

Grant County, Indiana

Internal Investigation Report

Concerning

Commissioner Chuck Poling

Date: September 2, 2026

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Background

This investigation began the last week of July, 2026 after County Human Resources notified County Legal of complaints and concerns raised by multiple county employees and elected officials about Commissioner Poling's conduct towards them recently and dating back to the last few years. These complaints included, but were not limited to, Commissioner Poling offering an employee a raise if she voted for his candidate for commissioner, screaming at employees, threatening them with job loss, invading their personal space while yelling at them, jabbing his finger in their face and chest and getting so close to them they felt he might physically harm them. On at least two occasions, employees complained that Commissioner Poling physically touched them by placing his arm around their shoulders and moving them into an enclosed environment away from cameras. Because this conduct spanned several months and multiple incidents, it was determined that an outside investigation should be conducted to ascertain the credibility, breadth and scope of the concerns expressed. Consequently, Commissioners Shane Middlesworth and Ron Stewart directed the County Legal Department to have this investigation conducted. As the investigation proceeded, it led to additional allegations of other serious civil and criminal violations by Poling of both federal and state laws.

Attorney Gary Johnson had been previously approved by the Commissioners as legal counsel for employment-related concerns. Because the complaints appeared initially to involve only employment matters, Johnson was appointed lead investigator. In order to protect attorney-client privilege in connection with legal advice that Johnson would provide, Johnson retained Attorney Martha Lemert to conduct the factual and legal investigation. County Attorney Martin Harker has a conflict of interest due to past representation of Poling, which prohibited his involvement under the rules of ethics governing attorneys. Accordingly, Consulting County Attorney Edward Ormsby serves as the attorney for the county on this investigation and matters related thereto.

This report summarizes witness interviews from 15 witnesses and supporting documentation concerning allegations involving Commissioner Chuck Poling. On August 23, 2026, at 8:39 p.m., Attorney Ormsby, spoke with Poling via telephone to outline the preliminary findings and ask for Poling's responses. During that fourteen-minute teleconference, Commissioner Poling consistently cursed, yelled, and cut-off Mr. Ormsby, said he knew who the witnesses were, said that they would all be gone, said to get ready for Hell, and then hung up. This report distinguishes firsthand testimony from information relayed by others and identifies corroborating testimony, documents, recordings, meeting records, and other evidence where appropriate.

While the investigation began as an HR related one, the interviews and supporting evidence reviewed revealed alleged criminal misconduct by Poling in seven broad categories: 1) intimidation of and threats towards county employees and elected officials; 2) illegal surveillance and wiretapping; 3) official and financial misconduct and conflicts of interest; 4) vote buying, bribery and other election related misconduct; 5) retaliation or threatened retaliation; 6) Human Resources related concerns related to ADA, FMLA privacy and confidentiality; and 7) other issues including abuse of power, nepotism, and preferential hiring or influence. Section 8 of this report states the federal and state statutes that are implicated.

Section 1: Intimidation and Threats by Poling

Commissioner Poling's Criminal History Known to County Employees

Witnesses stated that Poling's alleged criminal history and prior violent or threatening conduct were known and discussed among county employees and contributed to fear in the workplace. Former Treasurer, Tiffany Griffith, reported that her father had arrested Poling years earlier and that Poling allegedly threatened to bomb the family home and kill the family, prompting 24/7 guard coverage and Homeland Security involvement. This was a reason why Griffith stepped down as Treasurer after the primary. She did not want to work with Commissioner Poling. At least two interviewees referenced Poling head-butting a former Health Department employee before Poling held any office, breaking his nose. Newspaper archives identify that in 2005 Poling was sentenced to a 180-day suspended sentence for Class B misdemeanor battery following him being charged with a count of class D Felony intimidation and Class A misdemeanor battery. The *Chronicle Tribune* reported a plea deal on February 27, 2005, indicating that "Poling battered a child." Additional clippings show arrests for invasion of privacy, intimidation and battery with the most recent being two separate invasion of privacy arrests occurring in 2011. Witnesses further understood that although Poling had obtained expungement of his prior criminal-history record, the underlying history discussed among employees included alleged domestic violence involving his former wife, who was a judge. More than one witness indicated that he had "put her in the hospital." Newspaper and court records also show that Poling was found to have engaged in perjury in another person's criminal trial in federal court in 1998.

Intimidation of County Employees and Elected Officials

Multiple witnesses described Commissioner Poling as loud, aggressive, intrusive, and intimidating in his workplace interactions. County Administrator Beth Winters described incidents in which Poling told her to "shut your mouth," stood within inches of her face in a conference room for approximately 40–45 minutes, and made her fear for her safety. HR Coordinator Felicity Miller corroborated observing Poling place his arm around Winters and guide her into the conference room, and stated that Poling lacked personal-space boundaries, frequently stood close to employees, and whispered in ears when avoiding camera coverage. Kathy Foy indicated Poling came underneath her umbrella to confront her about something as she was on break. Video confirms this. Emileigh Barnes similarly stated that Poling got "down in my ear" while offering her a raise and urging her to vote for candidate Ed Hartman, leaving her uncomfortable and feeling unable to back away.

Health Department Administrator Tara Street's testimony adds another specific intimidation incident from February 2025. Street described Poling accosting her just outside the HR office arising from a Health Department matter involving a sewage or septic complaint and Commissioner Poling's plumbing business' involvement in related drain work. According to Street, Poling became angry, confronted her in close physical proximity, pointed at or near her chest, and yelled directives at her in a manner that caused her to be concerned for her safety. Former HR Manager, Justin Saathoff corroborated the occurrence and tone of the encounter, confirming that Poling was "screaming at the top of his lungs" at Street and swearing "You can't bullshit me!" Beth Winters also referenced this episode in her testimony, describing Poling as getting "very, very close" to Street's face, yelling, pointing very close to her, and saying words to the effect of "you're going to do this" and "you can't do this."

County Clerk Pam Harris' allegations add another reported intimidation incident involving Commissioner Poling. Harris described a July 1, 2025, encounter in which Poling yelled at her pointed his finger at her in close proximity and came so close to her physically that she raised her fist up to her chest as a protective or defensive gesture. The incident escalated to the point that Poling was escorted from the building. Video evidence from July 1, 2025, corroborates that Poling was escorted from the building by deputies, corroborating the existence of a serious workplace confrontation involving Harris and Poling. Nine contemporaneous witness statements were collected corroborating this incident. According to John Kauffman, Chief Investigator of the Grant County Prosecutor's office, one of the individuals Poling threatened with job loss was Sheriff Deputy Brooks. Poling got up close to Deputy Brooks and stated, "you see this badge, I'm a commissioner, this is my building!" Deputy Brooks pointed to his own badge and stated, "This is my badge." Video evidence from July 1, 2025, corroborates this exchange showing Poling right up in the Deputy's face and the Deputy tapping his own badge. One eyewitness pointed out to Poling in this incident that his approach to people was what was wrong. In response, Poling demanded her name. She stated she did not need to give it. His response was "We'll see about that."

Gracie Johnson's allegations provide another example of alleged physical touching and proximity and coercive pressure in the workplace. Johnson reported that after Treasurer April Laguerre and Commissioner Poling spoke privately, Poling told Johnson they "needed to have a talk," put his arm around her, hooking her by the shoulders, and led her into the Treasurer's Office break room, away from cameras and without another person present. Johnson alleged that Poling sat near her and attempted to discourage her from transferring to the Clerk's Office by telling her the position was not approved, suggesting the incoming Clerk might not keep her, and warning that, if she did not work out her notice, she might not be rehired by the county. Johnson described the interaction as intimidating and as an attempt to scare her into changing her mind about leaving the Treasurer's Office. Delaney Zech corroborated the timing through contemporaneous text messages from Johnson, and Felicity Miller corroborated that Johnson later came to HR and reported the incident.

An employee's report to Justin Saathoff adds a workplace-safety concern involving firearms. According to the testimony, an employee reported that on or about January 30, 2025, she encountered Poling while getting off or on an elevator and that Poling allegedly opened or flashed his coat and stated that he almost pulled his gun on her. the employee reportedly did not see a gun but believed the statement and gesture were intimidating and threatening, and she reported resulting fear, anxiety, and concern about retaliation. Witnesses further connected this incident to later concerns about a commissioners-only ordinance or policy allowing commissioners to carry firearms in county buildings. Harris, Winters, Zech, and others raised concern that authorizing commissioners to carry weapons did not address employee safety concerns and instead heightened fear because Poling was already viewed by some employees as a volatile and intimidating person with a past criminal record for violence.

Witnesses also reported occurrences against elected officials during public meetings. At an Election Board meeting in 2024, during a disagreement or tense exchange, Poling asked the chair of the Election Board to "go outside" with him, which witnesses understood as an intimidating or confrontational statement in the context of an official meeting. This allegation is corroborated through the Election Board video recordings of February 27, 2024.

Elliott also corroborated the Election Board confrontation and described Poling's conduct as unusually combative. Elliott stated that, because IT assists with Webex recordings, he had watched certain meetings from the IT office, including an election-related meeting in 2023 or 2024 where Poling argued with an Election Board participant and acted as if the exchange could become physical. Elliott recalled the other participant saying words to the effect that he could not fight because he had a bad leg, apparently attempting to defuse the situation.

