

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. Kleinpeter 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.




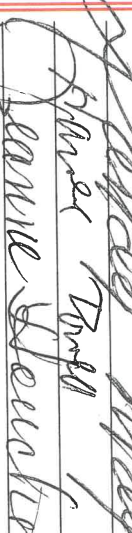

**2024 BUDGET**

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.

**JAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

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ATTEST:   
JAY COUNTY AUDITOR



**JUNE 12, 2024**

The Jay County Council met in session on Wednesday, June 12, 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, Dave Haines, attorney Wes Schemenaur, auditor Emily Franks, and Matt Minnich, presiding, absent Cindy Bracy. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the minutes from May 8th, 2024. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Additional Appropriations:**

**COUNTY GENERAL**

**1000-622-20-0016** County Living/ Retirement Center Repair Equipment : \$15,000.00 \$3,500.00

The Additional request was previously tabled at May’s Council meeting. There was no representative present to answer any questions. The council again chose to table the request. Faron Parr made a motion to table the additional appropriation request. Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**1000-006-20-0019** Surveyor -Other Garage & Motor \$5,000.00

The Additional appropriation was presented for the cost to fit a new bed on a dump truck that was recently transferred to Surveyor from the Highway Department. Harold Towell made motion to approve the additional appropriation for Surveyor- Other garage & motor. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote

**1000-006-30-0034** Surveyor- Tile Lot Maintenance \$1,500.00

The additional appropriation was presented by the surveyor to install lighting at their tile lot located at the County Highway Department. Mr. Daniels hopes the added lighting will help deter any more break ins. Harold Towell made motion to approve Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**1000-068-10-0049** Commissioners- Employer Health Insurance \$42,884.99

Emily Franks, auditor, explained a refund was received from employee Health Insurance provider, PHP, that will be used to reduce the cost to all employees who elect this coverage for the months of July-December 2024. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the PHP refund. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**1000-232-30-0012** Circuit Court- Travel Mileage \$300.00

An additional appropriation for travel/mileage was presented to the council. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the additional for travel/mileage. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**LIT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**1112-0001-30-0181** Small Business Development \$2,500.00

Travis Richards, JCDC, and Judy Porter from ECI Small Business Development Center presented a request asking for additional amounts that were originally in requested for 2024, but were not budgeted. Ms. Porter explained ECI Small Business Development provides various services to small business’ in the county for all aspects of business development. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for LIT-Economic Development. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**ARP 2021**

**8950-001-30-0148** Professional Services \$18,700.06

An additional appropriation for Professional Services to pay REA, Rundell Ernberger & Associates their most recent invoice was presented for council approval. The services are related to the 68-acre project. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the additional appropriation from ARP. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by majority vote with Harold Towell voting against the motion.

**TITLE IV-E REIMBURSEMENT**

**8891-001-30-0087** Pauper Counsel \$1710.00

An additional appropriation from the Public Defender regarding their monthly reimbursement from the state was presented for council approval. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the additional from Title IV-E. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**TRANSFERS**

A transfer for the Health Bioterrorism fund from Miscellaneous expense 8109-001-30-0046 to office equipment 8109-001-40-011 for \$1,800.00 was presented for council approval. The funds will be used to purchase needed office equipment. Faron Parr made a motion to approval the transfer for Health-Bioterrorism. Harold Towell seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**SKYCREST SOLAR- INVENERGY**

Ethan Sternberg, Invenergy Skycrest Solar project, returned to council with a request to amend the economic development agreement and SB-1 with the county. The agreement is the same as the original agreement except for changes to the timeline of the project and the EDA payment schedule. The amended forms have a construction start date of December 31, 2026 from the original December 31, 2024 and a completion date of December 31, 2028 from the original December 31, 2026. Mr. Sternberg stated that the goal is to complete the project sooner but is allowing extra time for any unforeseen circumstances that may arise. The first EDA payment to the county was originally planned to be paid 120 days from the completion date. The amended agreement now has the first payment due six months after construction begins. Attorney, Wes Schemenaur, felt the payment schedule is a benefit for the county and a good faith for having to move the project backward. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the changes to the EDA extension and the new payment schedule, Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**BRYANT PARK BOARD**

Paul VanCise, Bryant Park Board member, came to the council to request money to complete phase one of their park project. They had to remove the trees, benches, and bicycle racks from their original plan due to the increase of costs from the original award of the grant. The board originally used windfarm monies as the match to a Portland Foundation grant for playground and equipment. They would like the county to help contribute \$10,000 to an outside drinking fountain, a bike rack by the restroom facilities, park like trash cans and a leaf blower to maintain the trail. The commissioners approved the funding request at the May 28, 2024 meeting pending council approval. While the total request is \$10,000, if they will look for ways to save money



somewhere. If they can, he will use it towards a tiller for mulch maintenance. Mr. VanCise reported they are continuing to work with Nate Kimball to find other funding options for any future plans. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to have \$10,000 come from economic windfarm funds, Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**CE-1s**

The following tax abatement compliance forms for county granted abatements were received and will be verified by the following council members: Next Era- Dave Haines; Minnich Poultry & Reier Pullets- Cindy Bracy; Bitter Ridge- Jeanne Houchins. The members will verify the compliance and report back to the council at their meeting in July.

