

difference for merit deputies stemmed from the change from a 7k schedule with 1952 hours worked in a year to 40 hours or 2080 worked in a year. The two investigators were already working the 40 hour a week schedule prior to this budget. The recommendation is for the deputies to make \$26.15 an hour, Sgt \$27.48, Investigator Lt \$28.86, Investigator Capt. \$30.30. The matter will be decided at the March 8th council meeting along with the required additional appropriation.

With no further business for the council Faron Parr made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Randy May seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

AYE  
*David Haines*  
*Cindy Bracy*  
*Randy May*  
*David Haines*  
*Harold Towell*  
*Matthew*

JAY COUNTY COUNCIL  
  
NAY

ATTEST: *Emily Franks*  
JAY COUNTY AUDITOR

MARCH 8, 2023

The Jay County Council met in regular session on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 6:00 PM, in the auditorium at the Jay County Courthouse. Attending were, Harold Towell, Cindy Bracy, Faron Parr, Randy May, David Haines, Matt Minnich, Attorney Wes Schemenaur, Auditor Emily Franks, and Jeanne Houchins, presiding. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the minutes from January 30<sup>th</sup> joint, February 8<sup>th</sup> Joint, and February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 council meeting; Cindy Bracy seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Additional Appropriations:

COUNTY GENERAL		
1000-005-10-0025	Sheriff Wages- Deputies	\$16,744.00
1000-005-10-0026	Sheriff Wages- Investigators	\$4,014.40
1000-005-10-0029	Sheriff Wages- Srgt	\$3,515.20
1000-005-10-0134	Sheriff Wages- SRO deputy	\$3,348.80

LIT PUBLIC SAFETY		
1170-005-10-0025	Wages- Deputies (3)	\$10,046.40
Matt Minnich made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for the merit deputy's salary amendment. Randy May seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.		

COUNTY GENERAL		
1000-380-20-0040	Jail – Medical Hospital	\$100,000.00
Harold Towell made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for Jail Medical & Hospital. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.		

COUNTY GENERAL		
1000-232-30-0055	Circuit Ct. Court appointed doctor	\$5,000.00
Cindy Bracy made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for Circuit Court. Matt Minnich seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.		

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT		
1176-002-20-0051	Calcium Chloride	\$100,000.00
Faron Parr made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for Calcium Chloride. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Parr also expressed his wish for the county to provide a dust mat for all gravel roads as a way to better maintain the roads and equipment. The highway department learned from Adams County paying for a portion of certain sections of road was not benefiting all county residents. State Board of Accounts will allow the expense if it would benefit all county residents.		

IN LOCAL HEALTH TRUST		
1206-001-10-0049	Employer Health Insurance	\$375.00
Cindy Bracy made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for Employer Health Insurance. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.		

HEALTH DEPT DONATIONS		
4108-001-40-0011	Office Equipment	\$1,000
Cindy Bracy made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for Employer Health Insurance. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.		

COMM CORR 09-10		
8107-001-10-0018	Employer PERF	\$5.97
Cindy Bracy made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Matt Minnich seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.		

**TITLE IV-E REIMBURSEMENT**

8891-001-30-0087	Pauper Counsel	\$520.00
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Faron Parr made a motion to approve to the additional appropriation. Cindy Bracy seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**ARP 2021 CLFRF FUNDS**

8950-001-40-0084	Land Purchase	\$1,164,115.00
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At the conclusion of the meeting, Faron Parr made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for the land. Randy May seconded the motion. Dave Haines voted for the motion with Cindy Bracy, Matt Minnich and Harold Towell opposing the motion. Due to a tie vote, Jeanne Houchins, president, voted for the motion with the motion passing by majority vote.

**TRANSFERS**

County General-Sheriff 1000-005-10-0022 (Wages-Other Comp) to 1000-005-10-0141 (Wages- PT Deputies) \$10,000. Dave Haines made a motion to approve the transfer from the sheriff. Matt Minnich seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Jeanne Houchins gave an update from the last personnel committee meeting on February 27, 2023. The personnel committee recommended the hiring of the open position of election deputy in the clerk’s office. The committee also approved the hiring for an open jailer and dispatcher position. They also recommended creating the position of part time merit deputy at \$26 an hour to cut back on the use of comp time. Lastly, the circuit court is in need of part time clerical position for a few weeks’ time. The position will be paid out of the commissioners’ part time clerical line item since no position currently exists in the department.

