

**FEBRUARY 9, 2026**

The Jay County Commissioners met in session on Monday, February 9th, 2026, at 9:00. a.m. in the courthouse auditorium. The commissioner's meeting for January 26, 2026 was canceled due to severe winter weather. Attending was Doug Horn, Chad Aker, auditor Emily Franks, attorney Wes Schemenaur, and Duane Monroe, president, presiding. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the minutes from January 12, 2026. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**BOARD OF FINANCE**

Jonelle Foreman, treasurer, came before commissioners as part of the Board of Finance for 2026. She provided commissioners with the total interest collected in 2025 with a breakdown by funds and banks. An investment policy and approved list of depositories was also provided for approval. Chad Aker made a motion to appoint Duane Monroe president of the Board of Finance and Chad Aker and Doug Horn at the other two members. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**CEMTERY COMMISSION**

Chad Aker made a motion to reappoint Michael Leonhard and Jane Ann Spencer to the cemetery commission for another term. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

Chad Aker made a motion to reappoint Shannon Current as the non-voting school representative to another two-year term on the redevelopment commission. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**JCDC**

Ceann Bales, executive director, came before commissioners to give a quarterly update on operations. Mrs. Bales reported she is now an OCRA certified grant writer. They have also been working on READI 2.0 to reallocate funds from the 68 Acres project. A group of local leaders including local council and commissioners decided to pivot to the 10-acre housing project in Dunkirk. A report of other items completed in the quarter was provided to commissioners. Commissioners were also provided with a copy of the nine-county wage and benefit analysis from Purdue University. Lastly, Mrs. Bales introduced Colby Cline as the new community developer.

**TAX CERTIFICATE PROPERTIES**

Ceann Bales, executive director JCDC, explained she had met with all the cities and towns economic developments regarding properties not sold at the September 2025 tax sale. Portland and Redkey are interested in the following parcels. Pennville Economic Development has a parcel they are interested in that will be brought forward to the next meeting.

**RESOLUTION 2026-02 TO TRANSFER REAL ESTATE**

Resolution 2026-02 was presented for commissioners' approval related to a parcel in Portland. Chad Aker made a motion to approve and sign resolution 2026-02. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. The newspaper was unable to put publish the notice of hearing in time for the February 23, 2026 and the hearing will be moved to the next meeting on March 9, 2026.

**WHEREAS**, the Jay County Board of Commissioners acquired title to the following described real estate by tax sale certificate:

Property ID: 38-07-21-203-076.000-034

Property Address: 123 N Meridian Street, Portland, IN 47371

Parcel: Eleven feet of the South part of Lot 2, Block 11 of the original plat of Portland, and Eleven feet of the North part of Lot 3, Block 11 of the Original Plat of Portland.

**WHEREAS**, the Jay County Board of Commissioners has determined that it desires to transfer said property to a non-profit entity for use for the public good pursuant to IC 6-1.1-24-6.7; and,

**WHEREAS**, IC 6-1.1-24-6.7(d) requires the Jay County Board of Commissioners set a public hearing to consider the transfer of the property to a non-profit entity.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Jay County Board of Commissioners that it desires to transfer the above-described property to a non-profit entity and hereby sets the matter for public hearing on February 23, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. to consider any application by a non-profit entity for the transfer of said property.

**RESOLUTION 2026-03 TO TRANSFER REAL ESTATE**

Resolution 2026-03 was presented for commissioners' approval related to the Redkey parcels. Chad Aker made a motion to approve and sign resolution 2026-03. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. The newspaper was unable to put publish the notice of hearing in time for the February 23, 2026 and the hearing will be moved to the next meeting on March 9, 2026.