During a May 19, 2025, Commissioner Meeting, Commissioner Poling loudly interrupted and talked over Court Bailiff Meghan Glickfield as she attempted to point out the condition of the courthouse building to the Commissioners at the public comment portion of the meeting. This resulted in Glickfield being cut off by time despite another speaker offering to cede her allotted time so Glickfield could finish. Poling's combative conduct is corroborated by the official recording of the meeting as well as the *Chronicle Tribune's* audio recording of the missing few minutes of the official recording.

Elliott further stated that Poling's manner with him was not usually overtly rude, but that Poling often demanded immediate action and created a sense that employees who disagreed with him could face consequences. Elliott described an incident in which Poling came to the IT office after Elliott obtained a high quote for D-home technology upgrades and told Elliott, in substance, that the council was unhappy with him and "wanted [his] head," even though Elliott had not received any such feedback from council members and understood the council did not have authority to terminate him. Elliott also described Poling entering behind Elliott's desk and speaking from close physical proximity, and stated that Poling sometimes brought Mike from maintenance when confronting him, which Elliott found odd and potentially purposeful.

Multiple witnesses noted that while Poling has yelled at and threatened men, he tends to treat women particularly harshly compared to men. Poling told Winters to "shut her mouth" and that "she's not the boss." The two employees Poling placed his hands on were women. Poling's finger pointing in faces happened toward women. His criminal history, particularly that involving his former wife, place women in particularized fear of the potential of violence from Poling.

Intimidation by Surrogates or Others

Witnesses described intimidation allegedly carried out through or amplified by others aligned with Poling. Winters and Miller identified Ed Bounds, a podcaster and social-media news figure, as a Poling ally whose platforms allegedly attacked female county employees and disclosed confidential information. Winters stated that Bounds publicly named Winters, Tara Street, and Kathy Foy and stated he was not going back to prison and would "take some people with me," which she considered a threat. The video Bounds posted on social media on April 22, 2026, confirms this. Miller similarly described Bounds acquiring or using county-related video footage from July 19, 2025 and publicly discussing an employee's FMLA/PTSD status, which witnesses believed likely came from Poling. Witnesses also described Mike Simonson and Sammy McMullen as intimidating presences because they were associated with employee terminations and were brought along when Poling escorted and campaigned for candidate Ed Hartman through county offices on March 24, 2026. This conduct is confirmed by video footage. Poling often brings one or both of these maintenance employees with him as an intimidation technique during confrontations with other county employees and elected officials such as the Pam Harris July 1, 2025, encounter and recent interactions with IT.

Section 1 Citations and Pertinent Quotes

- Winters stated Poling told her, “you’re not the boss... You need to shut your mouth,” and later used the F-word before storming out.
- Winters stated that on January 27, 2026, Poling stood “3-4 inches maybe, maybe 6 at the most” from her face while she was against the counter and that she was “scared.”
- Miller corroborated the conference-room incident, stating she saw Poling put his arm over Winters’ shoulder and “kind of drug her into the conference room.”
- Tara Street described a February 2025 encounter in HR/Commissioners-area offices in which Poling confronted her over a health-department/septic or drain matter, yelled at her, stood close to her, and pointed at or near her chest in a manner she viewed as threatening.
- Justin Saathoff corroborated Street’s account of the February 2025 encounter and confirmed that Poling was in Street’s face, pointing his finger in her face and yelling loudly at Street.
- Pam Harris alleged that during a July 1, 2025 encounter Poling came so close to her that she put her fist up to her chest, and Poling was escorted from the building after the incident escalated.
- Gracie Johnson alleged that Poling put his arm around or hooked her by the shoulders, led her into the Treasurer’s Office break room or back room, sat near her, and tried to dissuade her from transferring to the Clerk’s Office.
- Delaney Zech read Johnson’s contemporaneous text stating: “April and Chuck talked and then Chuck made me talk to him alone... He tried saying council told him that position was never brought to them or approved. He’s trying to scare me.”
- Barnes stated that Poling “got into my ear” and said, “if you vote for this guy, you would be able to get a raise.”
- An employee reported to Justin Saathoff that during an elevator encounter on or about January 30, 2025, Poling allegedly opened or flashed his coat and said he almost pulled his gun on her; the employee reportedly did not see a gun but believed the statement and gesture were intimidating and threatening.
- Witnesses including Harris, Winters, and Zech raised concerns about the later commissioners-only ordinance or policy allowing commissioners to carry firearms in county buildings; Zech stated that she did not view it as a safety measure and was “incredibly” concerned because she viewed Poling as a “hot head.”
- Marcus Elliott stated that he observed Poling yelling, arguing, and acting combative in recorded or streamed meetings, including an election-related meeting where Elliott believed the exchange looked like it could become physical.
- Witnesses reported that during an Election Board meeting, Poling asked the chair of the Election Board to “go outside” with him or otherwise invited the chair outside during a tense exchange; corroborating evidence should include Election Board minutes, recordings, attendee statements, and contemporaneous notes or complaints.
- Winters stated that Ed Bounds stated, “I will not go back to prison... I’m going to take some people with me,” after naming Winters, Tara Street, and Kathy Foy.
- Elliott stated that in the IT office Poling told him the council was unhappy with him or “wanted [his] head” over a vendor quote, despite Elliott having received no such communication from council members and understanding that the council lacked authority to terminate him.
- Delaney Zech stated that Poling made her “nervous” and “anxious” because he was a “hot head.”

Supporting Documentation

- Nine contemporaneous statements corroborate the July 1, 2025, confrontation with Clerk Pam Harris including Sarah Rushing, Stephanie Riggs, Keara Montoya, Kelly Havens, Justin Faw, Stephanie Dunica, and another employee — uniformly describe Poling screaming, “I run these buildings,” refusing to take the stairs (“I’m the commissioner, I don’t take the stairs”), and demanding a deputy clerk’s name (“We’ll see about that”). Deputy Tanner Brooks heard Poling threaten “if she kept it up he was going to have her job.” One employee who was pregnant at the time, recorded a blood pressure spike to 184/88. “Everyone was visibly shaken, intimidated.”
- Verkada footage of July 1, 2025 courthouse incident.
- Tara Street contemporaneous documentation from February of 2025 including emails, witness statements and communication with State Board of Health.
- Health officer Dr. Woods’ written statement and letter of resignation.
- January 31, 2025 documentation of Justin Saathoff involving elevator encounter between an employee and Commissioner Poling.
- Meghan Glickfield documentation including powerpoint, email communications and Commissioner meeting from 5-19-25.
- Commissioner meeting from May 19, 2025.
- Recording of missing 2 minutes from *Chronicle Gazette* (at 21:00 mark).
- Newspaper articles detailing exchange at 5-19-25 meeting.
- Ed Bounds video posted to social media on 4-22-26 (11:00 to 11:45) (naming Kathy Foy, Beth Winters and others earlier at 8:00, 9:45).
- Election Board meeting video from 2-27-24.
- Ordinance 14-2025 re commissioners carrying on county property.
- Newspaper articles detailing Commissioner Poling’s criminal history.
- 7th Circuit court opinion in *United States v. Miller Jr.*, Nos. 98-1550, 98-1599 and 98-1624 (7th Cir, 1998).
- 9-27-24 video of Chuck Poling getting under umbrella of Kathy Foy.

Section 2: Illegal Surveillance and Wiretapping

Multiple witnesses described concern that Commissioner Poling used county cameras, audio features, Webex recordings, and related technology as tools for surveilling and stalking employees, rather than for public safety or building security. The testimony reflects both firsthand technical information from Marcus Elliott and corroborating employee perceptions from Beth Winters, Felicity Miller, Delaney Zech, Emileigh Barnes, and others. The common theme across the interviews is that employees believed cameras and audio access affected where they felt comfortable speaking, whether they trusted HR confidentiality, and whether Poling knew or could learn where employees were, who they were meeting with, and what was being said

in county offices. Concerns about surveillance were not limited to county buildings and grounds. One witness, Meghan Glickfield, indicated that a neighbor's daughter had warned her that Ed Bounds had offered a family member of the neighbor \$10,000 to get an incriminating photo or video of Glickfield about a month after Glickfield had confronted commissioners about the condition of the courthouse building.

Beth Winters stated that there was a camera above or near her desk in the HR area and that employees were uncomfortable bringing concerns to HR because they believed their conversations could be observed or recorded. Winters believed Poling watched the cameras frequently, including to monitor employee movement, smoke breaks, lunch breaks, department activity, and the location of employees inside county buildings. She further linked the camera placement to Poling's conduct during the January 27, 2026, conference-room incident, stating that she believed Poling moved her away from the HR camera because he knew the camera's range and wanted to speak outside its view. According to IT help desk logs, Poling put in a request to IT to have a camera installed on 10/23/25 that had a view of entrance to the commissioner and HR office area. At the time the camera was initially installed at the HR area, Winters confirmed with IT that the audio was off for this camera.

