

Circuit Breaker Tax Credits were discussed. The credit limits a taxpayer's total property tax liability to a fixed percentage of the gross assessed value of the taxable property, before any deductions. The homestead is capped at 1%, Other residential, rental, agricultural land and long-term care facilities at 2% and commercial/industrial at 3%. Mr. Semler showed an example of a property in Dunkirk and how circuit breaker losses impact the county.

Mr. Semler went through a brief overview of proposed county projects and estimated the total cost at \$13 million. He explained the county has four more years left on the jail bond totaling about \$2.9 million with \$2.7 outstanding principal. If the county were to go ahead and bond for the \$13 million in total projects, the tax rate would go from .0558 to an estimated .0990 for three years. After the jail bond is paid off the rate would go down to .0790. If the county wanted to keep the tax rate the similar to the current, they would need to provide an additional cash on hand of \$600,000-\$700,000 for three years. After the jail bond is paid off, they would need to provide an additional \$400,000 cash on hand.

There were several more slides in the presentation related to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and its allowable uses that were given to the present members for their review.

To start the regularly scheduled council meeting, Duane Monroe made a motion to adjourn the joint session at 6:04 p.m.; Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

JAY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chad Aker

Duane Monroe

Doug Horn

Attest: **Jay County Auditor**

MARCH 31, 2025

The Jay County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, March 31, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the courthouse auditorium. Attending was Doug Horn, Duane Monroe, auditor Emily Franks, attorney Wes Schemenaur, and Chad Aker, president, presiding. The regular, executive and specials session minutes from March 10, 2025 and the special and joint session from March 12, 2025. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

ARCH BRIDGE KROOZERS

Gary Johnston and Mark Shawver, members, asked commissioners for the courthouse to be opened on May 17th, 2025 from 1-5 p.m. for use of the restroom facilities. They have already spoken with security and will get with them for payment. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the courthouse to be open for the event. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

COURTHOUSE

Bruce Sutton, superintendent, came to the commissioners to discuss a quote from Priority 1 for a new wireless panic system for \$9,885. The sheriff requested the new system call Jay County dispatch and not the City of Portland for security. Mr. Sutton will make sure the system is set up to the sheriff's specifications and he has the money available in his budget for the expense. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the quote with Priority 1. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

68 ACRE FARM BID

The 2025 bids for the 68-acre farm ground located on highway 67 were opened as advertised. The bids were opened as follows Schoenlein Brothers at \$377 an acre, Dues & Sons (Rick Dues) at \$260 an acre and Chris & Tracey Muhlenkamp at \$420 an acre. Duane Monroe made a motion to accept the \$420 an acre from Chris Muhlenkamp. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Franks brought forward a request to commissioners to change the first installment due date from April 1, 2025 to May 1, 2025. Doug Horn made a motion to change the first installment due date to May 1st, 2025 from the original agreement date of April 1st, 2025. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

SAFER STREETS FOR ALL SS4A

Darlesia Lee, Assistant Director of Regional Economic Development & Planning (ECIRPD), and Mathew Nichols, project manager, SS4A, ECIRPD, came to discuss with commissioners the Safer Streets for All (SS4A) grant. They are in the process of forming a steering committee for the project. Mr. Nichols explained they are working with The Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission and as an MP they are responsible for transportation planning. The Safer Streets & Roads for All federal grant was awarded in July 2024 and will see them create a region wide action plan with safety concerns. Once the action plan is complete, they will go after additional federal dollars on the back end. Mrs. Lee explained how the grant would benefit the county including improving road safety and additional monies to use on local projects.

Mr. Nichols explained vision zero, which is to eliminate the more than 42,000 people killed annually on American streets. Mrs. Lee explained the safe system approach that aligns with the U.S. Department of Transportation National Roadway Safety strategy. They are asking commissioners to help guide their planning efforts and ask for feedback on the following; key safety concerns, any safety initiatives already in place and opportunities for interlocal collaboration. Mr. Nichols asked for one commissioner to be involved in the steering committee or if not, a designee to attend a total of four meetings from April-December 2025. They would also like 3-4 committee members or other leads as well. Mr. Aker volunteered to be on the steering committee and recommended they reach out to have one person from the Jay County Sheriff's Department, City of Portland Police Department and Jay County EMS.

