

ALLEN COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2023

8:30 AM

The Allen County Council met on Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 8:30 am in the Chambers in Citizens Square. The purpose of the meeting was for additional appropriations, transfer of funds in excess of the current budget, grants, and any other business to come before Council.

Attending: Tom A. Harris, Josh L. Hale, Kyle A. Kerley, Paul W. Lagemann, Robert A. Armstrong, and Don A. Wyss. Absent: Ken Fries

Also Attending: Council Attorney Harper, Nick Jordan, Auditor and Jackie Scheuman, Finance and Budget Director.

Tom Harris: Good morning. Good to have everybody here this morning. We're going to go ahead and start the County Council Meeting for Thursday, June 15th. If you'll please rise as we say the Pledge of Allegiance with a moment of prayer. I also want to mention that Sani Hire that had served with the sheriff's department for a number of years, served as their HR person has passed away. If you'd like to keep her family in your prayers, I would greatly appreciate it.

Council Members: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Tom: Again, good morning. At this point, we'll take a look for the approval of the minutes for May 18th, 2023.

Kyle: So moved.

Paul: Second.

Tom: A motion and a second. All in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Opposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Next up, our financial report with our auditor, Nick Jordan. Nick, good morning.

Nick Jordan: Good morning council. In your notebook, you see the financials through May. No issues with property tax collections. We expect them to be ahead of date. More people or some people pay their full installment in the spring. You will see miscellaneous revenue as well ahead of year to date and that was because the LIT supplemental distribution was about 30% higher than we anticipated. If you would pull out the additional LIT supplemental, we'd still be around 45% of our estimate. I can take any questions you got.

Tom: Council, any questions this morning over the financial report?

Robert: Motion to approve the financial report.

Paul: Second.

Tom: Motion and a second. All in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Opposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries).

Nick: Thank you.

Tom: Nick, thank you very much. Thanks. Total appropriations requested in the general fund today are \$27,415. Total appropriations requested in other funds is \$3,817,471. Next on the agenda is public comment. However, we're going to have a report by Allen County Recorder, Nicole Keesling. Nicole, are you with us this morning? I think she's got a fast presentation to share with us, and then we'll move to a public comment.

By the way on the public comment, it was announced in a number of media sources on Monday of this week that we will not be taking any action today on the jail. If anyone is anticipating that vote today, that is not occurring today, so just FYI. We'll go with Nicole and then we'll move to public comment. I've teed that up for you, Nicole. Hopefully, your presentation is ready to go ASAP.

Nicole Keesling: Good morning, Councilmen. Thank you for having me. My first council meeting, I promise I'm not going to ask for any money. Anyway, my name is Nicole and I am the new Allen County Recorder. I just have some brief slides on a refresher on what the recorder's office does and a brief update as well. At the beginning of the year, when I took over, one of the first things that we did was come up with a new mission statement for the office and this is what we came up with. Accurately and permanently storing our county's records for a clearer future.

Everything that we do, we're very intentional about making sure that all of our actions revolve around this mission. Just an update on our team. Myself and then my Chief Deputy who's been with the office for 16 years, and then our Senior Records Controller who's been with the county for about 20 years, and then there are 10 of us right now in the office. The question then I get the most and I'm sure some of you have probably gotten this as well is, what does the recorder's office do, and do you play the instrument? None of us play the instrument. There is a recorder in the office, but we try not to touch it. Basically, we record records. Mostly property records.

Deeds, mortgages, everybody's favorite, the release of mortgage, land contracts, neighborhood code liens, all that fun stuff. Then we do have some miscellaneous records that we do as well, including DD214s, our government bonds, and then our sole proprietorship DBAs are the three most popular. In addition to all that, we have to maintain all of our records permanently. I like to say longer than 500 years. When a document comes in, we actually scan it into our system, but we still put it on microfilm and it goes out to our storage facility at Iron Mountain out in Pennsylvania. Because right now microfilm is still considered to be the only permanent format.

Then we also provide copies of documents for our constituents coming into the office via mail or our online portals. This is just a snapshot of the number of documents we've recorded. You see we had a big jump in 2021. Last year with the declining housing market we did go down and we're expected to be at that level or below that this year. We're falling victim.

Tom: Below the 68,000?

Nicole: We'll be at that level or maybe right below that, depending on how the year goes. We're picking up a little bit more than we were in the beginning of the year. As the housing market gets better in the summer, we tend to do better as well. Then as you all know we are a self-funded office, but we still contribute money to the general fund. This is a snapshot of what we have contributed the last three years. You see two years, it was over a million dollars.

In addition to contributing money to the general fund, we also give money from all the documents that we record to the Training Fund, the Surveyors' Cornerstone fund, which our surveyor has done a great job now of maintaining that, and then the State Mortgage Fund. The State Mortgage Fund is a state fund that was created back in the early 2000s to help new homeowners learn about mortgage security and what kind of mortgages would work for them so that we didn't have a pop of the housing bubble like we did. The reason that we're here today is to talk about National Homeownership Month.

On June 1st, we had a press conference in our office, and we were happy to announce that the Allen County Recorder's Office was the first county in the entire country to add a text alert to our property fraud alert. You're now able to get updates with our property fraud alert via email, phone call, or text. We're also the first county that added a Spanish option to all of those. In addition, our website can be translated to Spanish as well. We think that this is a great resource to help a lot of our constituents in our community make sure that their property is secure.

For most people, the biggest investment they will ever make is the property in their home and we want to help them protect it. This is a completely free service. When you sign up for the service, you're able to get notified if a document gets recorded with your name on it in our office. This is what our brand-new user interface looks like. They did a complete redo for us. It's very user-friendly. Like I said, you can do it in Spanish or English. You can use it for a personal name, in addition with a business name or a trust name.

Our goal for the month of June, we've been pushing it really hard. Our goal was 500. As of last night, we were at 586 people signed up. Just in comparison last year alone we only signed up about 860 people, so far this year we're almost at 1300. We've done a huge increase on our publicity on this free service and it's really working. We're helping engage the citizens of Allen County and helping them protect their property.

Another big service that we're highlighting is our Neighborhood Resource Center. This is a free gateway that we have on our website for anybody to get on our website and see all recorded plats, and then restrictive covenants for condominiums and subdivisions for the entire county. This is very useful. I know a lot of real estate agents will print off the covenants for their clients when they move into a new neighborhood. A lot of HOAs use it. A lot of other county departments use it. This is a very good resource that we have. We were the first county in the entire state to get this back when John McGauley was recorder in 2007, and it actually won the AIC's County Achievement Award back in 2007.

This is just a plat of where we're sitting at today and this plat is from 1864. All the records on our website go back. The earliest record that we have in our office is 1820. The last thing that we're talking about this month are scams, and the scams that a lot of homeowners face. This is the most prevalent one that we see. This is from if you notice with the red arrows local records office, which of course looks like the Allen County Recorder's Office and that's not on accident.

This gets sent to most new homeowners and most people that pay off their mortgage, and this is telling them that they can send in \$99 and request a copy of their deed, when they can get the deed from us for a dollar a page and most deeds are under five pages. This gets sent out to a lot of people, and unfortunately, the people that are falling for the most are the people that don't speak English as their first language or elderly.

They have the please respond by date on there to create a sense of urgency that they have to respond very quickly or they could lose a copy of their deed. We want to make sure that people know if they have questions about scams that they're getting that make it look like it's coming from the Allen County government because there are several other ones out there. Every so often we get emails from other elected officials in the county saying, "Have you seen the scam? Have you heard about this?" Unfortunately, there are several out there that call us.

Tom: Is that happening from a local level or is this a national level that some of these scams are--

Nicole: I don't know where it's coming from. This one is out of Indianapolis, but they do it all across the state and the Attorney General's office has intervened and they've had to change some of the language. Unfortunately, when they make a ruling, they change it, but then they change something else to make it still look like it's coming from a government entity. It's really hard to keep up with and we just want to get it out there that people should call us if they have any questions about mail coming to them, or things that look like scams coming to them.

Okay, this is the contact information for our office. Again, I urge anybody who has any questions about their deeds, or about scams, or about the property fraud alert to reach out to us. You can sign up for our property fraud alert, of course, on our website, allencountyrecorder.us. Brand new website, very user-friendly. We're really proud. That was one of the first things that I accomplished as a new recorder, but I just want people to know the tools that we have for homeowners and that we're here to help them. Thank you, guys, so much, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Tom: Any questions? Now we thank you for the update and thanks for your progress early in your political career. How's that?