**WHEREAS**, the Jay County Board of Commissioners acquired title to the following described real estate by tax sale certificate:

Property ID: 38-09-24-201-022.000-031

Property Address: 301 E Bell Avenue, Redkey, IN 47373

Parcel: Lot 33 Cadwallader & Edger 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to the Town of Redkey, Indiana

Property ID: 38-09-23-101-023.000-031

Property Address 19 S Ash Street, Redkey, IN 47373

Parcel: Lots 17 & 24 in the original plat of the Town of Redkey, Indiana

Property ID: 38-09-24-201-038.000-031

Property Address: 235 E Delaware Street, Redkey, IN 47373

Parcel: Lots 29-30 in Marietta Glass Co. Addition to the Town of Redkey, Indiana

Property ID: 38-09-24-201-037.000-031

Property Address: 235 E Delaware Street, Redkey, IN 47371

Parcel: Lots 31-32 in Marietta Glass Co. Addition to the Town of Redkey, Indiana

**WHEREAS**, the Jay County Board of Commissioners has determined that it desires to transfer said property to a non-profit entity for use for the public good pursuant to IC 6-1.1-24-6.7; and,

**WHEREAS**, IC 6-1.1-24-6.7(d) requires the Jay County Board of Commissioners set a public hearing to consider the transfer of the property to a non-profit entity.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Jay County Board of Commissioners that it desires to transfer the above-described property to a non-profit entity and hereby sets the matter for public hearing on February 23, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. to consider any application by a non-profit entity for the transfer of said property.

**LAUNCH JAY!**

Ceann Bales spoke about the Launch Jay Pitch Competition for 2026 with the Jay County Chamber of Commerce. They are looking to make some changes to the program for this year. The program had three coaching meetings with a call out meeting in March. They would like to see 10 sessions before the presentation in September. Even if a business would not win, they would have a more solid footing. Mrs. Bales requested \$16,000 for funding \$14,500 would go towards the prizes and the remaining to supplies. Chad Aker suggested EDIT Windfarm. Doug Horn made a motion to request an additional appropriation for \$16,000 out of EDIT funds. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**ECI REGIONAL PLANNING DISTRICT**

Jacob Thomas, and Anna King-Cross, grant writer, came to the commissioners to give an update on operations. Anna King-Cross discussed their back-to-school program and Safer

Streets for All (SS4A) Grant. This is a planning grant but will try to go after the implementation dollars in March. Their work on Brownfields was discussed along with the USDA Best 6 and CCMG Matching grant. They will be hosting two Building Blocks to Grant Writing, which is a two-day workshop. The cost is \$225 for both days with lunch included. They are looking to make it funded for no cost to the participant.

They spoke regarding the financial literacy workshop sponsored by Three Rivers Bank which includes mobile banking for seniors. The program is flexible depending on the need in the community. It also works better to go to the location and have them reach out. Lastly, they spoke about the Portland Mural Project through the Indiana Arts Commission, which provided \$4,000 of the \$10,000 goal. ECRPD and the Portland mayor have donated \$1,000 each to the project, leaving \$4,000 left to complete the project. Duane Momroe personally pledged \$1,000 towards the project.

### **JEMS**

Gary Barnett, Kyle Gerlach, and Jessica Curtis, shift supervisors, came to the commissioners to give an update on monthly operations and financial report for 2025. The financial report provided runs for December with billed amounts. The report also provided amounts received in December. Two claims were presented for payment. A claim to Jones & Bartlett Learning to purchase textbooks for the EMT class in the amount of \$5,548.64. The second claim to ESO Solutions in the amount of \$8,113.08 for charting software. Chad Aker made a motion to approve both claims as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Two quotes were provided for the repair of the lights on the West Side of the EMS/Fire Station in Dunkirk from Coppersmith and Shockney Electric. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the lessor quote from Shockney Electric for \$913.11. Duane Monroe asked if they would be replacing just the fixture or also the adapter. The quote listed the adapter change, but Mr. Barnett was not positive. Mr. Monroe asked to review the quote and lights at the base before approving. Mr. Aker rescinded his motion and made a motion to table the quotes until Mr. Monroe could review the lights. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Lastly, the security system was installed by Second Shift Solutions in January. A claim for \$4,954 to be paid out of Cum Cap Development was presented for commissioner approval. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the claim as presented. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Barnett reported that the remount truck has been delivered and it is projected to be completed in four months. The title for the old chassis was signed by commissioners.

