

**COUNCIL MINUTES
BOONE COUNTY, INDIANA
February 11th, 2025**

Council Member: You are hereby notified that there will be a regular meeting of the Boone County Council at the Boone County Office Building, 116 W. Washington St., in the Connie Lamar Meeting Room, Room 105, in the City of Lebanon, on Tuesday, February 11th, 2025, at 8:30am.

Councilwoman Hostetter called the meeting to order. Council members in attendance were Shari Richey, Kevin VanHorn, Aaron Williams, Dan Lamar, Dustin Plunkett, and John Riner.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES

Councilwoman Hostetter asked for a motion to approve the January 14th, 2025 council minutes. Councilman Williams wanted to amend the January council minutes noting that Councilman VanHorn had said the Council had discussed the open APC board appointment in December. However, there was no discussion on the matter when listening back to the video. The January minutes were amended. Councilman Lamar made a motion to approve the minutes with the amendment. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

SALARY ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

The Council discussed the request to change the title of both the Human Resource and the HR Assistant lines to HR Generalist. They also discussed the salary increase for the HR Assistant that the Commissioners approved. The Council didn't receive all of the data that was requested and required in advance, so it was not possible for the Council to make any progress on this agenda item. It was decided to table the agenda item until all information is received. Councilman Lamar made a motion to table until March. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

The Council discussed the in-house legal counsel for the Commissioners. The Commissioners are requesting that their attorney be a county employee instead of a contract for services, as was the prior legal counsel for the past 15+ years. Councilwoman Hostetter had asked several times in advance of this meeting for a full job description and a full compensation package breakdown that would be offered to the attorney if she becomes a county employee. Councilman Williams noted that there is already a line in the Commissioners budget for legal services and that money would just need to be re-appropriated into a payroll line for county attorney that already exists in their budget. Due to the fact that the Commissioners have publicly represented that the cost of the in-house legal counsel will be a cost savings when compared to the prior counsel which was a contracted service – and due to the fact that this expense will range from \$200,000 to \$275,000 - Councilwoman Richey put together and distributed a draft cost benefit analysis comparison to determine, if in fact, the assertion that in-house counsel would be a cost savings. A robust discussion ensued and ultimately was not resolved as the information requested for the current counsel was not readily available (ie, PERF, HSA, fees for licensing organizations, software required, etc.). Councilwoman Richey- as well as other council members - would like to look closer at line-by-line costs if the attorney were to become a county employee vs. a contract.

Councilman Lamar made a motion to table until the information necessary to complete the analysis is received in advance of the meeting. Councilman VanHorn seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Allison Gutwein with Discover Boone County gave a presentation on the Innkeeper's tax rate movement 2025 initiative per Senate Bill 252. She has a letter of support for the Council to sign for an increase in the Innkeeper's tax rate. The proposed adjustment is for 8% from 5% currently. She spoke about how the Innkeeper's tax is used in Boone County and noted that the additional revenue generated will be allocated toward the creation of a capital fund designed to prepare for and manage the rapid growth of our county, ensuring sustainable development and infrastructure improvements. The Council decided to sign and approve the letter of support. Councilman Williams made a motion to approve. Councilman Plunkett seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

Michael Nance with Community Corrections presented his annual report to the Council.

Nick Parr with the Highway department presented his annual report to the Council.

The Council's attorney, Chou-il Lee with Taft, spoke to the Council about creating their own compensation/budget committee. He stated that he could create a resolution for the Council to adopt. He noted that they would have to be cognizant of how many Council members were on the committee as only three can be present together in an unadvertised meeting. Councilman Lamar proposed they wait and see how it goes on creating the committee before making a resolution. Chou-il Lee said he could go ahead and draw up a resolution for the Council to look over and then decide if they want to approve it.

Councilwoman Hostetter proposed the future budget workshop meeting dates and to change the July council meeting from July 8th to July 15th. The budget workshop dates are July 15th to discuss salaries, benefits, and insurance. August 12th, 19th, and 20th to discuss the rest of each department's budgets. Councilman Lamar made a motion to approve the date change of the July council meeting. Councilman Plunkett seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

The Council discussed the public meeting policy with Chou-il Lee. Councilwoman Hostetter mentioned that last year the Council adopted a resolution as to public comment. She wanted to ask Mr. Lee about online public comments. He stated that those online can participate in public comment if they follow the rules of the resolution. The Council is not obligated to respond to the public's comments, but they can if they so choose. Public comment is also limited to two minutes and for non-agenda items. He also noted that per state statute, public comment is not required and thus, the Council's policy on allowing for public comment on non-agenda items is generous. The only time public comment is mandatory is when it is a public hearing.

OLD BUSINESS

Auditor Crum spoke on response to the 3-year growth levy appeal that Boone County applied for. She stated that it was denied for pay 2025 because of how much the county has in reserves, which is approximately in the range 48%-55%. She suggested spending down on projects or putting funds into Rainy Day.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Prosecutor Eastwood wanted to inform the Council that House Bill 1006 will give back 50% of Prosecutor's office salaries. If this passes, the county would get back \$600,000 as of now. It hasn't been passed yet, and he said he would keep the Council informed.

Clerk Bruder stated she would like the Council and the Commissioners to work better together.

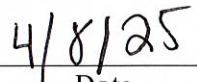
Brian Daggy wanted to tell the Council about House Bill 1628. It takes away local control and zoning control of energy, water, and other projects that have been controversial in the state.

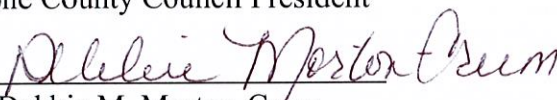
Councilman Lamar made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Plunkett seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

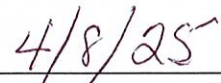
Minutes Prepared by Caryn Strode, Deputy Auditor.


Jennifer Hostetter

Boone County Council President


Date


Debbie M. Morton-Crum
Boone County Auditor


Date