

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

AYE

NAY

[Handwritten signatures: Cindy Bracy, Faron Parr, Jeanne Houchins, Dave Haines, Randy May, Harold Towell, Jeanne Houchins]

ATTEST: *[Signature: Cindy Bracy]*
JAY COUNTY AUDITOR

JULY 17, 2024

The Jay County Council met in session on Wednesday, July 17, 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, Cindy Bracy, attorney Wes Schemenaur, auditor Emily Franks, and Matt Minnich, presiding. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the minutes from June 12th, 2024. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Additional Appropriations:

COUNTY GENERAL

1000-622-20-0016 Ret. Center Repair Equipment \$3 **\$85,000.00**
Cindy Bracy made a motion to deny the additional appropriation. The department will file a new additional appropriation if needed in the future. Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

LIT-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1112-001-30-0220 JCDC Projects \$11,000
The additional appropriation would be towards the 2024 Launch Jay! Pitch competition. Cindy Bracy made a motion to approve the additional appropriation for LIT_Economic Development. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

CO. SHERIFF CONTINUING EDUCATION

1133-001-30-0128 Training Department \$5,000
The additional appropriation is to pay for training at the department. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the additional appropriation out of Co. Sheriff Continuing Education. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

DRUG FREE COMMUNITIES

1148-001-30-0126 Jay County Organizations \$16,015.14
The monies are collected via court fees annually and are put towards a comprehensive plan approved by the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. The list of recipients for 2024 were read aloud including Jay County Sheriff's Department, Jay County Community Center, A Better Life Brianna's Hope, Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition, Youth Service Bureau of Jay County, Indiana University Health-Jay, and Jay School Corporation. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

OPIOID RESTRICTED FUNDS

1237-001-30-0143 Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition \$11,000
The additional appropriation was for the study by Bruns Consulting related to the new sober living facility. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the additional appropriation from the Opioid Restricted fund. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by majority vote with Faron Parr, Dave Haines, Cindy Bracy, Jeanne Houchins and Randy May voting for the motion and Harold Towell voting against the motion.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WINDFARM

4500-001-30-0206 Bryant \$10,000
The additional appropriation was for the Town of Bryant Park Board for upgrades to the facilities. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

TITLE IV-E REIMBURSEMENT

8891-001-30-0087 Pauper Counsel \$1,260
Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the additional from the Title IV-E Reimbursement fund. Cindy Bracy seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

ARR- 2021-CLFRE

8960-001-30-0148 Professional Services \$11,000
The additional appropriation was for an invoice from Rundell, Errstberger, & Associates related to the 68-acre development. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by majority vote with Cindy Bracy and Harold Towell opposing the motion.

TRANSFERS

1000-005-10-0025 Sheriff (FT Deputies) to 1000-005-10-0141 (Part Time Deputies) in the amount of \$10,000. Cindy Bracy made the motion to approve the transfer. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

1000-005-20-0021 Sheriff (Training Supplies) to 1000-005-30-0012 Sheriff (Travel/Mileage) in the amount of \$515.00. Faron Parr made a motion to approve the transfer. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

1170-005-10-0014 LIT Public Safety (Wages- Jailers) to 1170-005-40-0014 (Vehicles) in the amount of \$2,121. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the transfer. Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

CF-1 Abatement Approvals

The following CF-1's were reviewed for compliance; Next Era- Dave Haines, Minnich Poultry/Reier Pulllets- Cindy Bracy Bitter Ridge- Jeanne Houchins. All were found to be in compliance with their original SB-1s. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve all CF-1s for 24 pay 25. Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

ORDINANCE 2024-08 Meal Reimbursement Policy

Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-08. Cindy Bracy seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

ORDINANCE 2024-09 Salary Amendment

Ms. Franks explained a probation officer had recently left employment and had since been replaced. The new employee had less experience and would be paid less based on the state standards. A new lower amount had been established by Judge Hutchison of the Circuit Court based on those standards, but an amendment to the salary ordinance was needed. Dave Haines made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-09

Salary Ordinance Amendment 2024-09

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

- 1) Probation Officer (Probation Dept.) 1000-273-10-0072 \$1892.04/salary
Full-time position
Effective June 1, 2024
Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

LIT TAX RATE CHANGE FOR 2025

Ms. Franks asked for the council to discuss the possible change to the existing local income tax rate. This has been brought up throughout the last year to potentially help fund various projects, such as broadband. The current EDT rate is .25% and could be increased up to .5%. Although this change would increase taxes, council believed this could be something to consider for 2025. At this point, final decisions do not need to be made but all affected units need to be notified of the potential change by August 1, 2024. Council then has until October, to decide if they would like to modify the rate. A public hearing would be required before any change is made. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to proceed with the possible LIT rate change, Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

HIGHWAY DEPT.- NEW POSITION

A new job description for the county highway department, that was previously recommended and forwarded by the personnel committee, was presented to council for approval. The position, assistant highway superintendent, would not remove the current administrative assistant but add an additional position. This request would need to have a salary Ordinance amendment and additional appropriation to complete. The current employee/ position is classified as a COMOT C and would become classified as a PAT. After review of the administrative assistant job description, the employee is doing more duties than are included in the current the job description. The wages for this position would be paid from the Highway Department budget. The employee has received needed certifications and has been doing the additional duties since February 2024.

