

THE MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL MET ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRAYER (*Vickie Kivett*)

Minutes

Brian Culp made a motion to approve the August 4, 2025 minutes. Motion seconded by Chip Keller. Motion carried 6-0.

Clerk's Report/Treasurer's Report EEO Plan

Kim Merideth noted that they have received the Clerk's Report, Treasurer's Report and EEO Plan. No vote is required.

Additional Appropriation:

- *Clerk*

Tammy Parker, Morgan County Clerk, stated that she is requesting an additional appropriation of \$7,320 into Acct #1000.12200.00000.0279 (Overtime) for the Records Department for expenses related to moving from the historic Courthouse into the new Judicial Campus. Brian Culp made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

Transfer:

- *Clerk*

Ms. Parker requested a transfer of \$150 from Acct #1000.21100.00000.0001 (Supplies) to Acct #1000.19800.00000.0001 (Years of Service). Ms. Parker overlooked adding longevity for herself when doing the budget. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Election*

Ms. Parker requested a transfer of \$150 from Acct #1000.21100.00000.0062 (Supplies) to Acct #1000.19800.00000.0062 (Years of Service). Ms. Parker overlooked adding longevity for an employee when doing the budget. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Records*

Ms. Parker requested a transfer of \$500 from Acct #1000.21100.00000.0279 (Supplies) to Acct #1000.12200.00000.0279 (Overtime). Ms. Parker stated that this is for the scanning project. Melissa Greene made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 6-0.

Additional Appropriations:

- *Highway Department*

Eddie Fisher, Morgan County Highway Superintendent, was present to request an additional appropriation of \$36,400 from the LIT Economic Development Fund (1112) into Acct #1112.16530.00000.0529 (Workmens Comp). Mr. Fisher stated that the rates increased and they did not estimate high enough now that the audit has been completed. Kim Merideth stated that they need to contact the carrier and have them endorse the policy to reflect what the audit figures are. Melissa Greene made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Motion seconded by Joe Crone. Motion carried 6-0.

- *EMS*

Linda Pruitt stated that the Monroe Township EMS Station Fund (4801) comes from an agreement

with a developer at Westpoint. As the funds come into the Auditor's Office, they need to do the additional appropriation so that they can be spent to pay the developer for the project. Ms. Pruitt requested an additional appropriation of \$110,053.22 from the Monroe Township EMS Station Fund (4801) into Acct #4801.44050.00000.0000 (Monroe Township EMS Station. Brian Culp made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Motion seconded by Joe Crone. Motion carried 6-0.

Transfer:

- *Sheriff*

Linda Pruitt stated that the Auditor's Office felt that there were some new account lines that were more appropriate for the purchases the Sheriff Department was making. Morgan County Sheriff Rich Myers requested a transfer of \$35,807.00 from Acct #1000.22207.00000.0005 (Firearms Supplies) to Acct #1000.40011.00000.0005 (Firearms Equipment) and \$3,104.00 from Acct #1000.22206.00000.0005 (SWAT Supplies) to Acct #1000.40012.00000.0005 (SWAT Equipment). Chip Keller made a motion to approve the transfers. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 6-0.

PTO Policy Update

Daree Fry, Morgan County HR Director, stated that a few months ago, a PTO benefit committee was formed that included appointed department heads as well as employees and elected officials and judges. The committee met five or six times and reviewed Section Four of the Employee Handbook and submitted recommendations. PTO days have been changed to hours. Supervisors can now approve up to three days of unpaid time within a 12-month period. PTO cannot be transferred from one employee to another. The pregnant woman's fairness act was updated as well as allowing time off for (can use PTO) for school conferences. The bereavement chart has also been updated to hours. The allowable amount of PTO that can be used after the 90-day probation period is 10 days instead of 14. You must be in paid status the entire day (shift) before or after a holiday in order to be paid for the holiday. Deputies are allowed to accrue up to 40 comp time hours. An employee who is terminated for cause will not be allowed to be paid out accrued PTO. They are asking for an effective date of January 1, 2026 for the changes. Kim Merideth thanked Daree and the committee for all the work they did on this. The Commissioners have passed a first reading and there will be a second reading at the next Commissioner meeting. No action taken.

Recess

Vickie Kivett made a motion to recess the Council meeting and open the public hearing. Motion seconded by Kim Merideth. Motion carried 6-0.

Public Hearing – Economic Revitalization Area

Rick Hall, Barnes & Thornburg, representing Woodland Caribou, LLC, stated that in May, the Council approved a 50% tax abatement for the company and designated the site as an Economic Revitalization Area. An economic revitalization area is an area in which a tax abatement can be approved and there were actual tax abatement deductions approved at that time. This is all consistent with the Taxpayer Agreement that has been entered into between the County Council and the company with respect to the project.

This morning, there was additional land that was rezoned to add to the project site. Because this land could contain investment that was set forth in the original Statement of Benefits, they are requesting that the economic revitalization area be expanded to include this new land that is now part of the site. This was preliminarily approved in May and is now back for consideration. There is nothing that has changed in the project from what was previously approved.