Nicole: Thank you.

Tom: Thank you very much, Nicole. Thank you. All right. At this time again mentioning that the jail will not be under consideration this morning from the standpoint of the [unintelligible 00:12:16] request. We'll open up for public comment. If we can keep those comments to two minutes, we'd greatly appreciate it. Thank you.

Reverend Timothy Murphy: Morning gentlemen, and the name is Reverend Timothy Murphy, Senior Pastor at Plymouth Congregational Church, and a member of the Help Not Handcuffs Coalition. Just want to let you know the Help Not Handcuffs Coalition is aware that the vote isn't happening today, which is why there's far fewer of us here today, and just wanted to say that we're pleased that the vote isn't happening today. We think that's a wise move on your all's part and understand that it's on Thursday, July 20th now.

Given that you've added another month and change between now and that vote, we would encourage you all to consider having another public hearing. I think the first one went really well, you heard a lot of comments, some really good data, some arguments. Also a lot of passion from community members and I think that a second public hearing sometime between now and July 20th would be well served to give me more information and so forth. You've created already the structure to allow that by not having the vote happen today. Just encourage you to have that and that's all I have to say for today.

Tom: Thank you, Reverend.

Reverend Timothy: Thank you.

Tom: Any other comments?

Speaker 2: Yes. I'm [unintelligible 00:13:44], I'd like to appreciate letting us talk to you. I want to just read you the same thing I've presented before, that I believe there are many ways to provide for the jail with less money and better solutions. Nobody explains why Damon Leichty, the judge in 2022 said the problems included overcrowding, understaffing, insufficient inmates, supervision, and too much violence. He suggested 981 beds. If you take the present jail with 732 beds, you only need 249 beds, and so no one has explained why you need thousand 1300 beds.

They may be needed in the future, but certainly not at this time. The other thing is that if you build a jail, you can build a shell structure that can be finished at a later date, which would save a tremendous amount of money. No one seems to be interested in saving money. You should all read the May 30th, 2023 issue. *The Wall Street Journal*, which presents some of the same problems that you're presenting here that you're creating. Building a larger jail is certainly not going to solve the problem.

It's also interesting in many other places, they have got away with all locked doors. That means you don't have to build all the bathroom facilities over. It saves a tremendous amount of money, and it works better for the people that are there. They also need less guards, less employees, and so on. No one is explaining all this. No one has explained what they plan on doing with a jail downtown, and it all seems to be a very secretive thing. Thank you and I hope you'll reverse the decisions of some people who want to seem to waste money. Thank you.

Tom: Thank you.

Sean Collentine: Sean Collentine, 46807. It's unfortunate to me that we aren't doing more community discussion of the jail. Today, we were on here for public comment, two minutes, and we don't have an opportunity to speak much, unfortunately, and there's no full discussion in within the community. The thing that got me into this whole jail quagmire has been the sheer cost. That's where I started out. We were going to spend 350 million. Let's discuss it.

There's been little discussion it's almost embarrassing. If you were to tell someone from the Soviet Union that this is how we're going to debate things in America they'd say, "Oh, America's not that way." "Yes, it is." Here's what I'm concerned about. Cost, start with cost, per bed cost in different counties in Indiana, we have 113,000 in Hamilton, Vigo County is 135,000, Delaware County is 100,000, and Allen County is coming in at a projected 230,000 a bed. Who's addressing that issue?

I think that's what's unfortunate we as members of the public know little about this other than through research on our own. Where's the forum? Let's discuss this huge amount of money and we're going to have to pay the tab. The other thing is that what I've also learned is that this whole system is based on the poor. The poor are the victims of this. The people in the jail are people that don't have enough money to bail themselves out. Why are we doing this?

Let's look at why people are in jail and let's try and help them out ahead of time rather than after the fact. It's too costly, it ruins their lives, and it's not working. Rather than have somebody mad in jail, let's do something ahead of time and work with them and produce a productive citizen.

Tom: Thank you, Sean. Thanks. All right. Any other public comments? Yes, sir.

Tony: Morning, my name is Tony Borton. I'm also in the 46807. I'm in the Fourth District, Mr. Wyss. Wyss or Wiz?

Don Wyss: Wyss.

Tony: Wyss. Okay.

Don: Yes, thanks for being here.

Tony: You're our new representative. I just want to make sure I get it right for the future.

Don: Thank you.

Tony: I know it's not on today's agenda, but I wanted to mention some comments about the jail as well. Since we only have two minutes, I really just have a few questions I want to ask that you consider because you are the stewards of the taxpayer funds that are intended to pay for this ultimately. This is the biggest capital project in the history of Allen County and I think we need a lot more information. What Mr. Collentine alluded to, we don't know a lot of the details.

Either there's a lack of transparency or I suspect the commissioners don't have a lot of details in their plans for how this is going to shake out. For a project this large, it seems like we should have all the details, or at least a guess at what things are going to be like in the future. It would be good to know, for example, what the logistics are going to be when the jail is somewhere else in town and the courthouse is still here. How much is it going to cost? How much more is it going to cost in the annual budget to maintain a jail that's much larger?

Just kind of question of in general, what is the return on our investment going to be? We know that crime rates have been pretty much the same as incarceration rates have grown exponentially over the last four years since last jail was built. Public safety is really not the right answer to that question. We need to think about what else we could do that would be a less costly solution. Again, if we had community-based treatment programs and that sort of thing that were outside of the criminal justice system, we could get to people and help them before they end up in jail and get stuck there because of all the problems and the things that aren't addressed while they're in the jail.

Another question I have is what are the opportunity costs of this project? If we spend this much money on the jail, what aren't we able to spend money on? The most obvious answer is the things I just mentioned, which are treatment facilities for people with mental health and

addiction problems. The state of Indiana is doing that at a state level. They realize there's a need for that. It seems like we should get on board that train rather than double down on mass incarceration. When I say double down, I'm literally saying double down.

Tom: All right. Thank you so much. We're at 2:30 and two minutes already [**unintelligible 00:19:58**].

Tony: I just would ask that you guys exercise your fiduciary duty as stewards of our taxpayer funds and really look at this. Keep in mind that you're not named in the lawsuit, so there's no pressure from the judge for you guys to say, "No," or let's go back to the drawing board or anything like that. I hope that the commissioners and the sheriff won't put any undue pressure on you that you guys will do the right thing.

Tom: All right, thank you very much. Thanks. All right. That concludes our public comment. At this time, we'll move to economic development. We have a number of items up for economic development this morning. Good morning. I'd like to introduce yourself and your titles, please.

Rachel Black: Good morning, Rachel Black, Allen County Economic Development.

Matt Rupp: Matt Rupp with Northern Indiana Anodized.

Tom: Good morning.

Matt: Good morning.

Rachel: Good morning. I have quite a few things this morning. For council's consideration this morning we first have a resolution approving a statement of benefits for NIA, LLC located at 13010 Bluffton Road. The company they anodize aluminum, which is a coating to prevent aluminum from corroding. This coating is applied by dipping aluminum in multiple chemical bass. The company offers a variety of color options. Just a little bit of background for previous abatement approvals. ASC Properties, LLC which is the real property owner, and NIA, LLC was approved for an abatement back in 2018.

Their investment was \$2 million in real property, and they were to build a 47,000-square-foot building to establish their business on Bluffton Road. The investment for equipment at that time was 4.6 million. They promised to create 48 jobs, and they currently employ 91, so it's double than what they had projected. For the request before you today, the company plans to invest another 4.2 million in new manufacturing an IT equipment. This new anodized equipment will increase the capacity of their current line, which includes 30-foot tanks, cranes, chemical storage tanks, and additional tooling.

The IT equipment includes new production tracking system, as well as cameras to monitor that production line. According to the statement of benefits, which was in your packet, the project should be complete in December of 2027. They plan to retain those 91 jobs with 3.4 million in salaries, and they plan to create 25 jobs at \$975,000. The company offers a comprehensive benefits package, which includes paid vacation, sick leave, paid holidays, health, life, dental, vision insurance, as well as employee training, a 401(k), and match plan.