Felicity Miller corroborated Winters' concern and stated that employees knew or believed Poling watched the cameras. Miller described Poling reacting quickly when a camera in the Commissioners/HR area was unplugged so Winters could use the available internet port and reported that Poling directed IT to run a new cable so the camera could be restored. IT Job tickets confirm this request. Miller also stated that Poling appeared to know where cameras did and did not capture activity, and that he would move conversations out of camera range, lower his voice, or whisper near employees when he did not want statements recorded or audible.

Delaney Zech's testimony supports the conclusion that surveillance concerns were not limited to HR. Zech stated that cameras in the Treasurer's Office were originally installed for employee safety after a threat at the public counter, but that employees later believed the purpose had shifted toward monitoring or spying on staff. Zech acknowledged she had no direct evidence that Poling personally reviewed the cameras, but stated that the presence of cameras with audio contributed to anxiety and the perception that Poling wanted to know "everything that's going on with everyone, every situation."

Emileigh Barnes' interview confirms that camera and audio recordings were significant evidence sources for the March 2026 Ed Hartman office tour and alleged electioneering incident. Barnes stated that video existed for the relevant dates, that she had reviewed it, and that the recording generally corroborated the encounter, including audio that could be heard if listened to closely. Her testimony also illustrates that, even where camera footage may corroborate events, witnesses believed Poling understood camera placement and audio limitations well enough to move closer, lower his voice, or speak near an employee's ear in a way that was more difficult to capture clearly. The recording of the March 24, 2026, Emileigh Barnes conversation reflects this.

Marcus Elliott's interview provides technical corroboration. Elliott identified Verkada as the county camera platform, confirmed that IT can review login and access information, and explained that system records may show when users accessed cameras and which cameras were viewed. Elliott also confirmed that public meeting recordings are downloaded and stored by IT, that county Webex recordings and YouTube uploads may be relevant, and that commissioners had access to the camera system. Elliott further stated that Commissioner Poling and Commissioner Middlesworth directed IT to revoke camera access from certain

courthouse deputies and other users who formerly had access for courthouse operations. Elliott indicated that the number of cameras increased since the beginning of 2025.

Significantly, Elliott stated that Poling recently told him to turn on audio for the HR-office camera and also told him not to tell anyone. Poling claimed that he wanted to know if Winters and Miller were going to leave. Elliott stated that HR audio had previously been disabled because HR conversations may involve personnel, policy, medical, accommodation, or other confidential matters that should not be recorded. Elliott further stated that he created a help-desk ticket anyway to document Poling's request and retained call logs showing the request and follow-up call. These documents reflect that the request by Poling was made on July 31, 2026, around 9 am, only a few days after this investigation was commenced. Elliott stated that he complied because Poling had camera-system access and Elliott feared retaliation or adverse reaction against himself or IT staff if Poling later discovered audio had not been enabled. Neither Winters nor Miller were informed by IT or Poling of this audio being activated.

The concerns of county personnel that Poling engaged in surveillance of them is well founded. The user log from the last 3 months showing all of Poling's log-ins and activities in the Verkada system shows Poling engaged in significant amounts of review of multiple cameras in the county building and the courthouse including frequent review of the camera over the HR office on the 6th floor identified on the log as "Commissioner's Office". During a three month period between May 21, and August 24, 2026, Poling logged 4,870 separate events on the log. The log shows that Poling focused much of his attention on the Commissioner's office camera where the County Administrator and HR Director is located. There were 349 unique viewing sessions by Poling of this camera during this time frame of which 135 were live streaming and 214 were review of video history.

This surveillance included review of audio engaged cameras. Between May 21, 2026, and August 24, 2026, Poling triggered 137 "camera audio change" events indicating a review of audio across multiple cameras, with 55 of these entries linked to the "Commissioner Office" camera where HR was located. Each of these audio accesses by Poling is a potential violation of the Federal Wiretap Act / Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510–2523, which carries a prison sentence up to five years for each violation.

Taken together, the interviews, call log, support tickets and Poling's user log reflect serious misconduct that could result in both criminal and civil consequences to Poling under federal and state law. The camera and audio issues also cut across multiple allegation categories. The evidence is relevant to intimidation because witnesses believed Poling used camera knowledge to isolate or confront employees away from view. It is relevant to retaliation because employees believed monitoring could identify who was speaking with HR or participating in this investigation. It is relevant to HR confidentiality because recording or enabling audio in HR could capture protected personnel, medical, FMLA, ADA, disciplinary, or complaint-related information. It is relevant to election-related allegations because camera footage and Webex records may corroborate the candidate tour and related employee encounters. Because of these concerns, County Legal instructed IT to turn off the audio on all cameras on August 20, 2026.

Obstruction and Interference with the Investigation

The very next day, Friday, August 21, 2026, Commissioner Poling confronted the IT manager Marcus Elliott about why audio had been turned off on county cameras. The Verkada log shows Poling attempted to access audio on county cameras 12 times on August 20th. Elliott explained that Legal had instructed him

to turn off audio on the cameras. After questioning Elliott, Poling stated that Elliott should have “given him a heads up,” that he was Elliott’s boss, that he now “knew where he stood” and that in January he was “going to clean stuff up.” Fellow IT employee Brian Kikendall stated that, later that day after Marcus Elliott had left, Poling came back to IT with the maintenance employees Mike Simonson and “Shadow” and instructed that the audio on the cameras be turned back on. Kikendall further stated that Poling referenced conversations with other commissioners and worded his instruction in a manner that made it appear, at least to Kikendall, that Poling had approval from the other commissioners, although Kikendall had not personally heard from the other commissioners and was not aware of any public vote authorizing audio to be restored.

Kikendall turned the audio back on the following Monday morning because Poling told him to do so.

Kikendall further stated that, during the same Friday afternoon conversation, Poling instructed IT not to share information, data, or documentation related to the investigation unless two commissioners approved it. Kikendall understood that directive to apply even if the request came from Beth Winters, Felicity Miller, or legal counsel. This instruction directly interfered with the outside investigation because it placed an additional commissioner-approval barrier between IT and the county legal representatives requesting information. Poling issued this directive even though Commissioner Poling was the subject of the investigation and neither of the other two Commissioners ever voted on or approved any of the instructions given by Poling on August 21.

Elliott’s follow-up interview corroborates another interference concern. Elliott confirmed that Poling had not asked IT to search for or review particular employee emails, but stated that Poling had directed IT to back up Beth Winters’ and Felicity Miller’s emails approximately monthly because Poling claimed they might leave and might delete files. Elliott stated that Poling did not have access to those backups and had not so far asked to review them, but the request remains relevant because it focused on two HR employees involved in the investigation and was made during the same general period in which Poling also sought HR-camera audio and later attempted to control IT’s release of investigation-related information.

Taken together, Kikendall’s and Elliott’s testimony support a finding that Poling attempted to not only surveil but also influence the availability, confidentiality, and flow of electronic evidence during the investigation. The conduct includes seeking restoration of camera audio after Legal directed that it be disabled, falsely implying or suggesting commissioner authorization, directing IT not to provide information to HR or Legal without future commissioner approval, and targeting HR employees’ email accounts for recurring backup based on the belief that they might leave. These facts are corroborated by help-desk tickets, call logs, Verkada records of Poling’s activity log, and commissioner communications.

Section 2 Citations and Pertinent Quotes

- Winters stated that there was a camera “right above my desk” in HR and that employees did not feel comfortable speaking with HR where they should feel safe.
- Winters stated that it was her belief Poling watched cameras throughout the day to monitor the courthouse, exterior areas, employee breaks, and department activity. This belief is supported by the user log produced showing thousands of actions by Poling to conduct video and audio surveillance.
- Winters stated that Poling appeared to know camera ranges and that she believed he moved her into the conference room in January 2026 to get away from the camera above her desk.

- Miller stated, “We know he watches the cameras,” and described Poling reacting when the Commissioners/HR camera was unplugged and directing IT to restore camera connectivity.
- Miller stated that Poling would pull people out of camera view, whisper, or lower his voice when he did not want statements captured.
- Zech stated that Treasurer’s Office cameras were originally installed for safety but that employees later viewed them as being used to “spy on us.”
- Barnes stated that video and audio existed for the March 2026 Hartman-tour incident and that the recording generally corroborated her account, although some comments required close listening.
- Elliott stated that the county uses Verkada, that IT can review login and camera-access information, and that access logs may show when users accessed cameras and which cameras were viewed.
- Elliott stated that Poling asked him to enable audio on the HR camera, told him “not to tell anyone”, claiming he wanted to know if Winters and Miller were going to leave.
- Elliott stated that he documented Poling’s HR-audio request through contemporaneous help-desk ticket and call logs, and that HR audio had previously been disabled by instruction of the commissioners because of confidentiality concerns.
- Brian Kikendall stated that Poling came to IT after Marcus Elliott had left, with maintenance employees present, and requested that camera audio be turned back on after Elliott had earlier explained that Legal had asked IT to turn the audio off.
- Kikendall stated that Poling stated or implied that he had spoken with other commissioners and made it seem as though the other commissioners had approved restoring audio, although Kikendall had not personally received that approval and was not aware of any public vote.
- Kikendall stated that Poling instructed IT not to share investigation-related information, data, or documentation unless two commissioners approved it, including requests from Beth Winters, Felicity Miller, or legal counsel.
- Elliott stated that Poling had IT back up Beth Winters’ and Felicity Miller’s emails approximately monthly because Poling believed they might leave and might delete files, although Elliott stated Poling did not have access to the backups and had not asked to review them.
- The combination of Poling’s HR-camera audio request, the later instruction that IT restore audio, and the directive not to release investigation-related information without commissioner approval supports review for obstruction or interference with the outside investigation.