OWNER OCCUPIED REHAB

Jodi Golden, EGIS, presented contracts for the four contractors awarded for the first round; AirXray, Dave's Heating & Cooling, Fortitude Consulting LLC, and Mustard Seed Remodeling for a current total project cost of \$154,122.75. Once the commissioners sign the contracts they will go to the contractors for their approval. The contracts between the county and the homeowners were also presented for commissioner approval. Once the commissioners sign the contracts, Mrs. Lee will handle getting the contracts signed by the contractors and homeowners. In the meantime, she will also reach out for the second round of Radon testing and to get inspectors out during testing. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the contracts between the contractors and the county and between the homeowners and the county. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

Autumn Marshall, ECI Regional Planning District Broadband Coordinator, reported to commissioners that there has been no update on the BEAD applications. Round one is now out and they will select the providers most fitting for the region. She has spoken with advisors on the digital opportunity grant who are also willing to meet with commissioners directly, if requested. The grant window will open April 30, 2025 with awards being made by July 15th, 2025. There will be webinars on May 5th and June 5th and recommends a lot of community participation on this grant.

Mr. Aker added that they had been working with Pennville Library for digital opportunities. He also wanted to clarify that the Indiana Broadband Office has changed the requirement to

no longer require match money from the county. He added the \$2-\$3 million required for Mainstream Fiber is no longer on the table.

Ms. Marshall explained the grant included digital skills training along with the possibility of building computer labs with the three libraries in the county. John Jay Center for Learning has also expressed interest participating with the digital skills training. She has been working with the Jay County Public Library to expand their existing computer lab. They have applied for a Portland Rotary Club grant that will get them the majority of the computers that they need. A survey will be released tomorrow to help them with the grant and those who participate will be entered into a raffle. They have received donated gift cards from Bizzy Dips, Pizza King and El Camino. This is the second round of similar grants and those awarded in the first round have yet to see the money. They will be applying for various corporate grants to help secure funding. The commissioners gave her permission to apply for the grant.

JAY COUNTY COUNTRY LIVING

Cindy Bracy, JCCL Advisory Board of Directors President, came to the commissioners to give them an update on operations. John Hemmelgarn, Jay Portland Building & Planning Director, has been out to the center to inspect the facility. The only big-ticket item he noted was related to the bathrooms. The rest of the work needed would require the county to start thinking about funding for it.

She reported the director is currently in training to create a non-profit and to find more creative funding through grants. There have been two residents to leave the facility, but they had just admitted two more. Mrs. Bracy also reported they would like to switch gas providers (propane) when their contract is up this spring. Mr. Aker asked for them to quote for the best price. The board would like to auction off farm equipment no longer needed including gates and fencing. Ms. Franks had verified the next auctioneer on the list would be Bricker's Auctioneering which was requested to be used by the advisory board. The commissioners asked that Ms. Franks reach out to them to see if they could set up a county auction for this spring.

Mrs. Bracy discussed payments and how the various ways residents pay rent. She has spoken with the health department to partner for housing. Mr. Horn questioned if most living at the facility were Jay County residents. Ms. Johnson stated the most recent two were Jay County residents. Mrs. Bracy stated the code allowed for the county to take in neighboring residents, but will try to get him the requested figures.

Mr. Monroe discussed working on energy efficiency and liability issues related to medication at the facility. Ms. Johnson explained the medication is stored in a safe place for them to take at a scheduled time. The staff is not allowed to administer the medications. She added because they are not funded by Medicare or Medicaid they are not under their regulations or audits. Mrs. Bracy stated they would look into the matter to see if policies are being followed.

JEMS

Gary Barnett, shift supervisor, came to the commissioners to give an update on monthly operations. He also spoke to commissioners about a preventative maintenance agreement with Stryker. They would like to get all their maintenance onto one agreement instead of the current four. This agreement would include the cots, heart monitors and other devices. It does not include the power loads because it was so far out of the timeline from the others. By combining the three, they will be saving money. The commissioners agreed to continue to let Mr. Barnett be the authorized signer for the agreement. Lastly, Mr. Barnett added that they are making huge strides in the department.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Heath Butz, administrator, came to commissioners for approval of a grant application. The grant must be used towards vaccination related expenses and runs from July-June annually. While the amount is a little bit less than usual at \$4,467.68, they would like to purchase

refrigerator and privacy screens. They may be cutting some of the health first funding and this grant could maybe offset some of the things they have planned. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the grant application. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Butz explained they are looking to replace their RICOH copier from 2018 that currently does not have the ability to hole punch or staple. He received three quotes from Four-U Office Supplies for a Kyocera at \$5,845.60, a quote from RICOH for \$5,900 and Weber Office for \$7,295 or a used copier for around \$4,000. He reported all units were fairly similar in operations, but would like to utilize RICOH again. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the purchase of the copier through RICOH. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

