

THE MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL MET ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 AT 6:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: VICKIE KIVETT, TROY SPRINKLE, CHIP KELLER, AND BRIAN CULP. ALSO PRESENT WERE: LINDA PRUITT, MORGAN COUNTY AUDITOR; DEB VERLEY, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT; JOSH MESSMER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR; AND ANNE COWGUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY. KIM MERIDETH, MELISSA GREENE AND JOE CRONE WERE ABSENT.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRAYER (*Chip Keller*)

Additional Appropriations:

- *Monroe Township Fire District*

Mike Wagoner, Chairman of the Fire District, requested an additional appropriation of \$75,244 from the Special Cumulative Fire Fund (8691). Mr. Wagoner stated that they want to replace some carpet and furniture as well as replacing windows. They trimmed some trees and need training equipment. One of the trucks is down and it is time to do some maintenance on it.

Elliott Rainwater stated that it was mentioned that they were on a shoestring budget and thought that having good windows and a roof that doesn't leak is a good idea.

Troy Sprinkle made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 4-0.

Transfer:

- *Data Administration*

Joel Johnson, Data Administration Director, requested a transfer of \$59,481 from Acct #1000.11401.00000.0106 (Data Systems Administrator) to Acct #1000.36100.00000.0106 (Contractual Services). Mr. Johnson stated that they have not hired an additional employee this year and he would like to transfer the funds to pay for the services that have been contracted out. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 4-0.

Treasurer's Report/Clerk's Report

Vickie Kivett recognized receipt of the July Treasurer's Report and Clerk's Report.

Transfer:

- *Parks*

Kenny Hale, Morgan County Commissioner, was present to request a transfer as follows: \$60,000 from Acct #1112.113.00000.00803 (Director) into Acct #1112.40000.0000.0803 (Equipment). \$35,000 of this will be used for the HVAC in the Wilbur Community Center and \$25,000 will be used for the Delaney House electric. Troy Sprinkle made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Chip Keller. Motion carried 4-0.

- *Dispatch*

Chelsi Massey, Morgan County Public Safety Dispatch/911 Deputy Director, requested a transfer of \$82,614.80 as follows from Acct #1235.36206.00000.0303 (AT&T Capital Lease):

\$65,795.00 into Acct #1235.11910.00000.0303 (CTO)
7,369.04 into Acct #1235.16500.00000.0303 (PERF)
5,033.35 into Acct #1235.16510.00000.0303 (FICA)
4,417.41 into Acct #1235.19700.00000.0303 (Holiday Pay)

Ms. Massey stated that they discussed this at a previous meeting; the 2025 budget left off one of the salaries. Due to some contractual changes, they have funds leftover in the lease and would like to transfer the funds to cover the salary instead of doing an additional appropriation. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the transfer as listed. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 4-0.

Ordinance 2025-10 – Supplemental Tax Distribution

Linda Pruitt stated that this ordinance regards the modification of the LIT (Local Income Tax) rate. The ordinance directs the supplemental tax distribution to be first used to lower the county's levy freeze tax rate. These funds would be transferred into the Stabilization Fund. Chip Keller stated that it has been questioned how this change might affect underlying units of government and asked if Ms. Pruitt could confirm that the changes would have zero effect to the underlying taxing units. Ms. Pruitt stated that the levy freeze distribution will remain the same. This is the same process the county has done for the past two years and the levy freeze distributions have remained the same. Ms. Pruitt handed out the Stabilization Fund projections for 2026. The fund can only be used for the LIT levy freeze and they are spending down the balance in the fund and redirecting the revenue into the correctional facilities LIT rate to help fund repairs at the jail. Mr. Keller stated that he talked to Tyler with Reedy Financial to confirm that this will not have an effect on the library funds; however, SB1 will have an effect on every unit of government. Ms. Pruitt noted that SB1 was action by the state, not the county.

Elliott Rainwater asked what the repairs were to the jail. It was noted that the Sheriff was at another meeting and was not present to answer the question. Linda Pruitt stated that there are multiple issues, such as collapsing sewer lines, several broken doors and other expensive repairs.

Bonnie Estell asked when SB1 would be in effect. Ms. Pruitt stated that it would be phased in over the next three years. The state is restructuring the property tax and income tax. They will start to see an effect in 2026 with many of the property tax deductions becoming a credit. The amount of the homestead deduction will change each year and tax rates will have to be adopted each year.

Brian Culp made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-10, An Ordinance of the Morgan County, Indiana Council Directing Supplemental Tax Distribution to be First Used to Lower the County's Levy Freeze Tax Rate. Motion seconded by Troy Sprinkle. Motion carried 4-0.

Ordinance 2025-11 – Modifying Local Income Tax Rates

Linda Pruitt stated that this ordinance modifies the LIT rate, reduces the amount of the levy freeze rate and increases the correctional facilities rate. Chip Keller made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-11, Ordinance Modifying Local Income Tax Rates. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 4-0.

Resolution 2025-9-9 – Expanded Economic Revitalization Area

Mike Dellinger, Executive Director, Morgan County Economic Development, was present to request that the ERA (Economic Revitalization Area) be expanded. This area is developed to allow tax abatement. Project Louie is not using TIF (Tax Increment Finance) but is requesting a tax abatement on real property. This is the first step in expanding the footprint. There is a property owner that has approximately 160 acres that could become part of the project. The property owner and Project Louie developer are requesting that this acreage be included in the ERA so it can become part of the project area. There is already ground that is zoned for data center development in Hendricks County and this would take the area up to the county line and secure the maximum amount of property within the Morgan County boundary. Brian Culp made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-9-9 A Resolution Declaring an Expanded Economic Revitalization Area Within Morgan County, Indiana. Motion seconded by Troy Sprinkle.