Additionally, the company plans to also-- they're willing to contribute 5% of their tax abatement savings to the tax abatement development fund. Based on the point system within your policy they are eligible for a seven-year tax abatement. That savings will be

approximately 110,000 over that seven-year deduction period while still paying 128,000 in property taxes. Matt is here. Do you have anything that you'd like to present before we turn it over?

Matt: She thoroughly covered it. I was going to provide a brief history of us. I was just going to tell you gentlemen that we have hit our max capacity based on our initial setup. We had been approached by two entities, one a current customer based out of Michigan, and a potential customer that we've unfortunately had to turn down multiple times based out of Tennessee because we don't have any additional capacity.

They've offered financial assistance to actually locate nearer to their locations, but for us our owners were smart enough to add some additional space when we initially set up the line for growth and expansion and that's why we're here today. We believe it makes more sense to fully maximize the current facility before exploring any of those options. I'd be happy to answer any questions you guys may have.

Tom: Congratulations on your growth. I noticed over 50% of your business is outside of Allen County, I think, right?

Matt: Yes.

Tom: In other words, your footprint is nationwide, is it international?

Matt: No, not international. Largely heavily Midwest. We anodize aluminum and the extruders are located certain areas. There's a heavy grouping of extruders in Ohio, in middle Michigan, and our biggest group of customers are probably based out of Elkhart, Indiana.

Tom: What industry is that? Is it manufacturing overall that you're fulfilling needs?

Matt: The aluminum extruders they take a raw aluminum and then they basically push it through what looks like the end of a Play-doh where you make stars or whatever shape you want. They will make this long extrusion of aluminum, and then that usually goes to automotive industry, it could go to our architectural industry, a lot of boat industry, RV industry.

Raw aluminum in itself corrodes quickly and easily and then the anodized process will-- it's a controlled corrosion, but it makes it so that it doesn't corrode outside, which is why you see aluminum bleachers are mostly aluminum-- sorry, bleachers are mostly made of aluminum because it doesn't corrode anymore. It doesn't conduct electricity anymore after the anodized process and it makes it so things can't adhere to it.

Tom: It is diverse, in other words, it's not just automotive. There's all kinds of--

Matt: There's several industries. We exist because of our sister company who is a T-slot provider, similar to 80/20. We did just metal frames of all sorts. They are very diverse. Could be just about any industry that uses aluminum. Aluminum's a great alternative to steel because steel prices are significantly higher at the moment. Generally, it's a little weaker, but it's just about as strong and it's lighter. Which is why automotive is using it so they can lighten the cars for better MPG.

Tom: Council, [unintelligible 00:26:30] Paul.

Paul: Thanks for coming. Congratulations on the work that you're doing. Really talking to you, but also to Rachel and the folks in economic development as we develop our supply chain here, we become stronger. Manufacturing supply chain in the most manufacturing-centric congressional district in the United States right here in the 3rd congressional district is absolutely critical to our growth and to our sustainability.

Keep doing what you're doing. I love it that the RV industry is a part of your portfolio. More RVs are produced and managed out of Elkhart, Indiana than anywhere else in the planet. It's great to see this strength right here. I'm excited for what you're doing. Keep doing it. Best of luck. I'm glad we can help.

Matt: Thank you.

Tom: Council, other questions or comments? Hearing none. Motion.

Kyle: Motion to approve Resolution 2023-06-15-01 approving Statement of Benefits for NIA, LLC.

Paul: Second.

Tom: Motion and second. Any other comments, questions council. If not all in favor say, aye.

Council: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Thank you very much and congratulations. Continued success.

Matt: [chuckles] Appreciate it. Thank you, guys.

Tom: All right, Rachel.

Rachel Black: Go ahead?

Tom: Yes.

Rachel: Okay. The next resolution we have for you is a Consideration of Resolution 2023-06-15-02 approving 2023 pay 2024 Compliance with Statement of Benefits forms. As required under state law, all companies with existing approved designations that file for deduction are required to file compliance with statement of benefits forms that contain information showing the extent to which there has been compliance with the original statement of benefits. These forms are due to the county auditor each year on May 15th. I review these forms for compliance, and just as a little reminder or review of what your policy says concerning compliance.

I first look at those creating or retaining jobs at least 75% of the total number of full-time or part-time jobs that were on those statement of benefits forms. I also look at the total salaries and if those meet the 75% as well. If the company doesn't meet those requirements, I then look at the investment numbers for the real and/or personal property. If they meet that 75% threshold then they are also found to be in compliance. On the resolution that's before you today, there's an Exhibit A and that lists all the companies that were in compliance, as well as met that May 15th deadline.

Tom: Very good. Any new information or anything different this year in comparison to last year?

Rachel: Not really. We had fewer non-compliant. Mostly the issues that we have are based on filing deadlines. We'll have those coming up, but we had fewer this year.

Tom: That can be a reflection of a growing community. Is that fair? Because the fact that they're complying, they're doing what they need to do and getting the paperwork in, and everything is good. If they were not complying, that meant that there are things not happening.

Rachel: Yes.

Tom: Council questions or concerns at this time? If not, is there a motion for consideration?

Paul: Motion to approve Resolution 2023-06-15-02 approving the 2023 pay 2024 Compliance with Statement of Benefits (C-1) forms

Kyle: Second.

Tom: Motion and a second. Any other discussion? Hearing none. All in favor say "Aye."

Council: Aye.

Tom: All opposed? That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Next item.

Rachel: All right. We have another Resolution 2023-06-15-03 determining Substantial Non-Compliance with Statement of Benefits for Standard Saybrook Associates. I'm going to give you a little bit of background history on this, so just bear with me. PB Development was granted approval for a 10-year tax abatement in 2017 for their 100,000-square-foot spec building located at the northwest corner of Fog Well and Lafayette Center Road. This investment was \$5.2 million.

In December of 2021, PB Development sold that building to Standard Saybrook Associates. This company is based out of Encino, California, so they're not located here, and they lease the building to ATC Conversions. From my understanding, the ATC conversions has to file the paperwork for tax abatement. Last year I contacted Mr. Kitchin, he is the owner of ATC Conversions. He stated at that time that he would submit the CF-1 real property form because at that time it was also late, so he had not submitted the form.

I did not receive that form, and I did not receive the form this year. I do want to note that Standard Saybrook Associates did not receive the deduction for 2023. I have been in contact with Standard Saybrook Associates, their CPA firm in California. They have emailed me multiple times asking me if Mr. Kitchin has contacted me or turned in the paperwork, and unfortunately, I've had to tell them, "No, I've had no conversations with Mr. Kitchin since last year." Before you this morning is a resolution finding that Standard Saybrook Associates is in substantial noncompliance, so I want to go from a next step from there.

You'll have two options then on what you would like to do. There's either the waiver eligibility option, so that would bring back if Mr. Kitchin would turn in the paperwork. Before you, there would be a \$500 fee. He would have to turn in the CF-1 paperwork as well

as submit a letter stating why he did not turn in that paperwork. Then there would be a hearing here before you all and you could talk to him. That's one option.

The second option within your policy, it also states that council may not grant waivers for property owners who have failed to file deduction paperwork more than once during the deduction period. You also have an option where you could terminate abatement completely. There are five and six years remaining left on this abatement, so you just need to let me know what kind of guidance that you would like me how to move forward.

Tom: Have you received any more information from them? At this point no additional information?

Rachel: No, sir.

Tom: What's the ramifications of simply saying, no, and in turning that abatement down either from ownership, economic development standpoint for that particular property?

Paul: He has to pay the taxes.

Tom: I got that point.

Rachel: Essentially that.

Tom: I get that point.

Rachel: He's paying 100% of the taxes that are due. In all honesty, I don't know of how much of great importance it is because the paperwork was not submitted last year, and now it's not submitted this year. To me, it seems like it's not important, but I think it sounds like it's important to the property owner in California. At this point, it's in their lease. They would have to take that up with him and my hands are kind of tied, so.

Kyle: They paid taxes?

Rachel: Yes, so they are. I did look at the tax bill and they did pay, they're up to date. They paid their spring.

Kyle: Was it 10-year or 7-year?

Rachel: This was a tenure that was granted, so there's, like I said, five and six years left.

Paul: What kind of outreach are we providing to just make sure they understand they're in non-compliance?