Supporting Documentation

- Marcus Elliott interview transcript.
- Verkada user-access logs of Poling’s user history, remote-login records, camera-view logs, shared-credential records, and permission-change history.
- IT help-desk tickets and call logs concerning Poling’s request to enable HR-camera audio and any related verification clips.
- Camera-location information, audio-status reports, and records identifying when audio was enabled or disabled for each camera.
- Video and audio recordings from the March 20 and March 24, 2026, Assessor’s Office interactions and the Ed Hartman building tour.
- Public meeting Webex recordings, downloaded files, YouTube upload records, and IT shared-drive records relevant to Election Board and commissioner meetings.

- County policies, notices, or employee communications regarding video monitoring, audio recording, HR confidentiality, and employee privacy expectations.
- Brian Kikendall interview transcript concerning Poling’s request to restore camera audio and instruction not to release investigation-related information without two-commissioner approval.
- Marcus Elliott follow-up interview transcript concerning monthly backup of Beth Winters’ and Felicity Miller’s emails and the instruction to disable camera audio.
- Email and other communications related to Poling’s request to re-enable audio on cameras including the camera over HR.

Section 3: Official Misconduct, Financial Misconduct, Conflicts of Interest, and Disclosure Issues

Witnesses described several categories of alleged official misconduct by Commissioner Poling, including use of his county positions both as Commissioner and Chairman of the drainage board in matters involving his private plumbing and drain business, repeated use of county labor alongside his private business, voting on claims involving payments to his business, and incomplete disclosure of business interests. Beth Winters stated that the county used Chuck’s Sewer & Drain “exclusively” for plumbing and drain work and estimated annual payments of approximately \$60,000. Witnesses indicated that while Chuck’s business was on site, county maintenance did much of the work. Invoices produced from February of 2025 through June 5, 2026, show payments of \$56,630 and, as Winters described, consistently show general, round-number bills with limited detail. The invoices and time records show that on at least two occasions, Chuck’s Sewer & Drain were paid for county work for the same time frame county maintenance employees also received pay, including overtime pay on the same projects. Winters further stated that Commissioner Poling generally did not abstain from approving claims that included payments to his own business, except on one occasion she recalled.

Winters and Felicity Miller also described a drain-cleaning machine arrangement in which Commissioner Poling permitted the county to use equipment from his business and, after the county purchased a new machine, Poling allegedly took the new county-purchased machine for his business. Miller estimated the equipment cost was approximately \$1,200 and linked the episode to a sewage leak response involving county maintenance employees working with Poling’s business interests. The invoice for the new equipment lists the cost as \$1,210.41.

Witnesses further raised conflict-of-interest and disclosure issues involving Poling’s business entities. Winters stated that Poling’s conflict-of-interest forms disclosed his plumbing or sewer-and-drain business but did not disclose Chomp Properties LLC, which she identified as a real estate-related LLC owned solely by Poling. Winters and Miller also referenced Chomp Properties quitclaim-deeding a property valued at \$37,100 to Ed Bounds’ Digital Marketing Productions LLC shortly before the primary election, while Ed Bounds’ platforms allegedly provided favorable media and advertising support to candidates aligned with Poling. None of the aligned candidates show any expenditure for advertising to Bounds or his company on their campaign finance CAN-4 forms.

Justin Saathoff noted that Poling had a dispute with County Clerk Harris over his late filing of required conflict of interest disclosure forms for 2022 and 2023. Harris stamped them as being received on April 7, 2025. According to Saathoff, Poling asserted that Harris had “lost” the disclosures. Harris denies this and

reported that the April 2025 date for which the 2022 and 2023 late disclosures were stamped were the dates they were filed with the county.

Justin Saathoff raised an additional procurement concern regarding renovation work at the Salin Bank building. Saathoff's concern was that renovation activity may have been divided into smaller projects or separate work packages so that each piece remained below the threshold that would trigger public bidding requirements under Indiana law. This issue was also raised by Pam Harris.

Section 3 Citations and Pertinent Quotes

- Beth Winters stated that the county used Chuck's Sewer & Drain "exclusively" and estimated approximately "\$60,000" per year in county payments.
- Winters stated that invoices were often not itemized: "the bills are not real detailed," and could state "work done at the jail, \$4200" or "time and material jail." Invoices obtained support this.
- Winters stated that Commissioner Poling voted on claims involving his business: "for the most part, I think there's only been one meeting where Commissioner Poling has abstained."
- Winters stated that Poling's forms disclosed his plumbing business but not Chomp Properties: "his conflict of interest form only reflects his business as a plumbing and/or sewer and drain business, not as his property... LLC for properties is Chomp Properties." The conflict of interest and candidate statement of economic interest forms filed do not show Chomp Properties listed.
- Felicity Miller corroborated the equipment issue, testifying that after the county ordered a new drain machine, "when the new one came in, Chuck took that one to his business."
- Invoices paid to Chuck's Sewer show dates that correspond to at least two occasions when county maintenance employees received overtime for sewer work on 3/24/26 and 6/5/26.
- Justin Saathoff raised concern that renovation work at the Salin Bank building may have been split into smaller projects or separate work packages to avoid Indiana public bidding requirements; corroborating evidence should include project scopes, purchase orders, invoices, meeting minutes, contractor communications, and legal guidance concerning applicable bidding thresholds.
- Pam Harris raised concern that the Treasurer had user access to a child support fund that the Clerk's Office is supposed to oversee; corroborating evidence should include user-access logs, role permissions, authorization records, Clerk/Treasurer procedures, and audit or State Board of Accounts guidance concerning fund oversight and separation of duties.

Supporting Documentation

- Invoices submitted by Chuck's Sewer & Drain, Inc.
- Time cards for county maintenance employees.
- County Ordinance 6-2025 and 9-2025.
- Email communications relating to access to County Clerk child support fund.
- Conflict of Interest forms filed for Commissioner and Councilman Poling.
- Chomp Properties, LLC SOS filing.
- Chuck's Sewer & Drain SOS filing form.
- Commissioner meeting records.
- Quit claim deed from Chomp to Ed Bounds' company Digital Marketing Productions, LLC.
- Records relating to county work and contracted work at Salin Bank Building location.

- Assessment records for property conveyed from Chomp to Digital Marketing Productions.
- CAN 4 forms for Poling aligned candidates for 2026 primary.
- Digital Marketing Productions SOS filing.

Section 4: Electioneering and Bribery Allegations

Witness testimony described several election-related concerns, including bribery, electioneering on county property, pressure on employees to support Poling-aligned candidates, use of county time or county facilities for campaign-related activity, and possible campaign finance or disclosure issues.

Barnes stated that Poling brought candidate Ed Hartman into the Assessor's Office during working hours, asked Barnes whether she would vote, moved off camera and stated close to her ear that "if you vote for this guy, you'll be able to get a raise." Barnes then responded that she wasn't voting and that she only voted in presidential elections. Verkada video of the encounter on March 24, 2026, confirms Barnes' account of the interaction. Multiple other witnesses and additional video evidence corroborate the Hartman tour, describing and showing Hartman being escorted through county offices on March 24, 2026, with Poling and maintenance employees, Mike Simonson, and Sammy McMullen. At least one other witness indicated they heard Poling exhort county workers to vote for Hartman by an elevator.

Neither maintenance employee accompanying Poling appear to be performing any maintenance work during the tour and overtime was charged to the county for later that same day for maintenance work with Poling's business also charging \$1,650 for the same work.

Winters also described county-funded listening sessions concerning a feasibility study for development near I-69 and State Road 26 that allegedly became campaign events after Poling asserted control over the meeting and urged attendees to vote for certain candidates if they opposed data centers. She stated that the county stopped funding the sessions after they became, in her words, "campaign things" and a "campaign circus."

Witnesses also raised campaign finance and advertising concerns involving Ed Bounds and Richarrh Tyson Channel 27 media platforms. Winters stated that candidates not aligned with Poling, including Stacci Landis and Commissioner Ron Stewart, were told there was no advertising space available, while Poling-aligned candidates received support and advertising access. Winters and Miller stated that Ed Bounds' business received a quitclaim deed from Poling's Chomp Properties shortly before the election, yet the witnesses did not see corresponding campaign-finance expenditure disclosures by supported candidates. These allegations are corroborated through campaign finance filings, deed records, and screenshots of advertising on media entities.

Elliott also provided technical context for the March 24, 2026, Ed Hartman building tour footage. He stated that IT preserved multiple Verkada clips into an archived file. Elliott confirmed the footage showed Hartman and others moving through county buildings, including the courthouse and other offices. Elliott further explained that some cameras contained audio and some did not depending on when audio had been enabled for public/common areas. The recordings show that Poling, Hartman, Simonson, and McMullen traveled through both the county building and the courthouse to various locations and offices talking to county employees and encouraging county employees to vote for Hartman.

