







JAY COUNTY COUNCIL

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 ATTEST: 
 JAY COUNTY AUDITOR

MAY 8, 2024

The Jay County Council met in session on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 6:00 PM, in the auditorium at the Jay County Courthouse. Attending from the council was Harold Towell, Randy May, Faron Parr, Jeanne Houchins, Cindy Bracy, attorney Wes Schemenaur, auditor Emily Franks, and Matt Minnich, presiding, absent Dave Haines. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the minutes including the joint session from April 10, 2024. Harold Towell seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Additional Appropriations:

COUNTY GENERAL

1000-622-20-0016 Retirement Center Repair Equipment **\$3500.00**
 Harold Towell made a motion to deny the additional appropriation request as the mower had been repaired by the Jay County Highway Department and believed the additional monies were no longer needed. Cindy Bracy asked the auditor if money was required at this time. Emily Franks stated they had enough money currently and could transfer, but might end up needing more funds later in the year. The motion died for lack of second. Cindy Bracy made a motion to table the additional appropriation request. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by majority vote with Harold Towell opposing the motion.

LIT - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1112-001-30-0027 Contractual Services **\$80,000.00**
 Cindy Bracy made a motion to deny the additional appropriation for the contractual services. The motion died for lack of second. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the \$80,000 additional. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by majority vote with Jeanne Houchins, Faron Parr, and Randy May voting for the motion and Harold Towell and Cindy Bracy voting against the motion.

1112-001-30-0236 Portland Rockets **\$3,450.00**
 The Portland Rockets requested money from the county towards fireworks and advertisement for their 65th year opening game. The commissioners had voted at their March 25th meeting to approve pending council approval. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the motion passed by majority vote with Harold Towell opposing the motion.

TITLE IV-E REIMBURSEMENT

8891-001-30-0087 Pauper Counsel **\$1,160.00**
 Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the additional from the Title IV-E Reimbursement fund. Randy May seconded the motion and the motion and the passed by unanimous vote.

TRANSFERS

A transfer from LIT Public Safety 1170-005-10-0114 (Wages- Jailers) to 1170-005-40-0038 (Equipment) \$22,800 was requested by the sheriff. The transfer will help outfit the new cars purchased by the department. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the transfer. Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

LEEWARD RENEWABLE ENERGY- ROSE GOLD SOLAR

Andrew Buroker, attorney representing Leeward Energy, returned to the council for approval of an amended Economic Development agreement as discussed at the prior meeting. He recapped that the changes in the grid connection process by the Federal Regulatory Commission led to delays which require an amendment to the current economic development agreement (EDA). The SB-1 was amended to modify two key components. The first was to change the construction start date from December 31, 2023 to June 30, 2027. The second change modifies the construction completion date from December 31, 2025 to December 31, 2028. The agreement will need to be approved by council and then by commissioners at their next meeting. Mr. Minnich questioned if they would still be able to modify the agreement moving forward. Mr. Buroker acknowledged they might be open to negotiation in the future, but wanted to know if the county approved the new timeline ahead of any more negotiations. County attorney, Wes Schemenaur, recommended the council pass the amendment as it is only modifying dates. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the changes to the EDA. Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the motion passed by majority vote with Harold Towell voting against the motion.

SKYCREST SOLAR- INVENERGY

Ethan Sternberg, Invenergy Skycrest Solar, came to update council on their solar project to be located in northern Jay County. The original approval was given in June 2021. Although Invenergy has made substantial progress, they have also faced setbacks similar to the Rose Gold project. Due to changes in the interconnection agreement, that is regulated by the provider, PJM, their original timeline for construction dates will need to be modified. The original expectation of beginning in 2022 to 2023, did not happen. However, they did receive their final interconnection earlier this year and see the project moving forward, when connection rights are received. The connection grid is estimated to be constructed by 2026 by Indiana & Michigan power. They are anticipating more delays and are requesting that council allow them a one-year extension to the original EDA. The construction would now begin by the end of 2024 with a completion of 2026. They have already made changes to leases that they have with the landowners to reflect the date changes. Their plan is to formalize the changes with an amended SB-1 in the

EDA at the June council meeting. Matt Minnich asked if there is willingness to review the EDA. Ethan stated that if an extension is granted by the county, this could be a possibility. Wes assured council that preliminary discussions on this matter have already happened and would continue. No action was taken on this matter.

OWNER OCCUPIED REHAB

Nate Kimball, ECI Regional Planning District Assistant Director, came to the council to discuss the release of the owner-occupied rehab application to county residents. The application release date has been set for May 28, 2024 and will remain open until June 28, 2024. This program is part of the Hoosier Enduring Legacy Program, HELP. Jay County secured a \$1 million, \$25,000 max per household for a minimum of 40 households, through this grant. It will assist Jay County residents in the rehabilitation of their homes in 5 specific project areas. These areas include roof repair & replacement, heating and cooling replacement, lighting & electrical upgrades, water heater replacement and ADA accessibility. Applicants will need to meet certain criteria to be considered for this program. These criteria will include income limitations, providing proof of income, mortgage holder information, proof of homeowner's information, a copy of the deed to the property and be up to date on property taxes. Applications can be picked up at the Jay County Courthouse in the Auditor's Office, at the Community Resource Center at 118 Meridian Street in Portland, and Dunkirk and Redkey town halls. They will also be available online at the county website, jaycounty.net. Electronic submissions will not be accepted due to cybersecurity reasons. However, applications can be returned to any one of the pickup sites. Applications will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis, with all applications date and time stamped at the location. Klempeter consulting will complete an initial review for completeness. The county can then begin the bidding process and offer environmental review. Radon testing is a new requirement by OCRA that is now in the review process. After all initial reviews are complete and approved, applications will be sent to the State, where final approval will be made. Matt Minnich asked if there would be a cost to the county for the environmental study portion. Nate said the state will allow up to \$5000.00 to be allotted from the grant for this study. He believed this would not be enough to cover every study that is required and was unsure of what the final cost to the county would be. The county could hire a contractor to determine what each household needs to estimate this cost. Faron Parr questioned the timeline for the entire program. Nate said that all funds for the program must be spent by the end of 2025. If there is money still remaining after the first round of projects are complete, they will reopen the application process to a second round of applicants. After the applications are released on May 28, he plans to begin working with contractors to determine what bids will be needed. Cindy Bracy stressed the importance of using local contractors first, if possible. Nate assured he will begin by looking at local contractors but may have to reach outside of the county. Wes stated that there will be a contract needed between parties involved. He is still working with OCRA to determine who the contracts need to be between. Although the cost to the county for the environmental study could be considerable, council agreed to continue moving forward with the program.


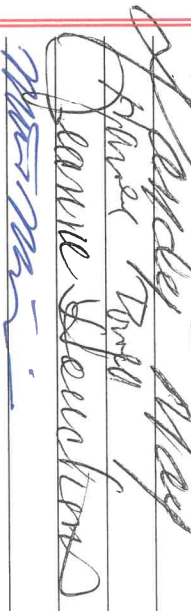
2024 BUDGET

Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the 2024 for 2025 Budget calendar as presented. Council discussed the schedule and if it was possible to have the budget calendar begin at an earlier date. Auditor, Emily Franks, said the calendar could begin as early as August, and suggested not to start any sooner than that. The second reading of the budget is required to be complete by the end of October. Council agreed for departments to submit budgets with a 3% increase as a starting point. Cindy Bracy seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

With no further business for the council Jeanne Houchins made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Faron Parr seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

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