SOLAR FARM/BATTERY STORAGE MORATORIUM

Bob Lyons, resident, came to the commissioners to express concern over a proposed moratorium of solar farms, and battery storage. He stated that he is a strong advocate for renewable energy in the county. Mr. Lyons noted the economic development payments made to the county and the increase to assessed value. However, he expressed he was not in favor of setting up TIF districts on them. Mr. Aker explained the moratorium is to allow the county time to complete research on the battery storage before deciding on policies.

Mr. Lyons explained while he did know enough about the battery storage to speak on it, he asked they listen to both sides before making a decision. Mr. Schemenaur clarified the plan commission was only looking at a moratorium for solar farms and battery storage. The moratorium is not meant to put a halt forever, but to study the issue before any development is started in the county. At this time, with no regulations, battery storage can be put within 50 feet of a property line. There also might be potential ordinance changes that need to be made once a solar farm is built. As an example, they are currently required to put a lot of vegetation up, however with the potential fire hazard that might need to be changed. You don't have to have battery storage to have a solar farm, but they could have a source of energy.

Mr. Lyons informed commissioners that there is another company very close to coming to the county. He asked again for the county to not promote anything until hearing from both sides. Mr. Schemenaur informed those present the process. The plan commission will meet and notice interested parties, once they make a decision. It will go to the commissioners for their approval and back to the plan commission for final approval.

Greg Miller, resident, asked to speak on the county creating another TIF district around the proposed solar farms. He expressed concern over the assessed value, instead of coming to the county, being diverted to the Jay County Redevelopment Commission. This would have those residents who live around them see no benefit on their taxes. Mr. Aker explained that this would be the only way to bring in more money since property taxes are capped at the state. Mr. Horn added that the commission would need to pick a good project to work on that would benefit the whole county. Mr. Schemenaur explained taxpayers would see a benefit from the solar farms, but would be nominal in comparison.

HIGHWAY

Dan Stocker from Stoops Automotive Commercial vehicle market, came to commissioners to discuss the purchase of another chassis. Mr. Stocker explained the county purchased one chassis in 2023 for \$130,000 and another one in 2024 for \$134,000. The county then purchased a seconded and third chassis in late 2024 for \$134,000. Mr. Stocker again explained the 2027 diesel unit admission standards will put a lot of stress on the mechanical items. He believes this will decrease the reliability and increase the price by around \$30,000 a chassis.

While some of this is to be determined, he has northern Indiana counties going through pre-buys for \$141,000 a unit. However, that price would not include any of the looming steel tariff surcharges, which he estimates to be at least \$3,500. The estimated cost of a 2026 chassis will be \$145,000 with an estimated cost in 2027 of \$175,000-\$200,000. Mr. Aker

clarified that this would be for just the chassis and did not include any of the build out. Mr. Howell requested he get permission to buy another 2026 truck pending approval of the 2026 budget from the Jay County Council. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the purchase of the truck. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Howell introduced Carrie Reynolds from US Aggregates who spoke to commissioners about purchasing stone with oversized materials in it. They would like to get it moved out of their plant for \$8 a ton, a savings of \$4.5 a ton. She acknowledged there were concerns about the quality and toughness or hardness of the stone as INDOT requires a rating of 45% or lower. Upon testing, one section came in at 38.5% and the other came in at 44%, both under the INDOT specifications. This stone would be used for conversions and not a top mount.