Rachel: First off I send out to all of our companies in April a reminder to send in their CF-1 forms, and then I do reach out to let them know that they have been found in noncompliance. Then I will state they need to turn in the paperwork and I go through all the process. Mr. Kitchin was aware of that last year, and we had multiple conversations through email, and then again from my understanding the company's CPA firm contacting him to talk to him.

Tom: It's been numerous attempts?

Rachel: Yes.

Tom: Council [unintelligible 00:36:07], at this point, I can entertain a motion to terminate abatement or we can consider a waiver.

Council: So moved.

Tom: We need a motion.

Josh: Make a motion to terminate the abatement.

Paul: Second.

Tom: A motion and a second. Council further discussion. Hearing none. All in favor of terminating abatement, say aye.

Council: Aye.

Tom: All opposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries).

Kyle: Is that how you needed us to submit?

Rachel: Generally what would happen, they would be found in non-compliance.

Robert: That's what I thought.

Rachel: Then next month I would bring a different resolution stating they would be terminated. So can we back it up?

Tom: You got to just hang onto the minutes. No, we'll do that. At this point, we can simply deal with that from next month. If there's a process that we need to follow for next month, we can do that next month, if that's what you're saying.

Rachel: Okay. Yes.

Kyle: To clean it up. Motion to rescind our last action.

Paul: Second.

Tom: And a second. All in favor say, aye.

Council: Aye.

Tom: That does pass 6-0-1(Fries).

Kyle: Then I will make a motion for Resolution 2023-06-15-03 determining Substantial Non-Compliance with Statement of Benefits for Standard Saybrook Associates.

Paul: Second.

Tom: Any other discussion?

Kyle: Thanks for clarification.

Tom: Any other discussion? Hearing none. All in favor say, aye.

Council: Aye.

Tom: All opposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Does that help?

Rachel Yes. Thank you.

Tom: All right. Very good.

Rachel: We'll have kind of the same scenario for this next one. We have another resolution for you, 2023-06-15-04, determining Substantial Non-Compliance with Statement of Benefits for Stonebridge Property LLC. ICON Exhibits LLC, Silverado Properties LLC was granted approval for tax abatement in 2013, for real and personal property investment of over \$7.3 million. The property was purchased by Stonebridge Property LLC at the end of 2020. ICON Group Delphi was then acquired by Sparks, so we have this kind of same scenario.

We have a new owner of the building and the property, and then we have Sparks who is leasing that building and that same sort of scenario where Sparks should be submitting the paperwork just because apparently in their lease it states they need to do that.

Last year council found that Stonebridge Property LLC was in noncompliance for failing to file the required paperwork in a timely manner, but they were granted the waiver of noncompliance. That same scenario with, I had to search out who the property owner was, so I Googled the name and randomly called the phone number.

They didn't know that they needed to do this. I think that was part of council's understanding. Last year they submitted the paperwork and there was a waiver that took place. They did receive the deduction for 2023, but then they failed to file the paperwork this year. We're in that same scenario if you want to allow them to come before you and ask for a waiver. Once they turn in the paperwork, they'll have the fee and such and such, or you can have a consideration of termination of the abatement. They were granted a 10-year approval, and they are in year nine, so they're at the end of their abatement, but it's--

Tom: That could be significant from their standpoint that they're looking at one year at this point.

Rachel: Yes, sir.

Tom: All right, council. In order to get it right this time, we're looking for a motion to consider this resolution.

Kyle: Motion for resolution 2023-06-1504 determining Substantial Non-Compliance with Statement Of Benefits for Stonebridge Properties, LLC.

Paul: Second.

Tom: Second. Any other discussion? Hearing none. All in favor say aye.

Council: Aye.

Tom: All opposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries).

Rachel: Do you have any direction for me then how you would like to proceed with either a waiver or would you consider termination or--?

Kyle: I know last year with Stonebridge that when you seek the guy out they actually showed up and asked for a mea culpa they didn't know they were supposed to do it. I know they talked about they've had a lot of turnover, so I'm wondering if it's a very similar situation. In the past, haven't you brought both resolutions before us?

Rachel: I have done that in the past.

Kyle: That would probably be my preferred course is bring us both resolutions and-

Rachel: For each of the companies?

Kyle: For both and see if-- if neither company responds it's--

Tom: Yes. Help council soon, discussion time. Council, everybody good with that?

Council: Yes.

Tom: All right. Did that help Rachel?

Rachel: Yes. Thank you.

Tom: All right. Very good. Anything else?

Rachel: No. That's all for me.

Tom: Okay. Thank you very much.

Rachel: Thank you.

Tom: Next up this morning on today's agenda is our sheriff's department.

Erica: Good morning, council. Erica Beachem compensation generalist. Here today as a follow-up to the May 25th personnel committee meeting. The meeting discussion for the first agenda is the sheriff department. Just a reminder that I believe first quarter or second quarter of last year the sheriff department did come to the council and it got approved for 15 positions of which 10 they've already started utilizing. It was just a matter of record for them to come back to the committee for the additional five, just as a matter of record. If anyone has any questions, we're here to answer what you may have.

Gary Grant: Thank you, Erica. Good morning council, Gary Grant.

Council: Good morning.

Gary: Morning County. Three items for your consideration this morning. Like Erica said, the consideration for the five new positions at the jail at C3 at \$47,729. You guys did approve 10. We have filled those 10. We're currently sitting on at least eight backgrounds in progress right now with five waiting. We're actually going to allocate some manpower over to help out with these backgrounds because we're starting to get a influx applications finally. We're

going to probably-- if you guys approve this today, be getting into that five immediately, which will help out tremendously at our jail. It'll take us to 151 employees in there.

Tom: Does this complete the 15-- was it 15 that we had approved?

Gary: Yes.

Tom: That meets the needed. Does that end the need of those additional officers?

Gary: No. The study that was done for employees calls for-- and of course the federal lawsuit being in place calls for about 177 employees total to sufficiently run the jail with the amount of staff and the way the jail's laid out right now. We're going to get into [inaudible 00:43:21].

Tom: We've had a number of discussions both at the personnel committee as well as over the last year in terms of the needs. Council, thoughts, questions, comments at this time?

Paul: Yes. First of all, Mr. Grant, thank you for bringing this to us. I know that it's been a chore to try to get the applications in, and I know it's been difficult to try to get these positions filled. This was a key component of Judge Leichty's requirements for the short term of handling the prisoner-to-confinement officer ratio, so kudos to you guys. I know it's been a lot of work and I know you've put a lot of time and effort into it.

This was passed. I'll just remind council that our rubric has been that, if it's a 3-0 vote, it's perfunctory before us. When it was 3-0 at our personnel committee. I can tell you in working with the sheriff's department as a liaison, these guys have really been on it trying to make sure that they're filling these positions, and taking care of the problems in the jail, number one.

Number two, this is one of the few jails in the state where we're really stacking up applications because this process of going to the jail as your entry point into the sheriff's department, if you want to get in a car, if you want to become a sheriff, has been highly successful. If you want to talk a little bit about that, I think that's important. These five, not only have we passed it once, but it was 3-0 at personnel. We should move on with this part quickly. Mr. Grant.

Grant: Thank you. I appreciate those comments. I truly do. On behalf of the department, we thank you. Yes, he alluded to the fact that we hire internally, we promote internally. We do a proper background on all civilians that come in the jail. We've explained that to the federal judge that we just can't hire anybody off the street to work our jail. We have to do a proper background on them. We do an actual police officer background on anybody that comes to work in our jail. Once they've worked there for a little while, they do have the opportunity to promote.

We hire as we retire on the police side of things. We hire internally from our reserve program, from our jail, from our court security. These guys have already been vetted, and they're working for us now. We actually call that a promotion into police officer. We do have statements from several confinement officers that work in there, probably at least 25 to 30 of them that work there solely for that reason, because they want to promote into police officer. If we stopped that process, now it's a robbing Peter to pay Paul type scenario sometimes, because we do pick off from the jail to swear in officers when we need them.

We would be probably down at least 20 people in that jail if we stopped that process. It's been very successful. We come up with this plan in 2018, and it's worked tremendously. COVID affected everybody, and that affected us and hiring and getting people to work in that jail that was our struggle. Not the internal process that we have. We're going to continue down that path. The sheriff likes this idea. He's seen it work. I've seen it work, and we're going to keep continuing as far as we can with it.