### **SHERIFF-COUNTYWIDE RADIOS**

Larry "Ray" Newton, sheriff, and Ben Schwartz, chief Deputy, came to the commissioners to discuss a garage expansion for his department. The expansion would create additional space for IT as well as house the new countywide radio system. Five quotes for a building were provided to commissioners. There were two quotes from Motorola one for a new 12'x24' building fully equipped at a cost of \$544,712.09 or a refurbished concrete shelter for \$219,705.06. The local quotes were Briner Building \$146,500, total cost with metal roof \$176,000, Mid-States Construction \$105,500 with metal roof \$117,500, and Muhlenkamp Building \$104,900 with metal roof \$107,350. The quotes include all heating, cooling, lights, and insulation. However, the quotes do not include running electrical from the Jail Electrical Room to Garage Expansion from All Circuit from \$28,998.99 to \$42,848.09 and 4TC from \$29,300 to \$31,200.

Duane Monroe spoke regarding electrical options, believing the 2<sup>nd</sup> option from All Circuit to be the best option at a cost of \$35,379.17. He explained once the antenna is installed, they would immediately need to get a fence up to protect it. Only one quote was provided for asphalt work in the parking lot. A quote from KBL Trucking that included grinding down the current lot came in at \$54,785. It would cover both the current paved area as well as the

gravel lot with markings. Mr. Monroe suggested the Redevelopment Commission be approached to help with the cost of the entire project.

After a brief discussion, Doug Horn made a motion to approve the quote from Muhlenkamp Building with metal roof for \$107,350. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. Chad Aker made a motion to go with the suggested All Circuit Electrical option#2 for \$35,379.17. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. Doug Horn then made a motion to approve the quote from KBL for \$54,785. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. Lastly, Chad Aker made a motion to approve the Jay County Redevelopment Commission for 100% of the cost of the project. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

#### **SHERIFF**

Larry "Ray" Newton, sheriff, discussed entering a contract with Cintas for janitorial supplies as they have a state bid. They must buy \$35 dollars of supplies a week with the most being \$500. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the contract with Cintas. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Newton discussed purchasing a new stove from Fort Wayne. The two quotes were from Wasson Food Equipment at \$9,554.18 and the second from Professional Food Services \$11,155.50, both with a one-year warranty. The department currently uses Professional Food Services and would like to continue using them. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the purchase from Professional Food Services for \$11,155.50. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Lastly, Mr. Newton requested the 911 director be allowed to carry over 5 ½ vacation days from 2025 due to being short staffed. Chad Aker made a motion to allow the employee to carryover the days until March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

#### **HIGHWAY**

Bob Howell, superintendent, and Spencer Patterson, road foreman, came to the commissioners to give an update on operations. They are touching up roads from weather and trying to make roads two lanes, if possible. A renewal contract with Vialytics for the PASER rating was presented for commissioner's approval. The PASER rating is required for the Community Crossings Grant as well as pre and post inspections. The cost is \$33,840 per year for a contract term of three years. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the contract for continuation with Vialytics for another 3-year term. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Howell requested they be allowed to use \$85,000 left in the vehicle budget to build the new dump truck coming in pending council approval of an additional \$25,000. W.A. Jones is working on getting a total quote through Sourcewell. Mr. Horn asked for confirmation whether the money would not be needed for the remainder of the year. After Mr. Howell confirmed they would not, Doug Horn made a motion to approve the use of the \$85,000 pending council approval. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The department requested permission for out of state travel to Illinois for training on the new chip box and distributor for Spencer Patterson and Sean Kunkle. The training will help with the warranty. They will be staying in an Airbnb as it is cheaper and closer than a hotel. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the claim and out of state travel as requested. Chad Aker seconded the motion to approve the claim and out of state travel as requested. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. The tube bids were opened with the county receiving quotes from Civil Con and St. Regis Tile. Chad Aker made a motion to accept all bids for the department to use. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

United Consulting contracts for bridge #93 and #110 were presented for approval. The total contract for bridge #93 is \$167,000 and #110 for \$164,300 reimbursed 80% by INDOT. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the contracts for both Bridge #93 and Bridge #110. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Howell read a formal request from Jeremiah Cotherman to pave county road 700 w between 600 S and 800 S considering the increasing traffic and industrial use. Mr. Monroe explained the area was not on the scope of upcoming roads from the road committee. It also does not meet the requirements for houses or adjoining pavement. Mr. Aker added roads were evaluated to prioritize the roughly 200 miles of stone roads remaining. He also inquired if they would be willing to pay for a portion of the conversion. Mr. Howell confirmed their priority has been repairing soft spots and adding base to work in the future. The request will be reviewed at the next road committee meeting and their recommendation returned to the commissioners.