Jeanne Houchins believed that if the employee has been doing the additional duties since that time, they should be compensated for that time. Auditor, Emily Franks, cautioned that there are other departments that also have administrative assistant positions who requested and received recommendation for a classification change, but were not asking for retroactive pay. Ms. Franks felt the council should consider this before compensating employees retroactively, noting all reclassifications are due by April 1 indicating they had been doing an altered job description since before then as well. Jeanne Houchins made a motion to approve the new job description for assistant highway superintendent, Faron Parr seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. They also decided the salary for the new position would be set at \$52,727.16 based on the average pay for this position in other counties. This will need to be forwarded to the personnel committee for approval. Faron Parr made motion to approve, Harold Towell seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

JAY COUNTY COUNTRY LIVING DIRECTOR

The current pay for the director at the county living facility was discussed. The current director is paid on a part time basis. The board of directors for the facility would like to combine the wages of part time director and a former financial coordinator position. The facilities board of directors is planning to discuss the job description as well as this wage change soon. It was suggested to forward this request to the personnel committee before council make any final decisions.

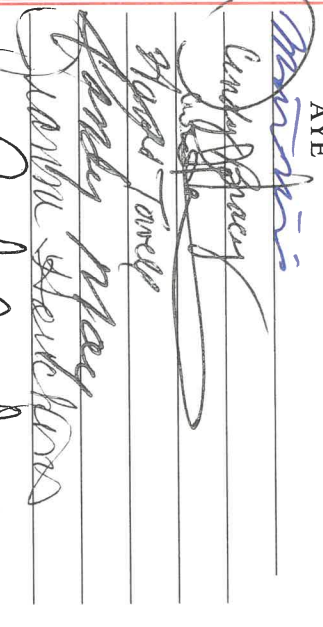
Auditor, Emily Franks gave council the preliminary 2025 budget information to review. At this point, with all requested changes, the 2025 budget has increased \$2,000,000 overall from 2024. With only a \$256,000 max levy increase from 2024, she noted some of the major increases over the prior year. Ms. Franks also gave an update on the status of the previously discussed tax and financial software changes. The cost for each system was given to council. Due to the importance, including the cost, she would like to take more time to research the software before making a final decision.


With no further business for the council Faron Parr made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Jeanne Houchins seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

JAY COUNTY COUNCIL

AYE

NAY



ATTEST: 
JAY COUNTY AUDITOR

JULY 31, 2024 JOINT SESSION

The Jay County Council and Commissioners met in a special joint session on July 31, 2024. Present were council members Harold Towell, Cindy Bracy, Dave Haines, Randy May, Faron Parr, commissioner Rex Journey, auditor Emily Franks, attorney Wes Schemenaur, and commissioner Chad Aker, president presiding. Absent was commissioner Brian McGalliard, council member Jeanne Houchins and council president, Matt Minnich. The purpose of the joint session was to discuss ARP monies.

Wes Schemenaur, county attorney, provided members with a brief overview of the ARPA funds including how the funds can be obligated and spent. The county has chosen revenue replacement which allows the money to be used towards any government services. The money must be obligated under contract for property or services by December 31, 2024. The obligation could also be an interagency agreement in place of a contract by December 31, 2024 and would still be required to be expended by December 31, 2026. The agreement must include one of the following terms: imposes conditions on the use of funds by recipient agency, department or part of government, governs provision of funds from one agency, department or part of government to another, or governs the procurement of goods or services. It also must include all three of the following: Agreement has specific requirements (scope of work), is signed by all parties, and does not disclaim binding effect or state that it does not create rights or obligations.

