JULY 13TH, 2026

The Jay County Commissioners met in session on Monday, July 13th, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the courthouse auditorium. Attending was Doug Horn, Chad Aker, auditor Emily Franks, attorney Wes Schemenaur, and Duane Monroe, president, presiding. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the minutes from June 22nd and July 8th, 2026. Duane Monroe seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

ASSESSOR- OVERNIGHT STAY

Robin Alberson, assessor, requested permission for overnight travel to Fort Wayne at their upcoming conference in September. Doug Horn made a motion to allow the overnight stay. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

SUN CHIEF SOLAR

Spencer Micali, project manager, came before commissioners to discuss the appendices provided related to their road use agreement. This included Map#1 transportation map, Map #2 for the 10 proposed driveways that have been marked and flagged. Map#3 shows the underground collection of county roads, that will connect different parts of the solar farms to each other. Any crossings at a chip and seal or paved road will be bored under the road. If it is a gravel road, the lines will be trenched (on 800 W between 400-500 S). The original Road Use Agreement from 2021 had plans to run through the county right of way, which no longer exist in the current plans.

The main points of contact from Scout Clean Energy were presented with Joe Gallagher assigned as the transportation coordinator for the project. Any issues, concerns, signage or traffic impendences should be addressed to the coordinator. Mr. Gallagher will remit necessary information to highway department and to the school superintendent. Mr. Micali reported the solar farm should be delivered over a couple of hundred trucks carrying the units in modules. Those modules should be smaller loads and less damaging than the wind project.

Mr. Micali then reviewed the transportation map with commissioners. Mr. Aker expressed concerns with trucks using 400 S between Highway 1 and Highway 67 as the road was newly paved. Mr. Micali assured the county the remediation outlined in the road use agreement was robust and would repair any damage captured in the post construction inventory. Mr. Monroe expressed concerns with using 600 S and 600 W due to sharp turns for large vehicles, suggesting 700 W or 800 W as better roads to travel. Mr. Schemenaur advised commissioners to keep the entire section of 400 S and other areas of concern as part of the road use agreement to receive remediation for any damage. Following a lengthy conversation Chad Aker made a motion to approve the addendum to the road use agreement to include appendixes as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

HIGHWAY

Spencer Patterson, road foreman, and Stephanie Klarer, assistant superintendent, came before commissioners for a monthly update. They have completed 36 out of 60 miles of chip and seal and continue to maintenance roads as weather permits. Bridge #110 went for letting July 8th, with 4 total bids submitted. INDOT recommended the lowest bid and the department agreed. They are working on the final paperwork for Duncan Robertson, Inc in the amount of $1,043,446.43 from Franklin, Indiana which came in under the engineer bid. The county will be paying 20% of that at $208,289.36. Bridge #93 will be let in November due to the parcel issue.

ORDINANCE 2026-10 FEES FOR SURVEYOR/HIGHWAY

The ordinance amends chapter 92.01 Right of Way Use provisions to include a fee for the county highway and surveyor related to right of way permits. The fees should be divided evenly between the two departments unless they are commercial. Chad Aker made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-10 as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

BUILDING & PLANNING- PLAN COMMISSION
Pati McLaughlin, administrative assistant, presented commissioners with recommendations from the Jay County Plan Commission hearing on July 9th, 2026. The plan commission approved a rezoning request at 1450 S 400 W, Portland from Industrial back to Agricultural Residential. The commission also presented a proposed CO2 Geological Carbon Sequestration Ordinance. Chad Aker made a motion to approve both items and set a hearing for the July 27th, 2026 meeting to discuss the proposed ordinance. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

RETIREMENT CENTER
John May, maintenance, came before commissioners to discuss roof repairs following wind damage sustained to the main residential roof and large barn. A quote from Goodhew Roofing for the addition on the north side of the home was provided as $20,800 for shingles or $25,900 for standing seam. A second quote from Schwartz Building Supply & Construction was provided with $21,700 for shingles or $19,500 for rib metal. Both companies provided quotes for the large barn repair with Goodhew quoting $12,000 and Schwartz quoting a very loose estimate of $3,500. The commissioners discussed the various options. It was decided to go with standing seam to match the main building. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the roof repairs from Goodhew for standing seam and the minimum patch on the barn. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

JCDC QUARTERLY UPDATE
Ceann Bales, executive director, came before commissioners to give a quarterly update including the OCRA grant for the county comprehensive grant. They continue working on the Dunkirk Housing Project. Colby Cline has started work on taking inventory of downtowns to strategically attract a strong mixture of service, restaurant etc. The organization looking ahead will work on the OCRA grant, Portland Façade, Dunkirk and Pennville Parks with additional park projects with Redkey and the Conservation Club. They will also be working on Opportunity Zones 2.0, there are four tracks that qualify in Jay County and they will be applying for all. It is highly competitive but rural communities are supposed to be higher on the list.

