the necessity of appropriating additional funds for such an audit with the State Board of Accounts and the Vigo County Auditor's Office regularly conducting and providing the similar services. Vigo County Auditor Larry Hutchings noted his office provided information to Council and the public whenever requested. There was discussion about the value of appropriating this funding without a goal in mind of what the Council was looking to discover. Judy DeLisle with the Vigo County Auditor's Office approached the Council and clarified an incident in December 2025 Randy Gentry referred to several times in which the Council appropriated \$1,887,499.75 from the LIT Public Safety Fund for the first payment in a new communication tower project. She said she had communicated to some members of the Council ahead of the vote this fund may not be able to handle future payments for this project in future years and a new fund may need to be utilized going forward. Randy expressed he was not aware of this information until after the vote was held. There was discussion about the possible inflammatory nature of the "forensic" label to the requested audit.

l. Additional Appropriation 2026-11: 2026 Vigo County Budget Adjustments/Corrections – General Fund

Council Administrator Devan Gackle explained this request for several adjustments/corrections to the General Fund's budget. She said additional appropriations would necessary to "make good" on approvals and commitments made by the Council in 2025 after the budget had been adopted in October. Because these corrections/approvals/adjustments were discovered and made after adoption of the 2026 Budget, these needed to be additional appropriations in 2026. She cited the raises given to County Elected Officials approved in late 2025 as one of the examples. Devan supplied the Council with information on each of these requested appropriations. This request constituted the adjustments required for the General Fund. The total appropriation required from the County General Fund for these adjustments was \$820,692.

m. Additional Appropriation 2026-12: 2026 Vigo County Budget Adjustment/Corrections – Various Funds

Devan then explained this request was the same nature as the one above for the County General Fund, but these adjustments corrections for the 2026 budget were needed in various funds. Devan said these were approvals made by Council and corrections discovered after the budget was adopted in October and required additional appropriations in 2026.

n. Approving the Amended Ordinance Adopting the 2026 Salary Schedule and Compensation Policies for Vigo County, Indiana General Employees

Devan then explained these requested changes to the Vigo County 2026 Salary Ordinance for General Employees. She said these changes were requested by the County's HR department to adjust the wording and phrasing on items. She said the Council had received a proposed edited version of the Ordinance with these changes to Section 7, Section 10, Section 13, and Section 15. These changes include wording changes clarifying

Deputy Coroner's compensation rates as an annual rate instead of a daily one, clarifying Election Board members stipend being paid twice a year, and clarifying Building Inspection Board members being paid \$25 per meeting four meetings per year.

o. Approving the Amended Ordinance Adopting the 2026 Salary Schedule and Compensation Policies for Vigo County Court Staff

Devan explained three case managers had been removed from the 2026 General Employees Salary Ordinance and placed on the 2026 Court Staff Salary Ordinance.

There was discussion about the necessity of calling an Annual Budget Committee hearing to further discuss changes/adjustments/corrections to salaries proposed at this meeting when the request were for the 2026 Budget Year and the Annual Budget Committee usually recommends a proposed Budget for the following year.

Devan also noted there were clarifications made in this ordinance about stipends judges receive.

Public Comment

Earl Elliot referenced his history as a CPA and noted a forensic audit was very extensive and wanted to discuss other options aside from an audit extensive in nature. He said he did not want to see the County take this course of action if it was unneeded.

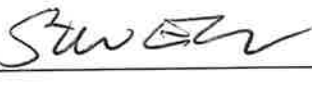
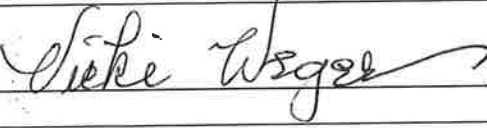
Adjournment

Brenda Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Randy Gentry seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

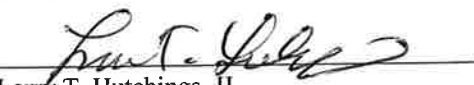
MINUTES OF THE VIGO COUNTY COUNCIL SUNSHINE MEETING

FEBRUARY 3, 2026

Presented to the Vigo County Council, read in full and adopted as written this 10th day of March, 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