Tom: I like the idea that they're moving up within the department. What we wouldn't want to happen necessarily is that we train them here and they go to other departments in other places around the state.

Grant: Absolutely. The thing is, is we're seeing some loyalty with Allen County. We're seeing these guys when we're doing these interviews they're coming in and saying that we're loyal. They appreciate the training that we're giving them, the opportunity that we're giving them, and they see room for advancement. There was so much time that had went by in the past that they didn't have any room for advancement. They sat there stagnant in their job saying where do I go, what do I do.

Tom: That leads to turnover.

Gary: Yes. We're actually cultivating that. We do hire at 18 in there, and we've had some young guys come in there and work that jail for a couple of years and they've matured. If you can work in that jail, to be honest with you, and some of you have come in and toured that jail recently. You've seen the conditions in there and seen the work environment that they have, and that's truly appreciated too.

I'd like to make a comment about that you guys are coming and seeing it firsthand and seeing what these guys go through. What the inmates are going through in those condition, it's not fair to them, it's not fair to the employees. We're watching these guys mature so rapidly in that jail and work in that environment that when they come into a police officer, they're ready to hit the road and serve the citizens of Allen County as a police officer. It's amazing to watch.

Tom: Council, any questions or comments?

Paul: Just one other comment. Can you also touch on, and this is for future consideration, the effects of the state police pay increases that happened in this last legislative session that were substantial? How's that going to affect your department?

Gary: The sheriff and I just had a long discussion about that, and I'll touch on that very quickly. They're going to go to a starting pay of \$70,000. Fort Wayne city looks like they're going to be doing the same thing. We haven't got their final pay and what they're going to start at. That's going to affect us all the way down, and you have to see the trickle-down effect of that. We hire internally like we just discussed.

If we're starting pay at \$63,000 for our police officers. Our young guys in the jail are looking at entertaining, going someplace where they can start at \$70,000. The pay in the jail, the pay for the sheriff's department, probably needs increased at some point. We'd love to have discussions with you down the road for that to maybe do a long-term plan on getting us there, so we can compete with our local departments.

Like I said, Fort Wayne and the state are starting out at \$70,000. The matrix for the state police, a 15-year trooper that has no rank is going to make \$112,000. When they see that starting at 70 and going up to that 112 within a 15-year period, you can't blame them for going there. If we can't compete with that, then we're going to be right back in the same position we were five or six years ago when we were 26 people down at the jail.

Tom: Thank you. All right, council, any other discussion? Hearing none.

Paul: I'd like to make a motion for the Consideration of the Salary Ordinance Establishing the pay of five Confinement Officers at C3, \$47,729, 40hrs/wk, Non-exempt.

Council Members: Second.

Tom: Motion and a second. Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Thank you.

Grant: Thank you, council. The next thing that I have for your consideration is our SORN division. That's our registered sex offender division. They're held in very high regard in the state, and we were the groundbreakers for that. We have in the last five years went from 500 registered sex offenders in Allen County to almost 700 registered sex offenders in Allen County. What we're asking for is they generate their own funds for their division, and they support themselves, and they have a cash line that currently has \$72,000 in it.

We have a part-time extra deputy hire in there that we use to help do the registration. If these people come into the office and register, it takes about an hour to do a new register, and that's a constant flow of people all day long for the eight-hour day. We are running out of extra deputy money hire because we need him to be there for an extra day now because the amount of people that are coming in there. We're just asking for a line transfer out of our cash line has \$72,000 in it to the extra deputy hire line of \$15,000.

Tom: The bottom of the Meeks Center, is that where that's-

Grant: Yes.

Tom: Council, any questions on that? Hearing none.

Paul: I move that we-- Nick, how do you need me to phrase this? That we allow for the transfer of \$15,000?

Nick: [unintelligible 00:51:44] appropriation.

Paul: Or appropriation of \$15,000 for the extra deputy hire?

Kyle: Second

Tom: The motion and a second. Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries).

Gary: Thank you, council. The last thing on the agenda for us, and this is new territory, and I'll be more than happy to answer any questions about this. Is that the sheriff is looking to partner with you with his commissary fund and be transparent about what he uses some of those funds for. Some of the funds in the past by sheriffs, and he'd like to continue this, is donate to local charities and employ appreciation.

When I say employ appreciation, we do a banquet and award ceremony, and we do cookouts for our confinement officers during confinement officer week, things like that. Commissary funds have been used to help pay for those things. He is looking to be transparent with the council, and for you guys to approve him for his first term to be able to use those monies like they've been used in the past and continue that with some transparency with you guys.

Tom: The difference though is you're saying how they've been used in the past. Has this been done in the past?

Gary: Yes.

Tom: All right. The challenge that I would say is that the demands of a jail and confinement itself continue to come. While those inmates are paying that lead to this commissary fund, all those demands keep coming from the confinement center, can we keep some of those funds focused that way? Now, I understand the need and desire to give it in different directions, and I keep that priority on the confinement center because that's where we're going to be paying for that in years to come at this point of thought. Go ahead, Paul

Paul: Number one, I think Mr. Grant or Officer Grant was trying to clarify that this has been the practice for sheriffs going way back as long as I remember. I've served on a local board that supports the Fort Wayne's SWAT team for a number of years. They've always donated to the annual fundraiser, sent teams to that golf outing, and used it for those kinds of purposes. This is the first time the sheriff has come before council to codify this process of providing these dollars to local charities.

This does go to support, and you can maybe hit on a few of these, Mr. Grant. The Crime Stoppers, the save which is the Fort Wayne's SWAT team, because the city of Fort Wayne is determined that they don't want to provide adequate equipment for their folks, that it has to be done through a charity, unfortunately. Maybe hit on a couple of the other entities you've [unintelligible 00:54:46].

Gary: [unintelligible 00:54:46] any of these victims' assistance for Child Advocacy Center, things like that, that directly affect our jail in one way or another and so on, buying vehicles even for our Vice/Narcotics Units. We bought five vehicles last year out of commissary for that. That all directly affects the jail and what goes in the jail and everything. It's like the jails are a hub of our department. It's the center. Everything that's funneled through our department ends up happening to do with the jail at one time or another. The sheriff would just like to continue to help out these organizations and some charities and show our employees some appreciation at times too.

Tom: Anything, Bob.

Robert: Thank you for being here today. The key thing here is, there has been no violations from the Indiana State Board of Accounts on this type of process. It's like Troy wants to do and Gary, it's all about transparency. Everybody's concerned about the commissary fine, what it's used for. The commissary fund is always audited by the State Board of Accounts. If there's an issue, they're called on it. If it's a misuse of funds, they have to pay it back. This is not anything more than, like Gary said, this is pure transparency to the taxpayers of Allen County.

Tom: Thank you.

Josh: I think my two council members here have said it best, but I am very happy that you guys are doing this, and I think you and Sheriff Hershberger need to be commended because this should have been done a long time ago. Thank you.

Tom: Thank you. We're asking for permission. There's not a requirement needed for a vote or anything of this point.

Kyle: No, we got to approve it.

Paul: I think that we should codify this. I think that we should provide-

Tom: This falls under state law, but if someone would like to make a motion.

Paul: Certainly. I'll move that this body provide permission to use commissary funds for employee appreciation and local charities to the Allen County Sheriff's Department.

Bob: Second.

Tom: Second. All in favor say, aye?

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Thank you very much.

Grant: Thank you, council. I appreciate your time.

Tom: Next up this morning is our surveyor.

Erica: The personnel committee did review the surveyors' request for two new positions, a drainage inspector and a hydrologist. The motion did carry for both position at the personnel committee, 3-0. We do have my Mike Fruchey here if you have any further questions.

Tom: Good morning.

Mike Fruchey: Morning, council. Mike Fruchey, I'm the County Surveyor. As I swore in last September, I came before council and introduced myself, and there was a comment by a council member at the time that, "There's a lot that needs to be addressed in the surveyor's office. Let us know what you need." I think I said at that time, "I don't know what I need. I need to get in there and structure things logically in my mind and try to attack some of these longstanding issues and areas that haven't been given their due diligence."