Mrs. Bales asked the county if the $11,800 dedicated to the Make My Move program could be used if necessary to have a consultant review their submission. The expenditure would still have to go through their executive committee for final approval. Chad Aker made a motion to designate those funds towards the new project. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

EDIT APPLICATION REVIEW
Arts Place, Carolyn Carducci Executive Director, requested money for their Arts in the Parks Program in the amount of $15,000.00. After a brief explanation of the program providing over 200 classes, Chad Aker made a motion to approve the request as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Jay County Chamber of Commerce, Amanda Blair, Executive Director requested $10,000 to implement Stay in Jay, a countywide economic development initiative. After a series of roundtables, it was identified lack of people utilizing from local businesses. The money would fund Phase 1 and 2 of this campaign, including printed materials for businesses, branding, storefront materials, photography and videography. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the request as presented. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

John Jay Center for Learning, Rusty Inman, director, requested $50,000, to establish a Residential Skilled Trades program including added equipment needed. This would include construction and healthcare fields. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the same amount as 2026 of $35,000. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

East Central Indiana Small Business Development Center, Claudia Metzger, representative, requested $4,000 for specialty advisors to help small business owners with specific help and training needed. Other organizations in attendance spoke in favor of the center. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the request as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The other requests were reviewed with no representation present from the entities. The annual request from the 4-H Club for $8,000 was reviewed. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the request as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. The annual request from the Dunkirk Volunteer Department of $2,500 for 4th of July Fireworks was reviewed. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the request as presented. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. The annual request from the Jay County 4th of July Committee of $5,000 for fireworks was reviewed. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the request was presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. A request from Redkey Fireworks Committee of $2,500 for 4th of July Fireworks was reviewed. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the request as presented. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

A request from Midwest Pet Refuge of $6,750 for a complete gutter installation on their current facility was reviewed. Mr. Aker noted a lack of economic benefit to the county with the project. Doug Horn made a motion to deny the request as presented. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

A request from Redkey Town Board of $50,000 towards a veteran and civilian cemetery was reviewed. Mr. Aker explained the county's contribution to the burial of soldiers and plaques. He suggested the board approach the cemetery committee. Doug Horn made a motion to deny the request as presented. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

SRO AGREEMENT 2026-2027

The annual School Resource Officer agreement with Jay Schools Corporation was presented for commissioner approval. The only change to the new contract is related to reimbursement costs based on current wages and benefits. Doug Horn moved to approve the contract as presented. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

MDM ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sam Rhodehamel, cybersecurity taskforce member, discussed a mobile device management policy created for the county. It will install an app on personal devices used for county business. The app will only wipe county data in the event it is lost, stolen or upon separation. If an employee chooses not to sign the acknowledgement, then no county data will be allowed to be accessed. This has been recommended by the county's insurance and would show a good faith effort to comply. Chad Aker made amotion to approve the policy and acknowledgement form as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

2027 BUDGET

The commissioners' budget for 2027 was presented for approval. It included increases in health and liability insurance as well as the developmental disabilities rate. The county has not received the maximum mental disability rate for 2027 yet. Once wage increases are determined, the budget will need to be adjusted accordingly. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

BAKER TILLY

A fiscal sustainability agreement with Baker Tilly Advisory Group was presented to commissioners following the July 8th, 2026 council meeting. The scope is not to exceed $35,000. Emily Franks, auditor, explained the benefits of the plan including better bond ratings, review of expenditures and potential revenue streams, and help with the new LIT structure. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the agreement as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. An additional appropriation will be submitted to the August Council meeting.

VERIDUS GROUP

A scope of services from Veridus Group Advisors related to a Public Safety Building was presented for commissioners' approval. The agreement includes phase 1- project development services with a fixed fee of $30,000. Phase 1 is estimated to be completed in October 2026. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the agreement to be paid out of EDIT funds (1112). Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

The payroll docket was presented for commissioner approval. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the payroll docket as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The treasurer's report for May was presented for commissioner approval. Doug Horn made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Chad Aker seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The clerk's report for May was presented for commissioner approval. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the clerk's report as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

An updated Employee Exit Interview/Status of Benefits form was presented for commissioners' approval. It was discussed whether the form is utilized by most departments with the most benefit from the beginning and ending sections. The commissioners requested the employee exit interview be removed and resubmitted for the next meeting.

A covered bridge certification was presented for commissioner approval. The county reported no covered bridges. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the report as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The commissioners requested an advertisement for sealed bids be submitted related to the old radio tower. It will need to state the county will have no liability and all screws and bolts be replaced. Mr. Schemenaur agreed to work on drawing up the notice.

An emergency claim to Penn Care for the new ambulance in the amount of $226,457 was presented for commissioner approval. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the claim as presented. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Emily Franks, auditor, requested permission to renew the Meraki licenses for a cost not to exceed $15,000. Chad Aker made a motion to approve the purchase up to $15,000. Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

With no further business, Chad Aker made a motion to adjourn at 11:22 a.m; Doug Horn seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

JAY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Duane Monroe

Chad Aker
Chad Aker

Doug Horn
Doug Horn

Attest: Emily Franks
Jay County Auditor