Section 4 Citations and Pertinent Quotes

- Barnes stated that Poling asked whether she was going to vote and then said, “if you vote for this guy, you would be able to get a raise.”
- Barnes stated Poling told her he “fought in the Army for my butt to vote” and that she felt she “pretty much had to sit and listen.”
- Video with audio of the encounter corroborate Barnes’ recollection of the exchange though the portion where Poling speaks to her off camera is difficult to understand. Poling later in the video makes reference to the “million dollars” Barnes would like to find and that he is still looking for it.
- Marcus Elliott confirmed that IT compiled Verkada footage from March 24, 2026, into a case, that download restrictions were a permissions issue, and that additional audio availability depended on which cameras had audio enabled at the relevant time.
- Miller corroborated that Poling took Hartman through county buildings and stated that Hartman entered employee work areas while “checking things out.”
- Winters stated that Poling stood up at a county-funded listening session and said, “young man, you go sit down. I paid for this building. I’m in charge of this meeting,” after which the event became “basically a campaign meeting.”
- Winters stated that Poling-aligned media advertising and campaign support were not reflected in campaign documents: “Ed Bounds—his business—nothing is disclosed on any of those campaign documents.”
- Witnesses and filing paperwork indicate that Poling ran for county council before his criminal record had been expunged and the expunged documentation may show him to have been ineligible to hold office based on prior convictions involving battery and intimidation; this would require further corroboration through certified court records, expungement records, candidate filings, and election-board records.

Supporting Documentation

- Verkada footage from 3-24-26 of Poling and Hartman touring county offices.
- Verkada footage and audio of the encounter between Barnes, Poling, Hartman and maintenance on 3-24-26.
- Campaign election filings including CAN 1, CAN 12, CFA 1 and CFA 4 forms for Poling, Hartman, Mike Scott and others.
- Examples of advertising and campaign related materials on Channel 27, Facebook and Ed Bounds Podcast.
- Ed Bounds’ Digital Marketing Solutions LLC Secretary of State filing.
- Quitclaim deed between Chomp Properties LLC and Digital Marketing Solutions.

Section 5: Retaliation Against County Employees and Elected Officials

Multiple witnesses expressed concern and gave examples of retaliation by Poling. These concerns were raised by both county employees and elected officials. Witnesses described attempted or threatened retaliation against employees who left offices aligned with Poling or who were perceived as disloyal.

Winters stated that Poling attempted to gather information to terminate or discredit her and Felicity Miller, including blaming them for a time-card issue outside their normal role. The former HR Manager, Justin Saathoff, indicated that he and his former HR Manager were targeted by Poling so Poling could hire in his people. Saathoff also indicated that while many employees were afraid to make a formal complaint but informally “almost the entire building” had complained to HR about Poling. Miller stated that Poling told employees in the Treasurer’s Office that Winters and Miller could not be trusted and that HR concerns should be brought to him instead. Both Winters and Miller described the Gracie Johnson and Delaney Zech situations as retaliatory efforts to prevent transfers or punish employees who left the Treasurer’s Office.

In the Gracie Johnson matter, Johnson, Winters, Miller, and Delaney Zech all described Poling taking Johnson into a back room or break room and warning her that the position she accepted in the Clerk’s Office was not approved or that she could lose the job when a new elected official took office. Johnson was concerned she could not safely work out her notice because she feared Poling and Treasurer April Laguerre might do something behind the scenes to upend or block her transfer to the new position. Contemporaneous text messages from Johnson to Zech corroborate this stating that “April and Chuck talked and then Chuck made me talk to him alone,” that Poling was “trying to scare me,” and that he told her the job was not approved. Johnson also reported that Poling indicated the incoming Clerk might get rid of Johnson after taking office. Miller stated that Poling later involved the Auditor’s Office and payroll questions to create obstacles to paying Johnson after she had transferred.

In the Delaney Zech matter, Winters and Miller stated that Poling and Treasurer April Laguerre discussed threatening or pursuing legal action over Zech’s notebook after she transferred from the Treasurer’s Office to the Assessor’s Office. Miller stated that Poling and Laguerre allegedly said they would hire an attorney to sue Zech or have her fired from the Assessor’s Office, even though Zech worked for another elected official. Zech later returned after her interview to report that an attempted write-up over a Treasurer’s Office matter felt retaliatory. Other witnesses, including Assessor Rhonda Wylie, also identified the incident as retaliation. Wylie also reported that Poling had targeted another employee for taking approved leave.

Even elected officials have been threatened with job loss by Poling. County Clerk Pam Harris reported that during the July 1, 2025, Clerk’s Office incident, Poling made threats toward herself and workers as he was being escorted from the building. Harris stated that Poling threatened to “put her out on the street.” Other witness statements from July 1, 2025, indicate Poling told a police officer that he would “have his badge,” demanded another employee’s name, and told that employee that if she kept it up he “would have her job.” These accounts characterize the statements as threats made in the context of an escalating workplace confrontation while Poling was being removed or walked out of the courthouse building.

After the Meghan Glickfield confrontation on May 19, 2025, Glickfield indicated a concern that she had inadvertently gotten Justin Saathoff fired due to her indicating in the commissioner meeting that she had not gotten a response from the commissioners. Saathoff indicated that he did not get approval to send the response he had drafted for the commissioners until late Friday before the Monday commissioner meeting and he felt that was an excuse to terminate him as Poling wanted his own person in the role.

Elliott’s testimony adds a retaliation-related concern from the IT department. Elliott stated that when Poling asked him to obtain pricing for D-home technology upgrades, the first vendor quote was several hundred thousand dollars because the system was old and required broader replacement. Elliott stated that Poling later came to the IT office and stated that the council was unhappy with Elliott and wanted his head because

of the quote, even though Elliott had not heard that from council members and did not understand the council to have authority to fire him. Elliott also stated that after election-related livestream footage involving Ed Hartman and Randy Atkins circulated, Poling called him on a Saturday for a 20- to 30-minute conversation about how the footage could have gotten out. Elliott felt the conversation suggested IT was being blamed or suspected even though members of the public could have recorded the livestream. Call logs corroborate Elliott's account.

The later IT interviews also connect the surveillance evidence to retaliation and witness-interference concerns. Poling stated to Elliott on Friday, August 21, 2026, that he was Elliott's boss, that he now "knew where he stood" and that in January [after the upcoming election] he was "going to clean stuff up."

Brian Kikendall stated that Poling instructed IT not to provide investigation-related information or documentation without two-commissioner approval, even if the request came from HR or Legal, and Marcus Elliott stated that Poling had directed monthly backups of Beth Winters' and Felicity Miller's emails because Poling believed they might leave and delete files. When considered with Poling's instruction to restore camera audio after Legal directed that audio be disabled, this evidence supports the concern that Poling sought to control or monitor the flow of information from HR and IT during an investigation in which he was the subject and retaliate against anyone who stood in his way.

Section 5 Citations and Pertinent Quotes

- Winters stated that Poling was "trying to gather information to get you terminated" and answered "Yeah" when asked if he sought grounds to terminate her and Felicity.
- Miller stated that Poling told Treasurer's Office employees that "Beth and I couldn't be trusted" and that HR concerns should come to him.
- Zech read Gracie Johnson's text: "April and Chuck talked and then Chuck made me talk to him alone... He's trying to scare me."
- Johnson also reported concern that she could not work out her notice because Poling and April Laguerre might act behind the scenes to prevent her transfer, and witnesses reported Poling told Johnson the incoming Clerk might not keep her after taking office.
- Miller stated that Poling and Laguerre were "scheming on how to get Gracie to not be able to take the position."
- Miller stated that Poling and Laguerre threatened to sue Delaney over a notebook and "have her fired from the Assessor's Office."
- The Zech addendum states that she later recalled an attempted discipline or write-up that she viewed as retaliatory and that other witnesses, including Rhonda Wylie, identified it as retaliation.
- Marcus Elliott stated that Poling suggested the council was unhappy with him or wanted his head after Elliott obtained a high D-home technology quote, and Elliott understood the statement as improper pressure because the quote reflected the vendor's assessment rather than any wrongdoing by IT.
- Poling telling Elliott on August 21, 2026, that he was Elliott's boss, that he now "knew where he stood" and that in January he was "going to clean stuff up."
- Pam Harris reported that during the July 1, 2025, Clerk's Office incident, Poling threatened to "put her out on the street." Contemporaneous witness statements reflect Poling told a police officer he

would “have his badge,” demanded another employee’s name, and told that employee that if she kept it up he “would have her job” as he was being escorted from the building.

Supporting Documentation

- Witness statements from Tara Street, Felicity Miller, Delaney Zech, Winters and Gracie Johnson.
- Text messages between Delaney Zech and Gracie Johnson.
- Meghan Glickfield emails with Justin Saathoff.
- Marcus Elliott interview transcript, call logs, D-home vendor quotes, and March 24, 2026, livestream/Webex records concerning the Ed Hartman footage.