Mr. Schemenaur also explained possible ways to obligate the funds starting with the 68-acre project. An interagency agreement could be completed with the Jay County Redevelopment Commission or the City of Portland to utilize funds for development of this project. This could be contingent upon READI funding, but must have a plan B (or C). The READI information is estimated to be finalized in October 2024. Another option, the countywide broadband project, was not awarded BEAD grant funding and will likely not allow enough time for completion. This will be addressed by Mainstream Fiber later in the meeting during their presentation. Also, Emergency Radios could be an option by entering into an interagency agreement with Jay County Emergency Management and other municipalities that are going to participate. The funds may not pay for the entire project, but could be used as a match for other grants. However, it could be opened up to some of the smaller municipalities and organizations for the purchase of radios. There might be some broad costs available to the county in the next six weeks.

MAINSTREAM FIBER NETWORKS

Shawn Gardner, the director of community outreach and government affairs with Mainstream Fiber, came to give an updated presentation to the county. Their business was founded in Brown County, Indiana by Brian Gabriel to bring broadband to rural residents. He explained broadband as a utility is looked for by developers at shovel ready sites. They are a fiber first company to provide high-quality, reliable fiber internet to all our customers. They are an Indiana based company and are 100% focused on serving rural Indiana. Their end goal would still be a whole-county approach and aim to meet all underserved and un-served in the county. They are partnership oriented and are fully funded by their capital partner, Searchlight.

Mr. Gardner explained the timeline for BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program) which would have IBO (Indiana Broadband Office) announcing the first round of winners November 1st, 2024. IBO had rebutted a lot of the addresses originally challenged for the Next Level Connections grant. He stated FCC Costquest Data had changed from 5 to 7 which had created issues for service eligibility. It went from approximately 3000 eligible addresses to 198 in the county. The current providers that are within the county can state they cover an area. They have found with a lot of fixed wireless customers once the carrier visits the site, they realize they cannot provide it in that location, but do not update their service maps. Jeff Marston, chief communication officer with Mainstream Fiber, provided an updated map of the served, underserved and un-served areas in the county.

Mainstream has built redundancy into their systems to make issues unnoticeable by the end user. This includes a 5G overlay to maintain communication and provide community access points. Many of those access points were located at volunteer fire departments, parks and libraries for online learning opportunities. The county could have input in where those access points should be placed. Mr. Journey asked for updated figures for the project. The cost, as of today, is \$7.8 million for the build out, with \$2.4 million from Jay County and a \$2.5 million match from Mainstream. They are hoping the remainder could come from BEAD funding. The 7.8 million would cover 2,281

passings (which is considered a home or business). That would still leave about 1500 houses/passes remaining. During the two-year period it would establish the footprint and would then work on the edges.

Chad Aker recently attended the Hoosier Huddle and spoke with Steve Cox, from the Indiana Broadband Office, regarding BEAD funding. Of the total grant, 75% was provided from the state and 25% from the provider. Some counties were not including any match at all. Mr. Gardner explained the additional could be requested through the BEAD program. They discussed areas that are located within Connect America Fund (CAF) that can't be considered and are blocked from any kind of BEAD program funding. Autumn Marshall, ECI's regional coordinator for broadband support training & education, explained that was awarded to Community Fiber between FCC and that internet service provider, which left out local government. A lot of Salamonina was awarded CAF so they would not be allowed to participate in the BEAD program. Their own investment could cover those locations, but would be omitted from BEAD eligibility. Bill Walters, ECI Regional Planning Director, explained it is more wireless than fiber connection and works in more rural locations. He added wireless is less reliable and that there is a time limit associated with those projects to be completed.

Rex Journey asked why the county was not awarded funding the first time and if the county would receive any for the next round. Mr. Gardner explained the first was for NLC (Next Level Connection) funds and this grant would be through BEAD. He added a lot of the money went to companies already existing in a location looking to expand and not projects. Mainstream has been told that those not selected in Next Level would be first in line for BEAD monies. Rex also questioned when we would know their decision. November 1, 2024 is the expected timeline for the announcement. They think a strong letter of support from the county would greatly help the county with the grant application. Mainstream plans to submit an application regardless and plans to support Jay County throughout the process. Chad Aker asked if the county were to allocate money towards this, what would be the timeline to contribute. When Mainstream has worked with other counties, they have allowed them to pay over a seven-year time period. Rex Journey asked what the timeline to complete the project would be. Jeff Marston said Mainstream would start designing and begin construction of the project immediately. A big obstacle in the beginning is getting through the permitting process.

RADIOS

Samantha Rhodelhamel, Emergency Management Director, gave an update on the contract with Ritter Strategic Services. Barry Ritter was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement. However, Mr. Ritter has already spoken to Motorola and the state regarding the project. They will administer an end user survey in the next 1-2 weeks. Once completed it will give a better idea of needed inventory and estimated cost. The cost of the radios will be the easiest and quickest information to provide the county. October would be the earliest for any sort of pricing on needed infrastructure, such as new towers. Mr. Ritter felt at this time, it would not be in his best representation to provide any numbers, but is going to get this information as quickly as possible. It is possible they may be able to get by with less equipment, as technology is more advanced with this type of system.