They have already donated some of this for the county for use on the soft spots. It is then covered with a different grade (73s). Mrs. Reynolds explained they need it cleaned up and out of their pit and would require the county to stockpile it at the highway barn. She added if the county were to purchase all 10,000 tons it would save \$45,000. The department was unsure if they would have enough money for the year to cover the purchase. Mr. Aker stated they might have to ask for an additional appropriation at the end of the year. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the purchase of whatever was available. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

A detour request and task order with SJCA Inc. was presented for commissioners' approval. Mr. Howell spoke with Perry Knox from SJCA to add approximately two miles to the SR18 detour. The scope of services includes pre-construction and post-construction assessment of the following roads; CR N 250 W from SR 18 to CR W 650 N, CR W 650 N from CR N 250 W to New Bryant Pike, CR N 50 W from CR W 650 N to SR 18, and CR N 100 W from SR18 to CR W 650 N. The fee for Task Order No#1 was \$4,002.22. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the task order with SJCA for \$4,002.22. Mr. Knox informed commissioners the final amendment changed the task order to \$4,202.22. Duane Monroe amended his motion to include the correct total of \$4,202.22. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Howell reported Bridge 114 at 600 W north of SR 26 is complete except for the guardrail which is being coordinated by Mr. Patterson, road foreman. Quotes for the installation of box culvert for bridge #113, on 600 W north of SR 26. Stephanie Klarer, Assistant Superintendent /ERC, explained they had a hole show up and were given a recommendation by EGIS to open the road once the guard rail is up. They will then load post it until they decide on the replacement of it as this bridge is about ½ a mile south of bridge #114.

Ms. Klarer informed commissioners they would be able to pay for the stone, contractor and guardrail. They would need the commissioners to pay for the culvert at an estimated \$275,000. She added there will be small structures on 300 N between 400 and 450 E. The shoulders will need to be closed off and they are estimating \$250,000 in repairs. They will likely turn the current culvert into a bridge. Bridge #159 on 700 W is their CCMG project for next year for an estimated \$1.3-\$1.4 million, but should have a small amount left over. She added they will start drowning very soon working on the small structures with SJCA.

Mr. Aker recommended that \$100,000 come from the Cum Capital Development Fund with \$175,000 from EDIT pending council approval. He also recommended going with the lowest bid for the installation of the culvert. Mr. Howell read the quotes for the installation as follows; Link Dozing LLC \$28,000, Lawrence Excavating \$35,736, KBL Transport \$39,710 and TJ's Concrete & Excavation LLC \$47,750. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the installation from Link Dozing for \$28,000 and the purchase of the culvert with \$100,000 from Cum Cap Dev Fund and the remainder from EDIT pending council approval. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Lastly, Mr. Howell wanted to clarify they were working with EGIS for the bridge inspections, SJCA for small structures and USI on asphalt ratings and asset inventory.

SHERIFF

Larry “Ray” Newton, sheriff, reported to commissioners that they picked up the two new Durango’s on March 19th and should have them on the road in the next month. If they could wait until the first week of May, they could have their old vehicles ready to be put in the county auction. Mr. Newton will offer kitchen items to the retirement center first since they are no longer needed in his department. If they are not interested, he will have those items to put in the auction too. The telephones have been shipped and they are expected to be ported over on April 7th. Mr. Newton questioned if they would have technicians and training on site. Ms. Franks explained it was a simple process, but could request the technician due to public safety.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS GRANT

A grant application and letter of support for the 2026 Adult Community Corrections grant was presented to commissioners for approval and signature. A copy of the budget for the grant was also submitted to commissioners for a total of \$188,905. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve community corrections to move forward with the grant application and sign the letter of support. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

The payroll docket was submitted for commissioners’ approval. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the payroll docket. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The claims docket for March was presented for commissioners’ approval. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the claims docket for March. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The clerk’s monthly report for February was presented for commissioners’ approval. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the clerk’s monthly report. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The Treasurer’s monthly report for January and February was presented for commissioners’ approval. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the treasurer’s monthly report as presented. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

An emergency claim to Mike Bishop for painting the treasurer’s office in the amount of \$6,000 was presented for commissioners’ approval. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the claim to Mike Bishop as presented. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

An emergency claim to US Aggregates for bridge #114 related to the ARP monies in the amount of \$11,186.55 was presented for approval. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the claim as presented. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

An emergency claim to Motorola Solutions for \$264,626 related to the purchase of body and vehicle cameras for the sheriff’s department. This was also approved to be spent out of the ARP monies. Duane Monroe made a motion to approve the claim to Motorola as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

With no further business, Duane Monroe made a motion to adjourn at 11:32 a.m; Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

JAY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chad Aker

Duane Monroe

Doug Horn

Attest:

Jay County Auditor