In having been in the office for about nine months now, I know where we're most needy. We're still at the same staffing level we were at in 1997. Our county is not the same as 1997, for sure, in terms of development. We have done a great job because we have an experienced staff of keeping up, but that staff is aging and in the next five years we will have retirements in probably five or more of those retirements. We have to get ahead of this. Our staff currently is working overtime to keep up. I think some of them are getting burnt out, and I need to provide them some relief, and these positions are vitally necessary.

Tom: Obviously, the first one was the drainage inspector and the second one?

Mike: Is the hydrologist. As you remember, last year in November we had unexpected medical leaves by almost all of our field staff, I think at least three of the four. We've since had, in the last six months, two of our staff passed away. We've got another staff member that has another severe diagnosis, and so we're dealing with that. It's all hands on deck, I send out all the project managers in the office.

I was going to go out and watch storm line inspection if that's what was necessary. We got through that November timeframe. It's important that we get another drainage inspector that they are able to be mentored. Our inspection supervisor's already indicated to me that he's going to retire in December. This is all going to come to a head, and we need to keep up with this storm line inspection-

Tom: Very good. Erica-- I'm sorry. This did pass through the personnel committee?

Erica: Yes sir, 3-0.

Tom: On both of these positions?

Erica: For both.

Tom: For the both of these positions, okay. Anything else, Mike at this point?

Mike: Let me just say, again, that's the drainage inspector, the hydrologist, we were at four hydrologists I think from 2005 to 2010 and then that was cut down to three. I don't know the reason for that, but the water quantity hydrologist, which is what this position would be are extremely valuable. They're doing the hydraulic and hydrologic analysis of the subdivisions, really the flood review. They're instrumental.

We have two water quantity hydrologists, their average age is 70. They will be retiring and we will be hurting. I'm certainly jumping in and willing to help and we need a new hydrologist in to be mentored and have some time to prepare for that. Also, want to reduce I know, Councilman Harris, you had asked me during the Personnel Committee about how good of service should be provided.

Tom: Establish some kind of a standard.

Mike: Yes. We look back at the last 18 months, and our initial comment time on subdivisions for water quantity review on a first review, which is the initial review, and you first see the project is eight and a half days. I think we can get that to seven days. I think that's reasonable and our water quality review is about four days, but that's not nearly as intensive as the flood review. If we can get that to seven days, I think that'd be a great goal.

Tom: I'll keep that up. Council, let's take these each individually. Number one, is there a motion for approval?

Kyle: a Salary Ordinance Establishing the Pay of Drainage Inspector at B6, \$47,017, 40hrs/wk, Non-exempt.

Paul: Second.

Tom: Second. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Second item.

Kyle: Motion to approve a Salary Ordinance Establishing the pay of Hydrologist at A7, \$61,223, 40hrs/wk, Non-exempt.

Paul: Second.

Tom: Second. Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That also passes 6-0-1(Fries). Next on the list is an appropriation-- Erica, thank you.

Paul: Mike, thank you. Keep up the good work.

Tom: We do have the appropriations within the general fund for these three items.

Mike: Yes, council, thanks for your vote on the two new positions. Appreciate that and I will be responsible with those and get those working for the citizens. The first appropriation is for this MS4 settlement money from the Monsanto national settlement for PCBs. Our MS4, we did not expect this, we've got a check for a little over \$27,000, approximately \$27,415. I'm coming to council to appropriate those dollars. They're meant to enhance our MS4 program.

In talking with Matt Gera, MS4 coordinator with the surveyor's office, he has a plan to use these funds. I'm just asking the council appropriate those into the necessary budget lines so that Matt can provide better public education, better water quality testing equipment for illicit discharge. Also in the involvement with the public, there's a water quality educator that Matt shares with ACTEM that person has supplies when they go out to public events and can educate the public as best we can about the necessity of water quality.

Tom: Hey, council questions? Hearing none-

Paul: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the General Fund appropriation of \$27,415 broken down as stationery and printing for 2000 supplies at 6000 contractual and \$19,415 to the appropriate funds that are listed to the left in our agenda.

Josh: Second.

Tom: Motion and a second. Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). We have an appropriation for the Cornerstone project.

Mike: I wanted to give you an update on that. Our phase one Cornerstone project is just a awesome project. We have six firms in six townships and doing an assessment. Because as I presented before, section corners have been neglected for at least 20 years in this county. We have not met our state requirements for at least one year as at 5% perpetuated per year. Ideally eventually in the future, I want to do this work in-house like Hamilton County does, but we cannot do that, we are so far behind.

These six firms have done a great job. We got updates this week. All six firms feel like they will meet the completion date of June 30th. Many of the firms have all their fieldwork done. I think one or two are finishing up their fieldwork. All of them are working on their section quarter matrix that we asked for. We really know what we have in the field. They've also done historical research on those corners.

Now, what will happen these phase two contracts, and I'm asking for funding for and this is my approximation or my estimate on what it's going to cost us, I may be back later when I get the proposals from these six firms. When they did this phase one, they assessed the section corners as either Class 1, Class 2 or Class 3, okay? Phase two is to do all of the Class 1s and Class 2s in a particular township.

The Class 1s I would consider, like the low-hanging fruit. We're perpetuating these section corners, they don't have everything they need, but they have a lot. Where we know there's a stone there, we may have one or two witness posts, we're supposed to have three. We're going to bring those up to standard. The Class 2s would be the middle-hanging fruit. I anticipate the Class 1s and Class 2s together will be about 80% of corners in these townships.

Class 2s, we might find a railroad spike, we have physical evidence, we might have historical evidence, but we have to investigate more, but it won't take as much again, to perpetuate those. These Class 3s that will be in a further phase will be ones where there should be a corner there, but we can find no physical evidence of it and no historical evidence of it. We'll eventually have to re-perpetuate and set a new stone there based off the other stones in the area. This is at least probably a 12 to 15-year project. I have to monitor the fund and see how it holds up.

Tom: Your request today is for contractual for 480,000 to-

Mike: What I think will be enough for the phase two contracts that I anticipate doing in July. When I do those phase two contracts for the Class 1 and the Class 2 section quarters, the completion date will be June 30th of 2024.

Tom: I see.

Mike: Again, I think these will be 80% or so of the section quarters in that township. We'll get a good chunk of them.

Tom: All right, Mike, thank you. I know we've had a variety of discussions in the past, we'll continue to look for those updates moving forward. This will keep you on track for that objective for 2024 the [crosstalk] Allen County.

Mike: I will say to is, as Nicole mentioned earlier, our second quarter fund gets a portion of the recording fees. Every month, we're getting deposits into that. I've been very aggressive, and I think when I came in the fund was \$1.7 million and it's about \$1.5 million now. I'm making a little bit of a dent in it, but it really should have been used in the past and wasn't. That's the situation that we're in.

Tom: Thank you for that update. Council, any other questions? Hearing none, is there a-

Kyle: Motion to Appropriate within the Surveyor Cornerstone Fund 247 for Contractual 480,000.

Tom: Motion. Is there a second?

Paul: Second.

Tom: Second. Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Thank you very much.

Mike: Thank you, council. I've one last update that I wanted to give you on the regulated drain system. Again, a system that we're supposed to oversee by state law, much like the section corners and to regulate drain system. I don't believe our asset management has ever been there, that we've ever certified and described the regulated drain miles to the executive branch, which we will do this year.

We will also produce a drain classification list by the end of the year. That's our goal. That list is supposed to be provided to our drainage board from time to time and has not been provided since 1997. Again, something that's well behind. There are a number of things that we're moving forward on.

Tom: Feel free to come back and join us at these meetings to give us updates. You don't have to always ask for money though-- I'm just saying. Just come by and give us an update. Mike, thank you very much. Keep up the good work. Thank you. Next up on our agenda is the highway department. Speaking of a little bit of money. Good morning, if you'd like to introduce yourself and your titles, please.

Bill Hartman: Good morning. Bill Hartman, Director, Allen County Highway Department.

Lara Dorsett: Lara Dorsett, the Allen County Highway Department.

Tom: Good morning.

Bill: Good morning. In 2019 Fort Wayne Trails and Allen County Board of Commissioners applied for a next level trail grant through the DNR or the State of Indiana and were quite successful, resulting in \$3,294,742

being awarded, and the check came through and we'd like to appropriate it.

Tom: Fantastic. Council, any questions with that? The fact that this is coming from a state grant, without going into too much detail, but what specifically will this be used for from highway departments' team?