### **COUNTY HOME**

John May, maintenance, came to commissioners to give an update on operations. Representatives from Journey Home took a tour of the facility with their board members on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. They still need to have the engineer inspect the building but all information related to the fire suppression, lights, extinguishers and passing permits were provided to them. The elevator passed inspection but has since quit working due to the cold. It will be inspected by the elevator company for repairs.

Mr. May reported continuing work on lighting and electrical noting the replacement of the push button lights. He has been working on an inventory of each room and all keys. There have been a few plumbing problems, but vent modules have been installed in the basement with drains. The water softeners and arsenic filters are working, and detailed instructions on their operation have been created. He will be working on small leaks around the dormers in the attic. Water testing has been paused, but a decision will need to be made soon on whether it will continue.

### **BUILDING & PLANNING**

John Hemmelgarn, administrator, came to the commissioners to give his quarterly update on operations. Mr. Hemmelgarn asked if he needed to continue presenting quarterly updates to the commissioners as the joint board between the city and county also meets. He believed this was causing confusion that they answered to the county and not the joint board. Mr. Aker explained the meetings were a good opportunity for the public to hear what was going on in the department and would like the quarterly updates to continue.

### **COURTHOUSE**

Monte Shrack, superintendent, came to the commissioners to give a quarterly update on operations. He has been completing a lot of cleaning; and is slowly starting work orders with departments. After a review from insurance, he is working on items for risk control including checking alarms monthly. They have repaired both boilers and the heat pump is up and running. The is repair work that will be required for the chiller before summer. AEDS are installed on each floor of the courthouse and training is being scheduled with EMS.

Mr. Shrack informed commissioners of upcoming items including removing the wax from the marble flooring and switching all lights to LED. An inspection with Five Star Roofing was scheduled for this week to look at the courthouse and extension office roof. He also noted that exhaust fans are not working in domes of the rotunda or circuit court. Mr. Monroe suggested All Circuit might have looked at them previously.

### **JAY COUNTY VISITOR AND TOURISM BUREAU**

Michael Leonhard, treasurer, spoke to commissioners regarding projects managed by the Jay County Visitor and Tourism Bureau. They use the funds collected from county Innkeepers Tax for operations to facilitate those projects. Mr. Leonhard requested the Innkeepers Tax Collected in 2025 of \$133,751.63 be remitted to the bureau. He also requested copy of

minutes showing the appointments to the Jay County Visitor and Tourism Commission. Lastly, he noted a recent meeting where Bryan Alexander, serving as president of the commission, gave a termination notice to the Jay County Visitor and Tourism Bureau Director.

Mr. Monroe explained the goal would be for both entities to work together while following state statute. Mr. Horn echoed his sentiments as a commission member, noting by statute they are required to oversee the disbursement of the money. Mr. Schemenaur explained the funds follow IC 6-9-18-4 where the auditor shall issue a warrant to the commission's treasurer. The money should only be expended to promote and encourage conventions, visitors and tourism within the county. Whereas IC 6-9-18-6 outlines the commissions' duties and powers. It allows funds to be transferred from the commission to any Indiana not-for-profit corporation for the same purpose.

Current members of the bureau believed they were set up by the commission to decide the use of the Inkeeper Tax monies. Mr. Schemenaur questioned if any by-laws existed for the entity. Mr. Aker asked for clarification on the request from commissioners. Darlesia Lee spoke about a potential restructuring of local entities in the community resource building. Ceann Bales clarified talks were centered around cooperation and not consolidation within the organizations. The partnership was discussed as being better stewards with the county money while providing better services.

It was understood the director was hired by the bureau and not the commission and had not been terminated as discussed. However, the commission did have authority over the release of Inkeeper Tax monies. Bryan Alexander, commission president, spoke regarding the restructuring. He noted points of concern by commission members such as a large amount held in savings. They also wanted to see more focus on "heads in beds" as opposed to promoting local businesses. The county council appoints two members, the commissioners appoint three members, and the Portland Mayor has two appointments. They will look at changing that to include one from Dunkirk. Lastly, Mark Leavell explained the money had been carried forward from previous years, most significantly during COVID.