Section 6: Human Resources Related Concerns—ADA Accommodation, FMLA Privacy, and Confidentiality

Witness interviews and supporting materials identify several human-resources-related concerns involving employee medical information, accommodation requests, FMLA-related privacy, and confidence in HR processes. These concerns overlap with the broader workplace-safety, surveillance, and retaliation allegations, but they warrant separate treatment because they involve statutory and policy-sensitive issues concerning disability accommodation, protected leave, medical confidentiality, and the ability of employees to report concerns to HR without fear of exposure or reprisal.

The ADA-related allegations primarily involve employee requests for exceptions to county building or maintenance directives involving lights, fans, heaters, air purifiers, and other workplace conditions. Beth Winters and Felicity Miller described instances in which employees provided medical documentation for migraines, allergies, or other health-related needs, but maintenance leadership allegedly questioned, dismissed, removed, or resisted the requested accommodation. Witnesses specifically distinguished general workplace rules about personal appliances from individualized medical accommodations and raised concern that maintenance staff treated doctor-supported requests as optional or suspect rather than referring them through HR for an interactive and lawful accommodation review.

The FMLA and privacy allegations include testimony that an employee’s protected leave and PTSD-related information were publicly discussed by Ed Bounds on July 19, 2025, on his social-media or podcast platform. Beth Winters stated that an employee was on FMLA leave related to matters involving prior military service and that Bounds publicly referred to an employee as a county employee being on FMLA leave for PTSD. Winters stated she could not confirm who disclosed the information but believed the disclosure may have come from Commissioner Poling because of Poling’s relationship with Bounds. Felicity Miller similarly identified the public discussion of an employee’s FMLA/PTSD status as a significant privacy concern.

Witnesses also raised broader HR confidentiality concerns. Winters stated that employees were reluctant to speak with HR because a camera was located above or near the HR desk and because employees believed their conversations might be observed or monitored. Winters also stated that she asked Gracie Johnson to provide a handwritten statement rather than email because she believed her email might be monitored and because HR complainants should have some measure of anonymity. Miller stated that employees were told by Poling not to bring HR concerns to Winters or Miller and instead to bring those concerns to

Commissioner Poling, which, if accurate, undermined normal HR reporting channels and employee trust in confidentiality. The former HR director indicated that very few people came forward officially but virtually everyone came forward informally to complain about Poling.

Wylie indicated that Poling was challenging the attendance of an employee who was on approved FMLA leave and felt it was Poling attempting to target the employee.

Elliott's interview and supporting audit logs of Poling's Verkada activity directly supports these HR-confidentiality concerns. Elliott stated that Poling recently requested on July 31, 2026, that audio be turned on for the HR camera, told Elliott not to tell anyone, and explained that he wanted to know if Winters and Miller were going to leave. Elliott further stated that HR audio had previously been disabled when the camera there was installed because HR conversations may involve matters that should not be recorded, and that he documented Poling's request through a help-desk ticket and phone logs. Elliott also confirmed in an addendum that commissioners do not have access to read county employee emails.

Section 6 Citations and Pertinent Quotes

- Winters described accommodation disputes involving heaters, fans, lighting, air purifiers, and employee medical documentation, and stated that accommodation requests supported by doctor's notes were sometimes challenged or resisted by maintenance leadership.
- Winters stated that an employee with migraines had a doctor's note requesting use of a lamp or adjusted lighting, but maintenance leadership relied on an OSHA light reading and initially resisted the accommodation, prompting Winters to distinguish OSHA lighting standards from ADA accommodation obligations.
- Winters stated that another employee's personal air purifier, with a doctor's note taped to it, was removed as if it were a prohibited fan, and that the maintenance director allegedly responded that "anybody can fake a doctor's note."
- Winters stated that an employee was on FMLA leave related to prior military-service issues and that Ed Bounds publicly discussed a county employee being on FMLA leave for PTSD; Winters stated she could not confirm the source but believed the disclosure may have come from Poling because of his relationship with Bounds.
- Winters stated that employees were uncomfortable speaking with HR because of the camera in or near the HR area, and stated that HR should be a place where employees feel safe bringing concerns.
- Elliott stated that Poling requested audio be enabled on the HR camera, told him not to tell anyone, and said he wanted to know if Winters and Miller were going to leave; Elliott documented the request by creating a help-desk ticket and retaining call logs.
- Winters stated that she asked Gracie Johnson to hand-write her statement and not email it because she believed her emails were being watched and because employees making HR complaints should have some anonymity.
- In a later addendum, Elliott stated that commissioners do not have access to read county employee emails, which narrows the email-monitoring issue while leaving the separate HR-camera/audio concerns for further review.

- Miller stated that employees were told Beth Winters and Felicity Miller could not be trusted and that HR concerns should instead be brought to Commissioner Poling, raising concern that normal HR reporting channels were being bypassed or undermined.

Supporting Documentation

- Doctor's notes or medical documentation submitted in support of workplace accommodation requests, including lighting, air-purifier, allergy, migraine, heater, fan, or similar requests, subject to appropriate confidentiality controls.
- HR records, accommodation-request forms, emails, maintenance work orders, and notes reflecting the county's response to accommodation requests, subject to appropriate confidentiality controls.
- Communications involving maintenance leadership, HR, and elected officials regarding enforcement of restrictions on heaters, fans, lamps, plants, air purifiers, or other workplace items.
- An employee's EEOC-charge, and related HR records, subject to appropriate confidentiality controls.
- Ed Bounds video or audio recordings, posts, or transcripts referencing FMLA, PTSD, medical status, or protected leave information from July 19, 2025 (Bounds has deleted these off Spotify but copies may still exist).
- Camera-access logs for Poling, HR-area footage showing audio reinstituted July 31, 2026, and remote-access Verkada records relevant to Poling's monitoring of HR communications by Poling.
- Marcus Elliott help-desk ticket, call logs, HR-camera audio records, Verkada logs, and video from 8-17-26 of HR-camera showing that audio was enabled in the HR area.
- Emails, handwritten statements, text messages, and HR complaint records showing whether employees avoided normal HR channels because of confidentiality, monitoring, or retaliation concerns subject to confidentiality controls.

Section 7: Other Issues—Abuse of Power, Nepotism, and Preferential Hiring

Witnesses described broader concerns that Commissioner Poling allegedly used his position to control county offices, influence hiring, place allies on boards, and favor friends or relatives. Winters stated that Poling sought influence over the Treasurer's Office, Area Plan, Drainage Board, Health Board, and other entities. She stated he placed friend Todd Glancy as Area Plan Director, placed allies such as Ed Hartman and Randy Adkins on the Area Plan Commission, influenced Drainage Board appointments, continues to serve as Drainage Board President and had his wife who runs his sewer business on the Health Board. The former medical officer, Dr. Brenda Woods, indicated this as a reason for her resignation since Poling's wife being on the Health Board is a direct conflict of interest under IC 16-20-2-13. Dr. Woods also noted Commissioner Poling's conduct toward Tara Street in February 2025 and his refusal to accept any responsibility for his conduct as additional reasons for her resignation. Winters further stated that Poling publicly stated he wanted to remove Health Director Tara Street and place his wife in that role.

Witnesses also identified relatives, friends, or associates of Poling or his close allies who were employed by or connected to county government. Winters stated that Mike Simonson was a close friend and put in as Maintenance Director; Belinda Benefield was a friend in Area Plan; and Glancy, who sued the county and was supported by Poling in that endeavor, was brought on the Area Plan Commission. Simonson's nephew

worked at the Highway Department. Witnesses indicated that both Poling's daughter and Mike Simonson's daughter are employed by the cleaning vendor for the county. The current holder of the cleaning service contract, Danny Combs, reportedly felt pressure to continue to employ Poling's daughter and hire Mike Simonson's daughter upon being awarded the contract because Poling emphasized that the contract included a 30-day cancellation clause, creating the concern that the vendor understood continued county business could depend on employing these individuals. More recently, Winters has indicated that the Treasurer's Office is contemplating hiring either Poling's wife or daughter into a part-time position there without going through normal posting, vetting, or interview procedures.

Also, the former HR Director indicated that both he and his assistant were let go so Poling could bring in his people into those roles. Multiple witnesses remarked that they felt Poling was trying to place his people into various roles throughout the county government to exert influence and control.

Witnesses repeatedly connected these relationships to concerns about access, influence, information flow, and preferential treatment.

Additional abuse-of-power concerns included Poling allegedly treating county property or funds as his personal resources, referring to county buildings as "his" or "mine," monitoring or using county camera systems to surveil employees, spending hours in favored offices during work time, interfering with county employees' work and accommodation requests through maintenance leadership, and directing or encouraging employees to bypass HR. Winters, Miller, Wylie and others stated that employees felt watched and intimidated and that the county workplace was fragmented by fear, alliances, and retaliation concerns. Wylie described it as "you can almost cut the air" with the tension in some offices.

