

WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, June 16, 2025, in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Wabash County Courthouse. Chairman Kyle Bowman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Council members present: Bowman, Matthew Mize, Dave Terflinger, Matt Dillon, Sam Hann, and Nick Kopkey. Gary Ridenhour was absent. Bowman opened with a word of prayer and Bowman led the Pledge of Allegiance. The proceedings of the meeting were recorded by Wabash County Auditor Shelly Bauccho.

First order of business was a review and approval of the minutes from the May 19, 2025, meeting. Terflinger made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Kopkey seconded the motion; it passed by a 4-0 vote. 2 abstained from voting (Hann and Dillon).

The public hearing scheduled for the evening was cancelled.

Christine Flohr, representing Visit Wabash County, presented the organization's achievements and requested continued funding of \$75,000 for 2026. She highlights the significant economic impact generated from tourism, which has increased from \$41.9 million to over \$80 million annually. The organization exceeds the state's annual tourism growth rate by 4.5% and has received numerous awards for their marketing efforts. Visit Wabash County also focuses on population growth through targeted campaigns and mentors over 60 small businesses in the county. Flohr emphasizes the organization's role in employee recruitment for major employers and shares testimonials from various community leaders supporting their work.

Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director of the Learn More Center, provided an update on the adult basic education and lifelong learning hub project. The new building, the old Millers Furniture building, is nearly ready for occupancy with 10,000 square feet of classroom labs and meeting spaces. The Learn More Center is working on raising funds for flexible classroom and lab spaces, including movable furniture and digital learning equipment. The organization has received a grant from Ford Meter Box for lab spaces and is partnering with various entities to create a comprehensive learning environment. Johnson presents the costs and benefits of adult education programs offered by the Learn More Center. She explained that their programs are free for students, with some state funding available for test fees and study materials. The direct cost per student is about \$3,800-\$4,000, but the return on investment is significant, with adult education adding \$35 million to Indiana's economy in 2023-2024. Cynthia requests \$50,000 for the 2026 budget. She also highlights their successful GED program at the local jail, with recent graduates and plans for expansion.

Auditor Bauccho presented a request for the Wabash County Soil and Water Department to increase the per diem from \$25 to \$35 to match the Indiana SWCD law IC 4-10-11-2.1 (b) that allows up to \$35 per meeting. SWCD pays this cost it is not a county expense. Terflinger motioned to approve the increase to \$35 as presented. Dillon seconded the motion; it passed by a 6-0 vote.

Regarding tax abatements, Terflinger would like the Council to consider limiting them to 5 years. These changes would require a change to the scorecard and this would require approval from both the County and City authorities. Dave asked Shelly the county's tax abatement revenue loss for 2024; it was \$123,000 for County Abatements, while the other taxing units was a loss of \$517,000. Total tax abatements resulted in a \$640,000 in lost revenue. The Council agreed to review a new tax abatement scorecard in July, with Tenille Zartman of Grow Wabash County.

The Council discussed implementing a wheel tax and excise surtax to qualify for direct distribution of community crossings funds, with potential revenue ranging from \$282,645 to \$2,057,600 for Wabash County. Cole Wyatt explained that implementing the tax would allow the County to receive funds based on lane miles rather than having to apply for grants, with the first-year distribution estimated between \$700,000 and \$1.6 million. The Council needs to determine the tax rate range to create a draft ordinance, and Mize reported Mayor Long's concerns about residents of incorporated cities potentially paying both county and city wheel taxes. The Council discussed implementing a wheel and excise tax at minimum levels to address funding needs for roads and bridges, with a 3-year sunset provision. Several members expressed concerns about the state's role in creating funding challenges and the potential impact on taxpayers, while others emphasized the importance of maintaining infrastructure. The Council agreed to pursue the necessary paperwork to enact the tax, with plans to review and potentially renew it in the future.

Auditor Bauccho presented a transfer to cover the training of Jim Johson for the Weights & Measurer position. Todd Tidus submitted his retirement paperwork.