#### **BANK ACCOUNT LETTER**

A letter to First Merchants Bank for Angela Byrum, Recorder, was presented with the commissioner's approval. The letter would remove former Recorder Melanie Upp from all county bank accounts. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the bank letter. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

#### **PAPER QUOTES**

Emily Franks, auditor, presented three quotes for 80 boxes of letter size and 10 boxes of legal size paper for the county. The three quotes were from Progressive Del Toro for \$4,370, Four-U Office Supplies for \$3,230.10 and Quill.com for \$4,410.80. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the purchase from Four-U Office Supplies. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

#### **EMERGENCY DECLARATION & CLOSING**

The commissioners approved and signed an Emergency Declaration Travel Warning for January 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 due to winter weather. Emily Franks, auditor, asked for clarification on what buildings were included in the emergency close on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 and for January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026 until noon. Duane Monroe explained the current county policy dictates that a facility must officially be closed by the county commissioners to receive payment for the scheduled hours in addition to payment for all time worked. Mr. Aker believed the intention was to allow additional pay for all employees while the county was under a red warning

Larry "Ray" Newton, sheriff, requested the commissioners pay emergency employees additional compensation when the other offices were closed. If not part of the policy, he would like them to revisit the current policy to allow for additional compensation. Ms.

Franks asked for clear guidelines if the policy were to be updated. As an example, would additional compensation follow building closures from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or from when the county issued a red travel advisory to when it went back to orange 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. Wes Schemenaur issued caution in changing the policy moving forward due to unforeseen issues.

Chad Aker made a motion to revisit the policy as outlined in the county handbook. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion carried. Ms. Franks will reach out to Waggoner, Irwin and Scheele for example policies from other counties. Doug Horn then made a motion that only facilities closed by commissioners including courthouse and annexes should be paid based on the handbook. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion carried by majority vote with Chad Aker voting against the motion.

Samantha Rhodehamel reported later in the meeting that the county had met the threshold for relief dollars. However, they will need to see if the State itself will meet their threshold.

### **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Emily Franks, auditor, informed commissioners the most recent liability insurance renewal came in at \$99,000 over the prior year. Bixler's Insurance suggested the county look at increasing the deductibles for some of their policies as a cost savings. The auto deductibles would increase from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for savings of approximately \$13,000. If the county were to increase the Civil Rights and Employee Benefits Errors of Omissions from \$2,500 to \$5,000 it would be cost savings of approximately \$4,500. If they were to increase the same policy deductibles to \$10,000 it would save approximately \$10,000. Chad Aker made a motion to increase the auto deductibles to \$2,500 the Civil Rights and Employee Errors of Omission to \$10,000. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **PERSONNEL AGREEMENT**

Wes Schemenaur presented the commissioners with a personnel agreement between Ana Isa Minnich, a former clerk employee, and the county. The terms were suggested following a recent exit interview with some members of the personnel committee. The agreement would be for a pay out of all sick time as opposed to the county policy, which states ½ of all sick time. Mr. Aker made a motion to go with the personnel committee recommendation. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

### **COUNTYWIDE RADIO-INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT-**

Wes Schemenaur, county attorney, asked commissioners to start discussions with cities, towns and emergency agencies regarding payment and terms for the countywide radios. Mr. Schemenaur recommended the county approach entities even if the county believed they would be unable to contribute. Since budget talks start in June, the next few months would be the best time to discuss costs. Mr. Monroe explained he would like to ask the Jay County Redevelopment Commission regarding financial help for the volunteer units.

Ms. Rhodehamel informed commissioners Barry Ritter would be able to break up costs on the county's behalf but would need more direction. As an example, would Pennville need to be divided between Pennville Town for the Police and the Pennville Fire Department. Also, while Redkey is not buying radios, would the county still want them to pay maintenance on the system. The commissioners agreed to start work on the matter with Barry Ritter and the other entities.

### **DECOMMISSIONING AGREEMENT**

The decommissioning agreement with Sun Chief Solar Farm, Scout Clean Energy, dictates the county agrees on an independent engineering firm. Scout Clean Energy recommended Sargent & Lundy to provide independent engineering service. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the engineering firm. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