Elliott's interview adds an IT-specific abuse-of-power concern involving county technology systems and evidence control. Elliott stated that camera installations increased in recent years and that added cameras were generally requested by Commissioners Middlesworth and Poling. He stated that Poling and Middlesworth also directed IT to revoke access from certain users who previously had camera access, including courthouse deputies and others. Elliott further stated that commissioners set the rules for the camera system, that Poling had access to the system, and that access logs could be used to determine when Poling or other users accessed cameras. The log-in information for Poling shows him logging in and reviewing cameras throughout the county building and courthouse, including during this investigation. This surveillance is documented in Section 2. The order by Poling to secretly turn the audio on at the HR office was done just after the start of this investigation and the investigation was coordinated with the assistance of HR. There are several entries in Poling's access log showing him reviewing that camera and its audio during this investigation. The volume and frequency with which Poling accessed the camera footage undermines any assertion that county technology was used for legitimate security purposes and supports that it is being used for employee surveillance and stalking, political advantage, or confidential-information gathering.

Section 7 Citations and Pertinent Quotes

- Winters stated that Poling had "placed his friend, Todd Glancy, as the Director of the Area Plan" and placed others on boards where he sought influence.
- Winters stated that Poling wanted to "get rid of Tara Street as the Director of the Health Department" and put his wife there.

- Winters identified relatives and associates in county positions, including Poling’s cousin’s daughter in IT, friend Mike Simonson as Maintenance Director, friend Belinda Benefield in Area Plan, and Simonson’s nephew at Highway.
- Miller alleged that Poling’s daughter was hired by the county cleaning-service provider and that the provider reportedly felt pressured to do so after Poling emphasized the contract’s 30-day cancellation clause.
- Miller stated that Poling told employees, “You’re either with me or you’re against me,” and that he claimed the council “does his bidding.”
- Winters stated he treated county money “like it’s his money to spend” and used phrases such as “I own these buildings” or “I paid for this building.”
- Miller stated that Poling watched cameras and that “there is log-in data showing where he has logged in from home.”
- Elliott stated that Poling had access to the Verkada system, that IT can pull log-in/access information, and that Poling requested HR-camera audio be enabled while directing Elliott not to tell anyone.

Supporting Documentation

- Public records relating to County Board appointment including Health, Drainage, Plan and others.
- Hiring records for friends and family of Poling.
- Bidding information and spending information related the award of county cleaning contracts and other contracts.
- Tara Street documentation regarding threats to replace her with Poling’s wife.
- Verkada user logs for Poling showing extensive review of county camera systems including audio at multiple cameras.

Section 8: Potential State and Federal Legal Violations Arising from Internal Investigation Concerning Commissioner Chuck Poling

Subsection 8.1: Purpose and Scope

This section summarizes potential federal and Indiana legal violations that are implicated by the investigation report concerning Commissioner Chuck Poling. It assumes, solely for purposes of legal issue spotting, that the factual allegations described in the report are credited by criminal investigation authorities. This portion of the report is not a charging decision, final legal opinion, or ruling. Each potential violation is subject to additional review by investigation authorities with subpoena power, review of statutory elements, available evidence, intent, causation, jurisdiction, immunity, limitations periods, and applicable defenses, if any.

Subsection 8.2: Executive Summary of Legal Exposure

The allegations present several overlapping areas of potential criminal legal exposure for Commissioner Poling. Below are federal and state statutes that are implicated with a short explanatory statement for each statute.

Subsection 8.3: Federal Law Analysis

Subsection 8.3.1: Federal Wiretap Act / Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510–2523

The Federal Wiretap Act prohibits intentional interception, attempted interception, procurement of another person to intercept, and intentional use or disclosure of intercepted wire, oral, or electronic communications, subject to statutory exceptions and consent rules. The report alleges that Poling requested that IT enable audio on the HR-area camera, instructed IT not to tell anyone, gave as a reason that he wanted to know whether HR employees were going to leave, and later sought to restore camera audio after Legal directed that audio be disabled. Poling’s surveillance included review of audio engaged cameras. Between May 21, 2026, and August 24, 2026, Poling triggered 137 “camera audio change” events indicating a review of audio across multiple cameras, with 55 of these entries linked to the “Commissioner Office” camera where HR was located. Each of these audio accesses by Poling is a potential violation of the Act, which carries a prison sentence of up to five years for each violation.

Subsection 8.3.2: Stored Communications Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2701–2713

The Stored Communications Act may be implicated by the report’s allegation that Poling directed monthly backups of Beth Winters’ and Felicity Miller’s emails because he believed they might leave and delete files. On the present record, Elliott reportedly stated that Poling did not access the backed-up emails and did not ask IT to review particular employee emails. Therefore, the concern may be more about preservation, monitoring, retaliation, and control of HR evidence than a completed unauthorized-access violation. However, investigation should be made on whether Poling has accessed emails.

Subsection 8.3.3: First Amendment Retaliation and Political Coercion, 42 U.S.C. § 1983

Because Poling is a county commissioner, coercive conduct tied to employee political activity may raise First Amendment and Section 1983 concerns. The most significant allegation is that Poling told employee Emileigh Barnes, in substance, that, if she voted for Ed Hartman, she would get a raise. The report also describes Poling escorting Hartman through county offices during work hours, urging employees to vote, and using county offices or meetings for candidate-support activity. Public employees generally may not be coerced to support a candidate, threatened for political non-support, or promised employment benefits in exchange for political activity.

Subsection 8.3.4: Fourth Amendment Workplace Privacy, 42 U.S.C. § 1983

Covert or undisclosed audio surveillance by a public employer may also raise Fourth Amendment search concerns where employees had a reasonable expectation of privacy and the monitoring was unreasonable in inception or scope. The HR-camera allegations are especially sensitive because HR conversations may involve complaints, medical information, discipline, accommodations, FMLA leave, attorney-client communications, or investigation-related witness contacts.

Subsection 8.3.5: ADA Accommodation, Interference, Retaliation, and Confidentiality

The ADA prohibits disability discrimination, includes reasonable-accommodation obligations, prohibits retaliation or interference with ADA rights, and requires confidential treatment of medical information obtained through disability-related inquiries or processes. The report alleges resistance to doctor-supported lighting, air purifier, migraine, allergy, heater, and fan accommodations; public discussion of disability-related or PTSD-related information; and HR-area audio surveillance that could capture accommodation discussions.

Subsection 8.3.6: FMLA Interference, Retaliation, and Medical-Leave Confidentiality

The FMLA prohibits interference with protected leave rights and retaliation for exercising those rights. FMLA regulations also require covered employers to maintain FMLA medical records as confidential medical records, generally separate from personnel files and consistent with ADA confidentiality requirements. The report alleges that an employee's FMLA/PTSD status was publicly discussed by a Poling-aligned media figure, that HR employees believed confidential conversations could be monitored, and that HR-camera audio may have captured protected leave discussions.

Subsection 8.3.7: Title VII Retaliation or Hostile Work Environment

The report refers to intimidation, threats, and alleged public attacks on female county employees by individuals aligned with Poling. Title VII exposure depends on whether the conduct was because of a protected characteristic, such as sex, race, religion, or national origin, or because of protected Title VII activity. The current record appears stronger on political coercion, ADA/FMLA confidentiality, retaliation, privacy, and Indiana criminal/public-integrity statutes than on a standalone Title VII theory unless additional facts connect the hostile conduct to sex or other protected characteristics, protected complaints, or retaliatory employment action.

Subsection 8.4: Indiana Law Analysis

Subsection 8.4.1: Official Misconduct, Ind. Code § 35-44.1-1-1

Indiana official misconduct applies to a public servant who knowingly or intentionally commits an "offense" in the performance of official duties. Per I.C. 35-31.5-2-215, an "offense" means a crime, which would include all Federal and Indiana criminal offenses, including those described above and below in this report. Official misconduct is a Level 6 felony.

Subsection 8.4.2: Bribery, Ind. Code § 35-44.1-1-2

Indiana bribery provisions cover conferring, offering, soliciting, or accepting property with intent to control official conduct or covered acts. Poling's alleged statement to Barnes that voting for Hartman would result in a raise would violate this statute.

Subsection 8.4.3: Ghost Employment, Ind. Code § 35-44.1-1-3

Ghost employment would be implicated if county maintenance employees performed private work for Chuck's Sewer & Drain, Poling, or related private interests while being paid by the County, or if public employees were assigned duties unrelated to county operations. The report identifies invoice and time-card overlaps, video footage of maintenance employees engaged in campaigning for Hartman, sewer or drain

work, overtime entries, and county maintenance employees assisting on projects associated with Poling's private business.

Subsection 8.4.4: Conflict of Interest and Public Purchasing Conflicts, Ind. Code § 35-44.1-1-4 and Related Disclosure Rules

The report alleges county payments to Chuck's Sewer & Drain, Poling voting on claims involving his own business, late disclosures, incomplete disclosure of Chomp Properties, county use or transfer of sewer/drain equipment, and related procurement issues.

Subsection 8.4.5: Indiana Election and Campaign Violations, Including Ind. Code § 3-14-1-17

Indiana Code § 3-14-1-17 prohibits a government employee from knowingly or intentionally using government employer property to solicit contributions, advocate the election or defeat of a candidate, or advocate the approval or defeat of a public question, and restricts distribution of campaign materials on government real property during regular working hours. The report alleges that Poling escorted Ed Hartman through county offices during working hours, urged employees to vote for Hartman, spoke to Barnes about a raise if she voted for Hartman, and used county-funded or county-facility events as campaign activity.