Bill: It'll build a new trail from Life Bridge Church at Corbin Road up to Fitch Road about 4.3 miles a new trail through a very heavily wooded area. It used to be a railroad line.

Tom: Council, questions, comments.

Paul: Mr. Hartman, I just want to say thank you for doing the hard work. These grants are not easy.

Bill: Well, thank Lara and Ken Castleman.

Paul: Laura, well done. These grants aren't easy but this is \$3 million that would have gone to Indianapolis or Fishers or some other community in this state. They're coming to Allen County and this is exactly the kind of work that you and NERC have done well, in the past. I commend you for it, I thank you for it. This is what good use of taxpayer funds looks like so keep up the great work.

Lara: Thank you.

Tom: Council, any other questions, comments? Hearing none.

Kyle: Motion to appropriate Within LIT Economic Development Fund 329: Next Level Trails Grant services for \$3,294,742.

Paul: Second.

Tom: Second. All in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Thank you.

Bill: Thank you very much.

Tom: Next, also is the appropriation within SEA and it looks like our auditor is coming forth on that one.

Nick: Yes, council, what this is, is back in 2016, the state sent a supplemental distribution. It had to be separated to 75/25. The council passed at that time, with a chunk of it going into this 858 fund that has been used as a match with road projects and now we're down to this remaining balance of \$11,984. We're just asking for it to be appropriated the highway will use and we'll close this fund out and be done with it.

Kyle: Motion to appropriate Within SEA 67-2016 Special Distribution Fund 858: Contractual 11,984.

Paul: Second.

Tom: Council, any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: Unopposed. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries). Thank you very much. Next up.

Nick: Yep. Council, this is coming out of the LIT Public Safety Fund. In conjunction with the items we've asked in the past few months for the Allen County Fire Chiefs Association. This amount of 15,745 will go towards a grant writer for the Fire Chiefs Association to hopefully procure some equipment. Apparently, in talks with the commissioners and possibly some of the council members. The discussion was that potentially the council could fund this.

Chris Forbing is here if you'd like more details on it. I've included some documentation in your notebook that specifies the request. I can't take any questions except for what the county is doing here, but Chris can if you would like to bounce any off of him. The grant monies will not come through the county, those are going to go through one of the fire districts or somebody else is not something we necessarily want to facilitate because it comes with strings. If we don't have to, we'll let somebody else handle those.

Paul: Mr. Chairman, I will also ask Councilman Hale to talk about this. One of the conversations that we've had consistently about a rubric for helping the fire departments as they consolidate and bring service, particularly EMS services to all of the corners of the county, especially in those corners where we are underserved where if you have a stroke, or you have a heart attack, it's likely to be fatal.

The fire departments have really come and stepped up to the table. This is again a great opportunity for us to step in before their rates kick in. Their rates will not kick in until 2024 fully where they're really seeing the money flow. This gives us a chance to help them get the things they need off the ground in the short term. Councilman Hale, you want to talk on that?

Josh: Sure, I'd be glad to add to that. I think the important thing is this is every Allen County Fire Department was brought into this opportunity, and this is getting a grant writer that will allow several of the fire departments to obtain a heart monitor Lifepak 15s. This will allow the departments that right now we're not operating at a paramedic level. This will be one of the necessary tools.

For this small investment for a piece of equipment that is a cost of 45 to \$50,000, this is a heck of an investment and we're suited well for really all of the unincorporated areas of Allen County. We want to thank you, Chris, for your work because you have been diligently working on some sort of a grant every year for the county fire departments as a whole.

Tom: Very good, thank you. With that, any other comments at this time? Hearing none.

Kyle: Motion to appropriate Within the LIT Public Safety Fund 120 for Contractual 15,745.

Paul: Second:

Tom: Motion and a second. Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: All oppose. That does pass 6-0-1(Fries), congratulations on that. All right. Next on our agenda today is-- it looks like New Allen Alliance Stellar Project Update. Good morning, if you'd like to introduce yourself and your title, please.

Kristi Sturtz: Morning I'm Kristi Sturtz with Sturtz Public Management Group. I've been under contract with Allen County Commissioners and the New Allen Alliance for the last few years to serve as the New Allen Rural Liaison. I wanted to spend a little bit of time today and thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to tell you about the work we've been doing on East Allen's Rural Revival. Just to give you a little bit of background, the New Allen Alliance began in 1991 as a group of-- Chambers Of Commerce came together in East Allen County, representing the communities of Grabill, Harlan, Hoagland, Leo-Cedarville, Woodburn, Monroeville, and New Haven, seven communities.

They really have been working as mostly volunteer group to be a voice for East Allen County in regards to community and economic development. I started my work with them in 2015 and we did a strategic investment plan. At that time, the communities put together some rules of engagement and core values that range from collaboration, economic diversity, empowerment, individualism, and leadership. They also put together some shared priorities, which includes sustainable economic development, quality of place improvements, and improved livability.

At that time, each of the communities also developed individual plans. I'm pleased to say that we had received some national recognition from the American Planning Association in regards to the collaborative work of the communities. In 2018, then the state of Indiana opened up the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities opportunity. Through that, we were able to compete to receive a designation by the state of Indiana, and a collaboration of their different state entities including the head office of Community Rural Affairs, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, and so forth.

Through that designation, they provide set aside funds to implement projects. The plan was actually a portfolio of \$64 million that was presented from each of the communities from a range of different funding sources that went from federal, state, county, local, private investment, foundations, and so forth. That's what I'd like to present on you today. We have been implementing this over the last four years. Thus far, we have seen engagement and collaboration from over 104 entities across the region, and are serving 68,000 people. I think that is notable for a rural region.

When you look at all of our surrounding counties in northeast Indiana, that is a larger population than any of the other rural counties in our region. Thus far, we have been able to implement \$50 million of projects. As you break that down, the largest segment has been in housing followed by complete streets projects, 8.4 million in utility infrastructure, park improvements sidewalks and trails, downtown revitalization, workforce, public health, and place making, which is through our mural project. When you break down-- we also have 14 million that is yet to be implemented.

We knew that may lag a little bit there are a couple of transportation projects that take a little bit longer to develop. One is the Cedar Creek Parks Trail Project and the other is the Amstutz Road Project in Leo-Cedarville. When you look at the overall breakdown of how funding came into the portfolio. Allen County came from various sources. 1.25 million came from the council, so thank you very much for passing that resolution back in 2018. 250,000 of that went towards assisting the unincorporated communities of Harlan and Hoagland in the maintenance and operations of their parks.

A million dollars has also been set for the Cedar Creek Parks Trail. The Allen County Commissioners also committed 4.25 million to the initiative. Allen County capital improvement board, 3.3 million. Over 15 million came from the individual communities. We've also received funding from the NERC federal transportation appropriation, the NDOT community crossings. There's been private investment over \$8 million in private investment. Then the stellar communities' piece was approximately 5 to 6 million of grants and a value of around 8 million in the low-income housing and tax credits. Approximately 13 million value there

Tom: On that slide, if I can ask. Have those monies been spent or at this point still just designated at this?

Kristi: This 50 million has been spent and has been complete. I am happy to say even though we received the designation and the set-aside funds, mostly their federal dollars that came through the state. We had to go through all of the regular red tape that you have to go through, and NERC and myself did a lot of the administration, and we did not receive one finding on the grant administration. I was really happy from that grant administration standpoint.

We only have 14 million that yet to be implemented, and those are under design and right away is near complete and ready to go in the next two years. As we look at what are we trying to accomplish here, a big premise behind this initiative from the state is that we are as many areas really hoping to retain and attract a workforce. As we have individuals that are retiring, our labor force participation has been declining. Particularly in rural areas, we're seeing population loss.

I am happy to say that there's indications of positive momentum going on in East Allen County. You'll see that from 2010 to 2020, there's 11% increase in population and a 5% increase in labor force growth. I will say we've also really been trying to target that growth in or near existing communities to help preserve our agricultural areas, and that's been a big part of our strategy.

We're also seeing housing growth at 8%, and there has also been some indication of educational attainment improvements. As far as some of the livability metrics, there are approximately 15 miles of sidewalks and trails across the region that are being improved in the portfolio. We've seen an increase in the festival attendance by 35% over the last four years, so people are taking recognition. New housing permits 354 in the last four years, valued at \$83 million.