**Salary Ordinance Amendment 2023-05**

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Jay County Council that the 2023 Salary Ordinance is hereby amended as follows:

- 1) Sheriff- Merit Deputies 1000-005-10-0025 & 0134 & 1170-005-10-0025 \$26.15/hour  
Full-time position  
Merit Pole A  
Retroactive to January 1, 2023
- 2) Sheriff- Sergeant 1000-005-10-0029  
Full-time position  
Merit Pole B  
Retroactive to January 1, 2023
- 3) Sheriff- Investigator-LT 1000-005-10-0026  
Prosecutor- Investigator 1000-009-10-0024  
Full-time position  
Merit Pole C  
Retroactive to January 1, 2023
- 4) Sheriff- Investigator-Capt. 1000-005-10-0026  
Full-time position  
Merit Pole D  
Retroactive to January 1, 2023
- 5) Add a part time merit deputy position 1000-005-10-0141  
Merit Pole A PT  
Effective upon signing

Matt Minnich made a motion to approve the salary ordinance amendment from the sheriff. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**OPIOID RESPONSE**

Cathy Scott, Purdue University LTAP, came to update the council regarding a grant for the opioid response. They have put together a consortium with IU Health Blackford & Jay Hospitals, Blackford County Community Corrections, Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition, A Better Life Brianna’s Hope, Radiant Health Systems and Purdue University. They have developed a youth mentoring program and increased presentations with middle school and high school by those in recovery. There will also be steps taken towards treatment and recovery. She will return at a later date for another update.

**LAND PURCHASE**

Jeanne Houchins presented Ordinance 2023-04 Authorizing Acquisition of Real Estate.

**WHEREAS**, the Jay County Council passed a Resolution 2023-01 authorizing the Jay County Commissioners to act as purchasing agent to acquire a certain parcel of real estate, more particularly described in the survey attached hereto and incorporated by reference as Exhibit “B” on February 9, 2023.

**WHEREAS**, two professional appraisers were appointed to establish the maximum purchase price allowed by I.C. 36-1-10.5-6 and said price was set forth in Resolution 2023-1;

**WHEREAS**, the Jay County Commissioners have subsequently negotiated a purchase agreement, attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein as Exhibit “A” for 68.06 acres at the price of \$17,104 per acre for a total purchase price of \$1,164,098.24, among other terms and conditions set forth in the attached Exhibit “A”.

**WHEREAS**, said purchase price does not exceed the maximum purchase price as allowed by I.C. 36-1-10.5-6 and Resolution 2023-1; and,



**WHEREAS**, IC 36-2-6-10 requires the Jay County Council to adopt an ordinance approving and fixing the terms and conditions of the transaction.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED** by the Jay County Council that the purchase of the real estate identified in Exhibit “B” is approved and the Jay County Council further approves the proposed terms and conditions set forth in the purchase agreement attached hereto as Exhibit “A”.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Jay County Council on this 8<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2023.

Cindy Bracy questioned whether the land purchase would qualify for the HELP1 Million-dollar match. Travis Richards, JCDC director, responded the project should qualify. He added the HELP1 grant was not a competitive grant but would require the county to follow the steps for the OCRA CDBG (community development block grant). Harold Towell questioned who would be responsible for building out the land. Jeanne Houchins stated a developer was already interested in the property but RQAW could put the county in touch with other potential developers. RQAW has been employed by the county for a feasibility study to be completed April or the first of May.

Harold Towell questioned if the main purpose of the land purchase was for a housing development. He also wanted to know if the 10 acres on front of the parcel not included with the sale would be limited in proposed uses. Wes Schemenaur, county attorney, clarified they would have to go through the zoning department for changes. Mr. Towell questioned how involved the county would be in developing the land and placing in infrastructure. Jeanne Houchins answered there was no concrete plan for the property at this time. Faron Parr added he believed not having infrastructure in place was deterrent to developers. He also believed the city will be required to hook up the development to water and sewer since it is in the city limits.

Mr. Parr added he also believed the county would not lose money on the land due to the increasing costs of farm land in the area. He would like to see multiple developers bid on the land but added it would need to start with the purchase of the land. The county would need to put up money to eventually reap the benefits of the purchase. Lastly he added ARP monies allow the county to work on such a project as was never an option in the past. Ms. Houchins echoed his sentiments of the purchase as it could potentially help the county’s assessed value, property tax and income tax revenue.

Mr. Towell questioned if Jay County Redevelopment Commission money would be used for any of the process and how much money was currently available. Emily Franks, auditor, informed the board the refund check to POET had been issued leaving almost \$300,000 in the fund with the potential revenue for the year around \$500,000 for an estimated \$800,000. Mr. Towell asked if the plan was to transfer the land to the Redevelopment Commission. The discussion then turned to why some members of the redevelopment commission were changed for 2023. Cindy Bracy expressed her feelings that voices were being eliminated and would continue to be eliminated if the property were to transfer to the redevelopment commission.