Subsection 8.4.6: Intimidation, Ind. Code § 35-45-2-1

The intimidation statute is implicated by alleged threats to employees' jobs, badges, and safety; the alleged firearm-related elevator encounter; the "go outside" Election Board exchange; the July 1, 2025, Clerk's Office confrontation; and threats allegedly made while Poling was being escorted from the building. Indiana law defines intimidation as communicating a threat with specified intent, including causing another to act against their will or fear retaliation.

Subsection 8.4.7: Battery and Criminal Confinement, Ind. Code §§ 35-42-2-1 and 35-42-3-3

Witnesses allege that Poling placed his arm around employees, hooked or guided employees by the shoulders, moved them into rooms, or engaged in close physical contact during confrontations. Any touching that was knowing or intentional and rude, insolent, or angry constitutes a violation of the statute. Criminal confinement is implicated if an employee was confined without consent or removed by force, threat, or fraud.

Subsection 8.4.8: Obstruction of Justice and Investigation Interference, Ind. Code § 35-44.1-2-2

The obstruction concern arises from allegations that Poling directed IT not to release investigation-related information without commissioner approval despite commissioners having approved the investigation, sought restoration of HR-camera audio after Legal directed disabling audio, falsely implied or suggested other commissioner approval not independently confirmed by IT, and maintained monthly email backups of HR employees involved in the investigation.

Subsection 8.4.9: False Informing or False Statement Concerns, Ind. Code § 35-44.1-2-3

The report reveals that Poling may have created the false impression that other commissioners approved restoring camera audio when IT had not independently received that approval and was not aware of a vote.

Subsection 8.4.10: Public Works, Procurement, Nepotism, Contracting-with-Relatives, and Health Board Conflict Rules

The report raises several governance and public-integrity issues beyond the criminal statutes. These include the Salin Bank renovation allegedly being split to avoid bidding thresholds; pressure on a cleaning contractor to employ Poling's daughter or Mike Simonson's daughter; contemplated hiring of Poling's wife or daughter without ordinary posting or vetting; placement of friends and associates in county roles; and Poling's wife serving on the Health Board while running his sewer/drain business. See Indiana procurement statutes, county purchasing ordinances, State Board of Accounts guidance, Indiana nepotism and contracting-with-relatives provisions, Ind. Code §§ 36-1-20.2 et seq. and 36-1-21 et seq., and the Health Board conflict provisions identified in the report, Ind. Code § 16-20-2-13.

Subsection 8.4.11: Theft, Ind. Code § 35-43-4-2; Conversion, Ind. Code § 35-43-4-3

A person commits theft when they knowingly or intentionally exert unauthorized control over the property of another person, with intent to deprive the other person of any part of its value. A person commits criminal conversion when they knowingly or intentionally exert unauthorized control over the property of another. Witnesses stated that Poling took and used county drain equipment for use in his sewer and drain business.

Subsection 8.4.12: Fraud, Ind. Code § 35-43-5-4

(a) A person who: (1) with the intent to obtain property or data, or an educational, governmental, or employment benefit to which the person is not entitled, knowingly or intentionally: (A) makes a false or misleading statement; or (B) creates a false impression in another person;

...

(3) possesses, manufactures, uses, or alters a document, instrument, computer program, or device with the intent to obtain: (A) property; (B) data; or (C) an educational, governmental, or employment benefit; to which the person is not entitled; or

(4) knowingly or intentionally engages in a scheme or artifice to commit an offense described in subdivisions (1) through (3);

commits fraud, a Class A misdemeanor except... that the offense is elevated to a Level 6 felony if the pecuniary loss is at least \$750.

Witnesses stated that Poling used county employees for work for which he then invoiced the county through his sewer and drain business, obtained camera audio through false pretenses, and filed false and misleading disclosure statements.

Subsection 8.4.13: Stalking, Ind. Code § 35-45-10-5

A person who stalks another person commits stalking, a Level 6 felony. As used in this chapter, "stalk" means a knowing or an intentional course of conduct involving repeated or continuing harassment of another person that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, or threatened and that actually causes the victim to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, or threatened. The term does not include statutorily or constitutionally protected activity. Poling's use of the camera system, intimidation and retaliation techniques described above, and threats toward county employees and elected officials would fall into this category.

Subsection 8.5: Evidence to Preserve

- Verkada user logs, camera-view logs, audio-change logs, permission changes, login records, and HR-camera recordings from July 2026 through the present.
- IT help-desk tickets, call logs, emails, and notes concerning HR-camera audio, restoration of audio, and restrictions on release of investigation-related information.
- Monthly email-backup records for Beth Winters and Felicity Miller, including authorization, storage location, access logs, and retention status.
- Video and audio from the March 24, 2026, Hartman office tour and Barnes encounter; Election Board recordings; July 1, 2025, Clerk's Office incident footage; and relevant commissioner-meeting recordings.
- Claims, invoices, purchase orders, time cards, job tickets, equipment records, and payments involving Chuck's Sewer & Drain, Chomp Properties, county maintenance employees, and the Salin Bank project.
- Conflict-of-interest disclosures, candidate economic-interest forms, campaign-finance filings, deed records, advertising records, and county-funded listening-session records.
- HR accommodation files, doctor notes, FMLA records, EEOC materials, maintenance directives, and communications concerning medical information or accommodation disputes.
- Cleaning-contract documents, hiring records, vendor communications, board appointment records, Health Board records, and any disclosures or recusals involving relatives or business interests.

Subsection 8.6: Recommended Referrals and Related Actions

1. **Immediate Internal Action.** Pursuant to I.C. 36-2-3.5-3, the **board** of commissioners is the county executive, not any individual commissioner. The commissioners should immediately remove Commissioner Poling from any individual control over county administration, county maintenance, HR, IT, surveillance systems, all investigation materials identified in Subsection 8.5, county claims, contracts, personnel and employee decisions, and referral communications on behalf of the county. Audio should remain disabled on the county cameras. This internal investigation report, the witness statement transcripts, and other documentary and video evidence in the interviewing attorney's data room should be made available to the public and preserved on the county website immediately after the Special Session of the Commissioners on September 2, 2026, and the video of the Special Session of the Commissioners on September 2, 2026, should immediately be uploaded to and preserved on YouTube. Poling should be warned not to threaten, intimidate, retaliate against or harass, directly or indirectly through other persons or means, any witnesses that made statements or contributed to this internal investigation report, and county employees and elected officials should be encouraged to report any such action by Poling to the HR director for immediate follow-up with the County Legal Department.
2. **County Remedial Measures and Policies.** The county should adopt or revise, and consistently enforce, policies governing conflicts of interest and recusals, independent HR reporting, ADA, FMLA, and medical record confidentiality, financial and procurement controls, campaign use of county resources, hiring, position appointments, nepotism, surveillance, and records retention. The policies should assign responsibility, provide reporting and enforcement procedures, prohibit retaliation for complaints made in good faith, and require corrective or disciplinary action for

violations. The county should further adopt or revise policies, resolutions and ordinances that: 1) delegate county administration matters to the county administrator as contemplated under I.C. 36-2-2-14; 2) adopt a camera and security policy that uses such systems only for video and not audio and only for security personnel or for legal matters as authorized only by the County Legal Department; 3) adopt an ethics policy that, among other ethics matters, prohibits business transactions of the county with commissioners and council members and their businesses; and, 4) that are otherwise appropriate or recommended by the consulting county attorney in the premises. Lastly, the county should consult with the county's employment lawyer regarding the advisability of pursuing a workplace protective order for any county employee that is unlawfully harassed, threatened, intimidated, or harmed by Poling.

3. **State Investigative Referral.** The county should provide the complete investigation report and supporting evidence to the appropriate unit of the Indiana State Police and a conflict-free prosecuting attorney for further action on implicated state law issues as they deem appropriate. If the Grant County Prosecutor has an actual or apparent conflict, counsel should request transfer or appointment of a special prosecutor.
4. **Federal Investigative Referral.** The county should provide the complete investigation report and supporting evidence to the FBI Indianapolis Field Office and the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Indiana for further action as they deem appropriate on potential public corruption, bribery, election coercion, unlawful surveillance and wiretapping, misuse of office, financial offenses, civil-rights violations, and obstruction.
5. **State Board of Accounts Investigative Referral.** The county should provide the complete investigation report and supporting evidence to the Indiana State Board of Accounts for audit and referral as deemed appropriate regarding financial, payroll, equipment, procurement, conflict, ghost-employment, property conversion, fraud, and public-funds issues.
6. **Possible Other Jurisdictional Referrals.** The county should consider referral of relevant matters to the Indiana Attorney General, or other authorities having jurisdiction over such matters, as deemed appropriate.
7. **Referral Process and Cooperation.** Consulting County Attorney Ormsby should make the referrals on behalf of the commissioners, provide this report and the data room of supporting evidence to the investigating authorities, preserve evidence, privilege and confidentiality as appropriate, and serve as the county's point of contact. All departments and employees of the county should be directed to cooperate with Consulting County Attorney Ormsby on all matters stated in this Section 8.6 and in all investigations by the county or other investigating authorities on this matter. The County should cooperate fully with investigating authorities, avoid directing charging decisions, and leave the scope and conduct of further investigation to the receiving authorities.