Another health issue that was identified was obesity in the region and we've been working with Parkview and St. Joe Community Health Foundation to implement some healthy eating training that could be perpetuated into the future. Over the last four years, we've received a number of awards both for the overall initiative as well as individual projects and here are a list.

Of course, the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Designation, the NIPSCO Luminary Award for Economic Development for the overall New Allen Initiative. We were featured in a promising practice article called Sowing Seeds of Healthy Eating in Rural Indiana by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health. Received a Governor's Excellence Award in Rural Housing for the Phoenix Manor Project which is a rehabilitation of the Woodburn Elementary School into senior housing.

We were a case study for the American Planning Association on New Ruralism in regards to the collaboration. 2021, an Excellence in Affordable Senior Housing for the Kady Gene Cove Project in New Haven. New Haven also received an Indiana Park and Recreation Association award for the facility design of their community center, and are also being nominated for their part this next year.

A lot of the monies that I've mentioned are really about the implementation of physical projects, but we did other things to help build the capacity of the region at the same time. Some of these which really cultivated that sustainable growth. Each of the communities have updated their zoning ordinances as part of this initiative. We have also, by implementing these projects, I've been able to work with development teams of each of the communities.

That include engineers, architects, attorneys, financial consultants, planners, grant administrators, community members, to go through the action of implementing federal projects and complex projects. To give them the capacity to continue to do this on into the future. There's been workforce readiness initiatives through East Allen County Career and Tech Center. Small business development initiatives through collaborative training with the SEA District in Fort Wayne, and the Be Local Buy Local Campaign. Then there's also we are seeing complimentary investment and occurring to the physical improvements being done by the communities.

Tom: Measure that?

Kristi: I'm sorry.

Tom: Do you measure that last piece, that complementary investment?

Kristi: I don't have a complete figure on that. I can but it does take-- I can give you some anecdotal examples of one here, in particular, is in Grabill. They've really focused on downtown revitalization in their community, and Elmer Lengacher who is the owner of the Grabill Country Shoppes, has also made an investment there on their facade and the overall improvements. He's also done some other housing improvements totaling about \$3 million in their community, which is significant for a community of around 1400 people.

Tom: That would be an example of that, so thank you.

Kristi: Yes. We've been able to do that and then we've had a really well-received public art project which really financially wasn't significant, but it was a great way to bring community identity and excitement. Here's an example of a mural by Ricco Diamante that was done in Grabill. Grabill is also participating in the Cedar Creek Parks Trail Project.

Harland, they really wanted to focus on their parks, and we had done a survey and received a resounding desire for a new playground. This has been implemented through county commissioner funds, and I think they're well pleased with what they've received. Hoagland as well has focused on park and playground improvements, and they also participated in the Mural Project. They've also received some lighting within their communities. Again, paid for through the county.

New Haven, they focused in a couple of target areas. One was near the Meadowbrook area, the other near their downtown. Near Meadowbrook, there was 11-acre infill site that they collaborated with Keller Development who received tax credits to do the Kady Gene Cove

Senior Housing Project. They did 50 units and that totaled around \$8 million. It's been very well received.

They subsequently came in with phase two with a market rate investment of a little bit larger units another 50, and that was additional \$8 to \$9 million of private investment that has went into that area. Within the Meadowbrook target area, we also included sidewalk improvements through Meadowbrook that connected Kady Gene to the New Haven Community Center.

A few years ago, that neighborhood they lost both their elementary school as well as their pool. This park provides great access to that neighborhood in addition to the community as a whole. The New Haven Community Center Park was a \$2 million project and has really been considered a hub for that community. New Haven has also put a lot of effort into the development of the Land and Road Project which is a Northern gateway into their downtown through that complete streets improvement.

Monroeville has worked on their park, they have a million-dollar improvement to their park. They received county commissioner funds to assist in addition to other grants. They've also upgraded their wastewater system and that has enabled them to be able to expand Industrial Park. They've also put over \$3 million into their water infrastructure and have done some downtown improvements including a mural pocket park, and are currently working on the implementation of a trail.

Woodburn, they really focused on walkability within their community, finishing their streetscape for their downtown, and several trail and sidewalk improvements. In addition to the mural, they've also upgraded there to a mechanical plant to help them be able to have the capacity for growth into the future. I guess in conclusion, I would just like to say we did all of this during COVID.

We were designated and we started in 2019, 2020, then, of course, is when everything hit. I will say we were fortunate we had done a lot of our public engagement, we were really in the nitty gritty of development, but we did have to navigate how to communicate with one another. We also had to navigate inflation of cost and supply chain issues. I'm very proud that the communities have found a way to prevail and I think it really speaks to the resilience of our rural communities. I'm just really proud of them.

I guess finally, I just wanted to give you an update on the Cedar Creek Parks Trail project. We are nearing being able to go to bid for this project. This is one of our larger collaborative projects and it connects from Metea through Leo-Cedarville over to Grabill. We initially had a plan and we have some plans to go up to Hurshtown Reservoir into the future.

However costs and some of the right-of-way complications, we just decided to go forward with the bidding of the first three segments at this time. The first segment would be an Allen County segment that goes along Hursh and Halter up to Hosler. The next segment, it goes from Halter at Hosler through Leo-Cedarville to their downtown. Then there is the Leo-Cedarville Grabill Bridge, which will be actually improved as a future project but it is underway, under development to be completed in 2025 by Allen County Highway.

The red segment that you see already exists in between Leo and Grabill. Then the trail then picks up into Grabill and goes to their downtown. It will connect both of the improved downtowns and then up to the Jack Harris Park property. We're looking at about \$6 million and the overall initiative. How we would like to divide-- and they are going to be bid

separately just for the ease because we do have more than one engineer and so forth in this. The first segment that I mentioned on the west side of the trail would be paid for through Allen County Commissioner funds.

The Leo-Cedarville segment we're looking at having them paid for through the Town of Leo, as well as the Capital Improvement Board funds. Then in Grabill, we have a mixture of the town of Grabill then the million dollars that the council has set aside for this as well as some commissioner funding. I guess that is my conclusion, and we do have some folks here that can answer any questions if you have any in regards to the trail or anything else.

Tom: I want to say congratulations, not only to you but to all those communities and all the probably thousands and thousands of hours that have gone into all the collaboration and discussion. Bob and I were here with 1.2 million, and it's exciting to see some of that come to fruition and continue along the way and commissioners as an example. Commissioners have been extremely involved in all these different discussions we had at one point, Harlan and God bless the Lions Club and the Harlans group, but they went door to door for years and years, just to get money to turn on the lights in the Harlan Community.

We were able to work out something with I think the commissioners to make sure that there's a revenue stream to be able to pay for that or at least subsidize a great deal of that on an annual basis. With the commissioners and council and all the communities, it's just been a tremendous success. Congrats and a great presentation today too and a great article in this morning's paper, too, by the way, I think. Questions at this time? Council what's left of council, I think. [laughs]

Paul: Just to say I really appreciate the trail. I ride, cycle, and hitting 50 miles in northern Allen County, you have to re-cycle a lot, you have to do a lot of loops. That trail is actually very helpful and it really improves safety. Thanks. Great job.

Tom: It'll be exciting to see this continue to enhance that growth and just a lot of eyes, a lot of people watching this continued growth in New Allen and the New Allen Alliance. Congratulations to all of you that have been involved in that, it's a tremendous accomplishment for this community. Thank you very much. Thank you. All right. Let's see next on the agenda is our any upcoming events, any upcoming meetings. Anything council.

Maybe before I ask that. We've got continuing progress with our airport and today the airport will be announcing the groundbreaking of its continued progress. That's why we had a couple of council members are headed to that event. It's happening simultaneously I think right now. That's another sign of a growing community as we continue to enhance the airport. Council, any other upcoming meetings? Not any liaison appointments or reports I should say. If not--

Paul: I move the approval to waive the second reading on any matter approved today for which it may be deemed necessary for the county council meeting. June 15th, 2023.

Josh: Second.

Tom: Second. All in favor, aye.

Council Members: Aye.

Tom: All oppose. That does pass. The next county council regular meeting will be held at 8:30 AM on July 20th, 23 in the chambers room of Citizens Square as our motion to adjourn.

Paul: So moved.

Josh: Second.

Tom: We are adjourned. Thank you.