Ms. Houchins asked the board to address the ordinance about the property before discussing other matters. A list of potential ideas was then discussed for the land. The main idea for the property would be a housing development with recreational items that could be used for all residents not just of the development. Those items could include a pool, tennis courts, baseball field etc. There have been discussions regarding a new public safety building on the front of the property for the EMS and Health Departments. The last idea included a new recycling facility also at the front of the proposed property. She stressed these were only preliminary plans and nothing was decided.

Mrs. Bracy again expressed concern regarding who would be making the ultimate decision on these matters and if the council would be involved. Matt Minnich reiterated the same concerns and cited recent decisions made by the County Commissioners. Those decisions included the transferring and holding of JCDC monies and the restructuring of the Redevelopment Commission to include the realtor who is selling the land. He believed there was value in the decision to purchase the land and agreed with the points made by Mr. Parr earlier in the meeting but was hesitant due to those concerns. He would like to know what the process looks like from other entities who have completed similar projects.

Mr. Minnich questioned how much time there was to research before having to make a decision on the land purchase. Wes Schemenaur, attorney, stated the property would need to close by April 14th, 2023. Any extension would need to be agreed upon by the seller but the appraisals should still be good. If the council would not approve the current terms, they could schedule a special session for the council. The commissioners would then need to approve the claim for purchase in an open meeting.

Mrs. Bracy asked what the next steps would be if it was approved by the council today. Mr. Schemenaur informed them it would be owned in the name of the Jay County Commissioners just as all other county owned property. If it were to be sold, the process would be almost the same in reverse. However, he did not believe the council would need to approve the transfer if it went to the Jay County Redevelopment Commission. The Jay County Redevelopment Commission would still be subject to the appraisal requirements if they were to sell. Their meetings are also open to the public and must be noticed. He added the short-term plan for the property would be the continuation of farming. The terms of the purchase include the sellers right to continue to farm the land for 2023 rent free. He believed it was reasonable term as a condition of the sale because they have already fertilized the ground. The county could continue to cash rent on a year-to-year basis and would be subject to the bidding just like the other county owned farm ground.

Mrs. Bracy asked for clarification on what the Redevelopment Commission could do with the property. Mr. Schemenaur referenced a 195-page handbook he would send regarding their guidelines, powers and authorities. A short list would be that they could develop it, sell it, or long-term lease it. Harold Towell questioned if the council would be a part of any of those processes. Mr. Schemenaur confirmed the council would not be required to be a part of those processes. Faron Parr asked as a member of the Redevelopment Commission why there was distrust. Jeff Bailey, FCC Vice President, referenced the distrust between Jay County Development Corporation (JCDC) and the County Commissioners at the root of the issue. He also asked how long the property had been up for sale with Ms. Houchins answering she believed the property had been on the market between 8-10 months.

Jo Acker, director of bakery operations at Tyson Food, spoke as the second largest employer in the county. The two biggest issues they face is a lack of affordable housing and childcare. He believes the biggest risk to the county is to do nothing. He would like to see everyone come together for those goals.

Jack Houck, local realtor for the sellers of the proposed property, clarified that he does not receive a commission from the county for the land, only from the sellers. He believed if the land were to sell in the future, it would be awarded based on a bidding process. Most of the developers he has spoken with decisions to develop have hinged on infrastructure. The



developers would be much more likely to come in if there was an incentive such as infrastructure already in place. Lastly, Mr. Houck added he has not seen the housing market decline in this area.

Gary Clark, business owner, questioned if an agreement with a developer would stipulate the use of local contractors for the construction of the development. As a local painter this is a major issue for him. He added it would be killing his job by bringing in developers from out of area. Jeanne Houchins confirmed they could make stipulations in agreements to ensure a percentage of workers were local.

John Gibson, citizen, encouraged the council to go move forward with the purchase of the land. He added land is not getting any cheaper and if the decision is pushed out it the deal could be lost. He also encouraged more than three voices should be used in the process.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Faron Parr made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-04 Authorizing Acquisition of Real Estate. Randy May seconded the motion noting the need for housing in the county. Dave Haines voted for the motion with Cindy Bracy, Matt Minnich and Harold Towell opposing the motion. Due to a tie vote, Jeanne Houchins, president, voted for the motion with the motion passing by majority vote.

Jeanne Houchins addressed those present in regards to JCDC. She personally has tried to bring JCDC and the commissioners back together. There are millions of dollars available through grants she would like to see them work together to receive them for the county. All the council can do is encourage the relationship and she does try to encourage them.

**HELPI Strategic Investment Plan**

Travis Richards, JCDC Director, came to the council to give an update on the HELPI Strategic Investment Plan. The state originally asked for changes back by March 3rd but an extension was granted. There have been changes made including adding the public safety building to the plan as suggested by commissioners. The third page includes eleven edits to the plan. Mr. Richards asked the council if there were any other changes before submitting. Cindy Bracy asked if there was a way to make the passage less negative “There is nothing to do here”. Mr. Richards requested she email him the suggested wording change. He was unsure of the timeline for them to receive back a final version after edits but presumed it would be fairly quickly. The final approval will go to the commissioners and then council for approval. Adopting the plan will not set aside any monies for the including projects.