**Salary Ordinance Amendment 2024\_07**

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Jay County Council that the 2024 Salary Ordinance is hereby amended as follows:

All qualified full-time employees will be eligible for a per month credit to offset the cost of available county health insurance coverage. The amounts as are follows:

Paid by employees from December- May for coverage January-June 2024.  
Single plan participants HRA: \$728.54 per month  
Employee and Children plan participants HRA: \$1,083.38 per month  
Employee and Spouse plan participants HRA: \$1,212.79 per month  
Family plan participants HRA: \$1,465.48 per month

Single plan participants TRADITIONAL: \$850.39 per month  
Employee and Children plan participants TRADITIONAL: \$1,281.27 per month  
Employee and Spouse plan participants TRADITIONAL: \$1,425.34 per month  
Family plan participants TRADITIONAL: \$1,872.02 per month

Paid by employees from June- November for coverage July- December 2024.  
Single plan participants HRA: \$731.12 per month  
Employee and Children plan participants HRA: \$1,246.08 per month  
Employee and Spouse plan participants HRA: \$1,382.41 per month  
Family plan participants HRA: \$1,869.62 per month

Single plan participants TRADITIONAL: \$904.33 per month  
Employee and Children plan participants TRADITIONAL: \$1,568.13 per month  
Employee and Spouse plan participants TRADITIONAL: \$1,731.20 per month  
Family plan participants TRADITIONAL: \$2,421.02 per month  
Harold Towell made a motion to approve salary amendment ordinance 2024-07 regarding the refund, Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**LIT RATE CHANGE**

A possibility of a LIT, local income tax, rate change for 2025 was discussed. Auditor, Emily Franks, stated if council would like to move forward, this would need to be acted on by August 1, 2024, with the final decision needed by October 2024. Matt Minnich asked if it could be possible to set the number of years for the increased rate and then have it reduced once a project is complete. Mr. Schemenaur did not believe that was an option, but would check into the possibility.

**SOFTWARE CHANGE**

Auditor, Emily Franks, and Treasurer first deputy, Jonelle Foreman, came to the council to discuss the need for new financial and property tax software. They have researched for more than a year and after viewing three property tax and two financial systems, would like this to be considered for the 2025 budget. There are only a few vendors to choose from because these systems are government programs and must be state certified. Ms. Franks explained the current financial software is Harris Local Government with an annual support cost of \$10,226.70 in 2023. The county converted to this system in March of 2011 at a cost of \$57,840. The current property tax software, MVP Tax, owned by Aumentum has an annual support cost of \$57,142 for 2023. The county began using this system in February 2006 for a purchase price of \$90,000.

Ms. Franks explained both departments are seeing challenges with the current software including a lack of customer support. Typically, there is only one person that can assist with support issues which contributes to longer wait times for the departments. The software updates are sporadic and have not helped with functionality for the user. There are license limitations that only allow a certain number of users to use the systems at a time. The lack of flexibility in needed report generations requires multiple reports to be printed and has caused reconciliation systems. The current systems are based on site, with no remote ability, which caused issues during the Covid pandemic and would be an issue in a natural disaster. The employees within these departments had to be onsite daily to keep the county operating for things such as bill payments, payroll, and collection of money.

The biggest concern is that the current software is reaching the end of life, with less than 20 counties in Indiana remaining on either system and more slated to leave this year. Ms. Franks stated she would like the county to make a good decision now rather than wait until we are forced to use a system that is no longer supported. Jeanne Houchins questioned if they felt any of the systems that have been viewed thus far, would work better for the county. Ms. Franks stated they recently completed the last demo and were impressed with the financial software, as well as the property tax software. Mrs. Foreman added she believed this specific company's customer support is exceptional.

Matt Minnich requested more specific information comparing all the systems that have been demoed and their recommendation. Ms. Franks stated they were between two companies, Lowe and X-soft, with the third system, GUTS, only offering software for a property tax system. The Assessor is already using X-soft software and Mrs. Foreman felt that it would be a benefit for all

three departments to utilize the same system. Ms. Franks added the price would also play a big part in her decision. Lowe Financial would cost the county approximately \$500,000 to convert and \$100,000 for annual support. They have a three year, zero interest payment option. While X-soft would be \$357,000 to convert and \$69,000 for annual support. Their company is offering a five year, zero interest payment option with the annual support comparable to the current cost.

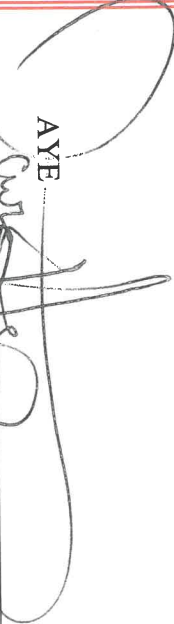
Matt Minnich questioned if these systems offer cloud-based options. X-soft is completely cloud based, while Lowe is a hybrid. Ms. Franks believes they could run into the same issue that they have with their current softwares. Jeanne Houchins stated the importance of having good software support and that proceeding with the software changes now, may be better than waiting until next year. If the council would choose to convert both systems in 2025, a decision would need to be made by October 2024. If approved, property tax software can only be converted in January or February, while conversion of financial software is more flexible. Ms. Franks and Mrs. Foreman plan to return to council in July with the requested information.

With no further business for the council Faron Parr made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Dave Haines seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

JAY COUNTY COUNCIL

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