Austin McKee, Morgan County resident, asked that the Council pause as they are about to vote on tax incentives for a data center, a company that has already received a tremendous gift from the county in rezoning land for their benefit. Mr. McKee asked why the data center can't stand on its own. Mr. McKee stated that a yes vote approves the backroom deal making that started with the Commissioners this morning. Mr. McKee stated that he has a legal right to information about how these deals are made; he filed a Freedom of Information Act request to uncover discussions surrounding these tax incentives. The county's response was "they're too busy". It appears that they are not too busy to fast track more zoning and tax breaks for this company. Mr. McKee asked how the Council can vote to give away public money in the form of tax breaks while the county government is failing to fulfill a legal request from the public it serves. Mr. McKee asked that the Council delay its vote until a reasonable period, 30 days after his FOIA is fulfilled.

Carl Gilbert, Morgan County resident, stated that he pays his taxes every year and asked why wealthy corporations get breaks. Mr. Gilbert stated that he owns a local company, hires local residents, and pays year after year. Mr. Gilbert stated that this company should stand on its own and not take from the rest of us. The original proposal stated that they would be entering on State Road 42. This proposal uses county infrastructure. Mr. Gilbert asked that they postpone the vote.

Anne Cowgur stated that she received information about the APRA (Access to Public Records Act) request in late July and one of the things that makes it complicated is that there are exceptions to the APRA, such as attorney documents and records relating to negotiations between the governing body of a political subdivision with industrial, commercial and research prospects. Ms. Cowgur is committed to reviewing and getting the information to Mr. McKee and noted that several items were voted on in a public meeting and are available online. Brian Culp stated that they need to do a better job of getting the information out.

There were no more comments.

Reconvene

Melissa Greene made a motion to adjourn the public hearing and reconvene the Council meeting. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 6-0.

Confirmatory Resolution 2025-10-6 B

Linda Pruitt stated that one of the Council members asked if she could get an estimate of the property tax impact based on the abatement application. Mr. Pruitt stated that the company is estimating that they would have a \$325 mil investment; with a 50% abatement, this leaves a net of \$162.5 mil. Estimated taxes would be \$2,026,114 per year. The total net assessed value of the twenty parcels that have transferred so far is \$2,694,552 with taxes of \$33,206 per year. This does not change the tax levy, but the corporation would pay more and reduce the burden on the taxpayers. Ms. Pruitt hopes to see the rates go down, but with Senate Bill 1, this has shifted assessed values. Chip Keller stated that SB1 places more importance on growing the net assessed value base with commercial and industrial property to lessen the burden on homeowners. Kim Merideth stated that additional houses would cause a need for additional services. Chip Keller made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-10-6 B A Resolution Confirming the Declaration of an Expanded Economic Revitalization Area Within Morgan County, Indiana. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 5-1. Joe Crone was opposed.

Harrison Township Fire District Excess Levy Appeal

Brooke Chaille, Reedy Financial, stated that the AV (assessed Value) has been certified since the previous meeting and the growth was higher than the state growth quotient. The three-year levy appeal impact is next to none. Brian Culp made a motion to approve the excess levy appeal. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

Monroe Township Fire District Excess Levy Appeal

Niki Franklin, Peters Franklin, stated that the tax rate is .008 for the \$37,000 levy increase. Kim Merideth made a motion to approve the excess levy appeal. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

2025 Budget Public Adoptions

- *Harrison Township Fire District*

Brian Culp made a motion to approve the Harrison Township Fire District budget. Motion seconded by Chip Keller. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Monroe Township Fire District*

Vickie Kivett made a motion to approve the Monroe Township Fire District budget. Motion seconded by Kim Merideth. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Morgan County*

Linda Pruitt stated that there were cuts made to two funds (Local Road and Street \$276,000 and Public Health Services \$212,000). After the first of the year, the Council will need to do an additional appropriation. The Commissioners budget was reduced (\$120,000) for the real estate lease since they closed on the former Reporter Times building. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the budget. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 6-0.

Appointments – Park Board

Kim Merideth noted that there are appointments that are ending in 2025 (Alcoholic Beverage Board, Tax Board of Appeals, Redevelopment Commission, and Economic Development Board) and they also need to make appointments to the County Park Board.

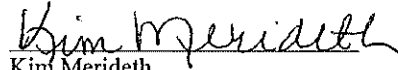
Chip Keller made a motion to appoint Becky McKinney as the Democrat appointment to the Park Board. Motion seconded by Kim Merideth. Motion carried 6-0.

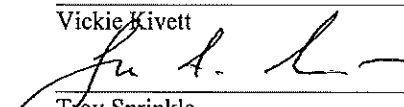
Kim Merideth noted that Ann Miller, Beth Latham and Jason Whitlow were interested in the Republican appointment. Brian Culp made a motion to appoint Jason Whitlow. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 6-0.

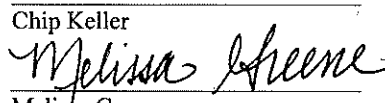
Adjournment

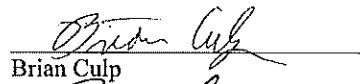
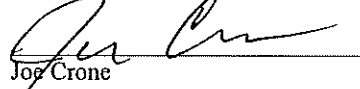
Brian Culp made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL


Kim Merideth

Vickie Kivett

Troy Sprinkle

Chip Keller

Melissa Greene


Brian Culp

Joe Crone

ATTEST:


Linda Pruitt, Morgan Co. Auditor