**JCDC- ANNUAL UPDATE**

Travis Richards, Director, came to the council to give an annual update on JCDC. The first topic was economic development. In 2022 there was 13 million in investments including Priority Plastics, FCC, and Fisher Packing. They created \$1.2 million in wages and retained 841 jobs with 35 new jobs created. A five-year return on investment would be 288%. Over the last year, their focus has started shifting to small business where it has been traditionally industrial driven. This included the 2022 small business resource guide, Portland façade funding program and Launch Jay competition. A point of note for the Launch program funded by windfarm monies included winners from Redkey, Portland and Dunkirk.

Housing development has been earmarked as a point of focus with the creation of a housing task force. They have been working with the developer by the Jay County High School. Mr. Richards indicated their third goal was the expansion of infrastructure. Through the HELPI Process they partnered with Purdue Center for regional development on mapping broadband speeds in the county. Around 850 speed tests have been completed. The FCC is plotting available speeds in areas across the county to see where the need is greatest. Their map will be used to distribute the funds being disbursed but can be superseded by the Purdue mapping. Other items completed in 2022 included the JayRegion website, Pennville Library Expansion from 1100 sq ft to 2800 sq ft. Yodel Community Calendar, MakeMyMove program and Manufacturing Day! Mr. Richards serves on the Education and Workforce Development task forces through the Portland Foundation.

Lastly, Mr. Richards wanted to address the relationship between his organization and the county. He acknowledged the large crowd present for the meeting as it is hard for most to attend a daytime commissioner meeting. They have had about 170 letters of support with most in attendance. He expressed his wish to be partners with the county. They would like to see the EDIT plan reinstated as it was a surprise to most of them when it was rescinded. They would also like to see the money appropriated in the budget released soon. Ms. Houchins would like to see the first half of the monies released with his organization returning for the second half later in the year. She would also like for them to complete the funding application for the commissioners. Adding the funding application allows them to make sure they are giving money to organizations that need it.

Faron Parr asked the two commissioners present in audience, Chad Aker and Rex Journey, seated separately. Chad Aker, commissioner president, spoke from the audience regarding items they needed before releasing monies. He mentioned the need for the completion of a funding application and other items requested last October. Mr. Richards asked for clarification on what was still needed from last October. Mr. Aker informed him they were still waiting on an answer about positions on the executive board. He added he would like a meeting to come to some sort of agreement.

Matt Minnich asked to make one final statement in regards to JCDC. He hears a lot from some current elected officials regarding decline in population, wages and high poverty rate. While giving examples for the decline in numbers including large farm operations, he acknowledged the work being done in the JCDC presentation. He noted we don’t know what life would be like without JCDC for the last 30 years, but believes we are in a better position than without them. While he understands the desire to be on their executive committee, he does not see much benefit. He would like there to be some separation between the two organizations and an acknowledgement of expectations. Mr. Richards asked the councils opinion in regard to completing the funding application. Mr. Minnich believed while most of the information was available to the commissioners there was no harm in completing the application.

Faron Parr added he had nothing but nice things to say about the organization in the community and that there would be no FCC or his shop in Bryant without them. He noted it was nice to see people out in support of the organization and hoped everyone could work together without seeing who can throw the biggest stone.

Mary Adair, director of Jay County Tourism Bureau, added she felt Travis was constantly moving to push the county forward. She also informed those present she would like to see more youth brought into community involvement. The annual Fiber Festival is coming up soon and she is having a hard time finding enough volunteers. She believes younger involvement will help keep them in the community. She also asked everyone to work together to push the county forward.

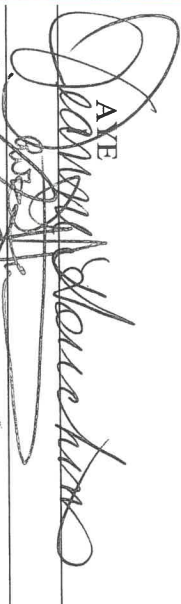



Lastly, the council heard from Alicia Corwin, Pennville Town Council President, and John Glassford, Bryant Resident, about the positive impact of ICDC on the smaller cities and towns. They added by eliminating or reducing their county funding it would hurt the small communities who rely on them.

Bill Walters, director the ECI Regional Planning, who was listed on the agenda was unable to attend the meeting.

With no further business for the council Faron Parr made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Cindy Bracy seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

JAY COUNTY COUNCIL

NAY

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ATTEST:   
JAY COUNTY AUDITOR