Harold Towell questioned if everyone in the county is on board with this project. Ms. Rhodelhamel reported that other entities are willing to be part of this project, but the biggest concern is with the funding. Gary Hendershot, deputy director from Community Corrections, expressed concern as a self-supporting department to pay for new equipment. Sheriff Ray Newton assured them they would be included in the transition. Ms. Rhodelhamel spoke in response to concerns about the highway department being able to communicate with the new system. The county highway department has a completely different system, and cannot operate daily on the emergency system, as it is against state law. Cindy Bracy questioned what would happen in emergency situations, such as weather, to communicate through the new radio system. Ms. Rhodelhamel explained in the event an emergency disaster is declared, the county can write in county plans to allow them to temporarily operate on the systems. The decision would need to be made if a radio is necessary for every truck in the highway department, as this would be an additional cost to the county. Currently, the highway dispatcher contacts their office, who then contacts a sheriff dispatcher to report any needed information. Ms. Rhodelhamel felt that decision should be made by the highway department. Sheriff Ray Newton offered other ways to communicate to his department besides radios, citing cellphones. He felt that the county cannot keep waiting for other people to get on board, noting this subject has been discussed since 2021.

Dave Haines, discussed a recent vehicle pursuit within the county and how the lack of communication ability made other departments unable to assist. He noted this is a major safety issue for the officers. Ms. Rhodelhamel added she was present in dispatch during the pursuit and witnessed dispatchers unable to contact anyone through radio. She added the fact that our deputies are supposed to protect us, though with this lack of communication, who is protecting them. Chad Aker noted getting the cost analysis from Ritter would give a better idea of what can be done. He remarked that this is something the county really needed to do. Ms. Rhodelhamel cited that 51% of the people in the county live in a town or city versus 49% that live in a rural area. Cindy Bracy explained that out of the 12 townships in the county, 10 have no/limited radio contact. She believes that these statistics support that this project should be a priority. Mr. Aker added, besides ARP funds there are other options that could be used for the project such as windfarm, EDIT, Infrastructure, Cum Cap and Rainy Day. Mrs. Bracy questioned if there were any matching grants the county could utilize to help pay for this. Ms. Rhodelhamel believes from time to time, Motorola does offer grants, but that they would be the best to answer this question.

Mr. Aker added there were other uses identified for ARP monies included in the county economic development plan such as a heated County Highway building that is estimated to cost \$2.2 million, County Public Safety building for an EMS Base/ Health Department/Coroner building that is estimated to cost \$3 million, or a Solid Waste building that is estimated to cost \$1.6 million. He suggested decisions be made when the final information is received, which is planned to be the end of October or the first of November. Mr. Journey agreed, adding there is no reason to hurry the decision, as there should be no problem allocating the money by the end of the year between all the potential projects. Mrs. Bracy spoke in favor of the radio project and felt that a commitment should be made now instead of waiting until closer to the December 31, 2024 deadline. Bill Walters, ECI, advised the county to consult with Baker Tilly, to help determine the best avenue and other possible funding options.

FUNDING REQUEST

Gary Hendershot, deputy director Community Corrections, spoke to members regarding a funding request. Their department is a self-revenue only agency and they were impacted by COVID which resulted in lost revenue. Cindy Bracy asked if there was a way to increase the number of offenders that participate in their program. Mr. Hendershot stated that there are a lot of components in order for that to happen. The decision to participate is mainly up to the offender with most now choosing to complete jail time rather than community corrections or probation. They are asking for money to pay for their building rent for 2025 and 2026. At this time, they pay \$6,000 per year from user fees that are collected. Mr. Aker said that if the department is only asking for \$12,000, this could be paid from the commissioner's budget.

Auditor, Emily Franks, gave members information about other possible fund options. The information includes the amounts that are remaining in the fund and how it can be spent. She also explained that the LIT-Public Safety fund could be used to pay for the radio project. Currently, the fund is used to pay for vehicles and wages for the Sheriff's department. There will be more discussion for a possible increase to the public safety portion of the local income tax rate (LIT). This increase would include every city and town and could be used towards the cost of the new radio system.

With no further business, Faron Parr made a motion to adjourn at 7:20 PM; Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

JAY COUNTY COUNCIL

NAY

AYE
Dave Haines
Faron Parr
Michelle Turner
Michelle Turner
Kandy Miller
Barbara Haddock
Barbara Haddock

ATTEST: *Sharon Smith*
JAY COUNTY AUDITOR