TRANSFER RESOLUTION									
NO. 2025-85-02									

WHEREAS, it has been determined that it is now necessary to transfer appropriations from one major budget classification to another within the same fund;
NOW, THEREFORE:

SEC. 1 Be it ordained by the Wabash County Council of Wabash County, Indiana, that for the expense of said county government and its institutions for the year ending December 31, 2025 the following sums of money are hereby transferred and ordered set apart out of the appropriated accounts herein specified, subject to the laws governing the same:

INCREASE			Amount Requested	Amount Approved	AYE	NAY
COUNTY GENERAL - Weights & Measurers						
Department Head	1000.11101.000.0026		\$408.00	\$408.00	6	0

SEC. 2 WHEREAS, it has been shown that certain existing appropriations now have unobligated balances which will not be needed for the purposes for which appropriated, it is further resolved that the follwing existing appropriations be reduced in the following amounts:

DECREASE			Amount Requested	Amount Approved	AYE	NAY
COUNTY GENERAL -Weights & Measurers						
Education & Training	100.30110.000.0026		\$408.00	\$408.00	6	0

The Council discussed the transfer for Jim Johnson's training. Mize motioned to approve the transfer as presented. Dillion seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Commissioner Dawes, said that Marcie Shepherd would like direction on the expenses related to the building project at 79 W Main. Dawes reported that the roof was replaced and HVAC was replaced on the whole building; and asked if this should this come out of the \$750,000.00 budget set by the council? Mize, Bowman and Dillon said they think that the \$750,000 was the whole project and those things are part of the project. Rich Mofield via zoom; mentioned that the Health Board had approved allocating \$200,000 towards the project. The council agreed that the total budget with the Health Department funds would be max of \$750,000.

The council agreed to hold a committee meeting to prioritize which pieces of the project to complete next. They also discussed the need to review building plans and contractor quotes, with plans to open bids at the Commissioners meeting.

Next steps

- Mark Frantz to draft an ordinance for the wheel tax and excise tax at the minimum levels with a 3-year expiration date.
- Cheryl Ross to call a committee meeting regarding the Health Department building project.
- Council members to attend a meeting on Monday, June 23rd at 4:30 PM to discuss budget calculations with Darren.
- Shelly Baucco to prepare an additional appropriation request for the second half of the Health Department building funding (250,000) for the July meeting.
- Department heads to use a 2.5% Salary increase when developing their budgets.
- Rich Mofield to prepare for an additional appropriation for the Health Department's contribution to the building project.
- Council to review accounting of spent funds and projections for the Health Department building project at the July meeting.

The Council reviewed the following reports:

- Auditor & Treasurer Financial Reports –May 2025
- Solid Waste Management District Income Statements -May 2025
- Wabash County Soil & Water Conservation District -March-April 2025
- Wabash County Sheriff’s Report of Commissary Fund – May 2025

With no other business to come before the Council, Chairman Bowman adjourned the meeting. The next scheduled meeting of the Wabash County Council is Monday, June 23, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.


The following individuals also attended the County Council meeting:

**If any names are spelled incorrectly, we apologize.*

Louella Krom, Nicky Burnsworth, Jim Dixon, Tyler Niccum, Cheryl Ross, Jeff Dawes, Jennifer Long Dillon, Rehak Family and Laura Grandstaff. **Via Zoom:** Rich Mofield, Amanda Shamberger.


The minutes can be found @ <https://www.in.gov/counties/wabash/meeting-minutes/>

WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL


Kyle Bowman, Chairman

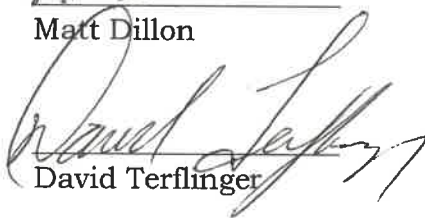

Matthew Mize, Vice-Chairman

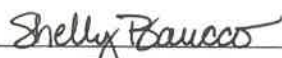

Sam Hann


Matt Dillon


Nick Kopkey


Gary Ridenour


David Terflinger

Attest: 
Shelly Bauccho, Wabash County Auditor