Diane Thrawley if there was any more discussion on this as she was not familiar with Project Louie. Anne Cowgur, Morgan County Attorney, stated that this is the declaratory resolution. A confirmatory resolution would be the next step and would be part of a public hearing.

Elliott Rainwater asked what impact this tax abatement would have on the budget. Brian Culp stated that the ground is currently being taxed as farm ground an abatement would take away from taxes on improvements on the property.

Motion carried 4-0.

Ordinance 2025-10 and Ordinance 2025-11

Anne Cowgur noted that the Council would need to waive the second reading or have a second reading on the ordinances at the next meeting. Vickie Kivett made a motion to waive a second reading on both Ordinance 2025-10 and 2025-11. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 4-0.

Request to Fill Positions

Daree Fry, HR Director, requested approval to fill two part time positions in the Parks & Recreation Department. Ms. Fry stated that two employees resigned and both positions are Maintenance Equipment Operators.

Purdue Extension will soon be losing their Admin Asst/Financial Specialist through retirement and would like to fill this full-time position.

The County Administrator has resigned and they would like approval to fill this position.

Brian Culp made a motion to approve filling all positions as requested. Motion seconded by Chip Keller. Motion carried 4-0.

2025 Budget Public Hearings

- *Harrison Township Fire District*

Brian Culp made a motion to recess the Council meeting and open the public hearing for Harrison Township Fire District. Motion seconded by Troy Sprinkle. Motion carried 4-0.

Brooke Chaille with Reedy Financial Group; John Kennedy, President of the Harrison Township Fire Board; and Eric Funkhouser, Bargersville Fire Department, were present to present the 2026 budget. Ms. Chaille stated that the budget increased slightly with the fire contract increasing \$25,000 over last year. They are asking for a three-year growth appeal, which would generate an additional \$23,000. There were no public comments.

- *Monroe Township Fire District*

Brian Culp made a motion to close the hearing and open the Monroe Township public hearing. Motion seconded by Troy Sprinkle. Motion carried 4-0.

Mike Wagoner, Chairman, Monroe Township Fire District, handed out the overview of the last five years runs. They are running two paid standbys 24 hours per day. It also shows the cost for adding an additional person. Mr. Wagoner introduced Chris Mills, Fire Chief, and Jeff Peters, Financial Advisor with Peters Franklin. Mr. Peters stated that they have requested an excess levy appeal from the state which would generate \$37,000. The budget increased by \$680,000 for 2026 and the Cumulative Fund was reestablished at .0333. Discussion continued regarding SB1. There were no public comments.

Brian Culp made a motion to close the public hearing and open the Morgan County public hearing. Motion seconded by Troy Sprinkle. Motion carried 4-0.

- *Morgan County*

Linda Pruitt stated that there are two funds (Local Road and Street, \$275,000 and Public Health Services, \$212,000) that the Council will need to cut prior to adoption. DLGF (Department of Local Government Finance) assumes that all prior year funds will be spent. The county historically does not spend 100% of the budget so even though the departments are relying on unspent funds from the current budget, DLGF does not look at it this way. Chip Keller stated that he felt good about the General Fund and the budget this year. There were no public comments. Brian Culp made a motion to adjourn the public hearing and reconvene the regular meeting. Motion seconded by Troy Sprinkle. Motion carried 4-0.

Other Business

Don Adams stated that at the Board of Commissioners passed an ordinance to reestablish a Park Board. Mr. Adams thanked Anne Cowgur for her work on the ordinance. It is a five-member board with the Council appointing two members, the Commissioners appointing two members and the County Assessor appointing one member. They have 90 days to make the appointments. Brian Culp stated that Jason Whitlow approached him to express interest in the board and he would like to see that he is considered.

Vickie Kivett noted that next year is the 250th celebration for the state.

Don Adams stated that they are putting together some ideas for Morgan Hall and he would send out an email to the Council.

Ms. Kivett stated that the County History Museum is giving a presentation on Frank Brown Shields at the Foxcliff Manor House tomorrow evening from 6:30 to 8 pm. Mr. Shields built the Manor House and was the inventor of Barbasol shaving products. Admission is free.

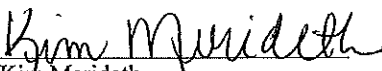
Thank You

Chip Keller noted that this is Josh Messmer's last Council meeting and wanted to thank him, as he has never met a finer guy that cares about his community. He is very talented and the fact that he was born and raised here was just a bonus. To have an engineer and MBA working as the Administrator for the past several years.

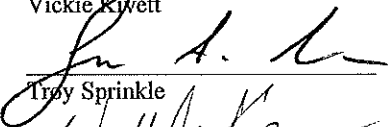
Adjournment


Chip Keller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 4-0.


MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL

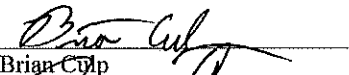

Kim Merideth


Vickie Kivett


Troy Sprinkle


Chip Keller


Melissa Greene


Brian Culp


Joe Crone

ATTEST:


Linda Pruitt, Morgan Co. Auditor