

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

August 13, 2024

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 4:00 pm on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Members in attendance were Chair James Argerbright, Vice Chair Thomas Warner, Kim Wheeler, Thor Hodges, Nicholas Brewer, Joan Western, and John Barrett. Others in attendance were Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Assessor Kim Erdly, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Clerk Cindy Doolittle, Chief Deputy Clerk Debbie Beers, Commissioners Banks, Baysinger & Schuman, Sheriff Jason Spencer, Chief Deputy Sheriff Todd Cook, Billy Maddox, Robert Sands and Janelle Schmitt with the Sheriff's Department, Community Corrections Director Paula Worden, Chief Probation Officer Ed Beber, Highway Director Ryan Getts, Coroner Scott Smith and Tim Summers from the Maintenance Department.


Chairman Argerbright called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

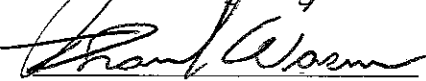
2025 BUDGET DISCUSSION: The Council addressed several items pertaining to the budget with discussions between themselves as well as other Elected Officials and department heads to come to decisions on the 2025 budget and 2025 salaries.

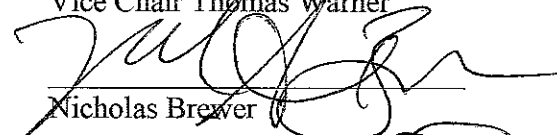
- Ed Beber with Probation was present to let Council know that the grant funds that the State gives for two of his positions are no longer able to cover all salary and benefits. He will be approximately \$6,700 short and would like to ask that those funds be covered by the County. Council members expressed concerns that when approving grant positions this is always a possibility and has been something that they have been questioning. Councilman Warner made a motion to approve the additional funding for the 2025 budget year, and to be paid from county general, seconded by Brewer, and passed with a 7/0 vote.
- Council discussed the request for the judges supplemental in the amount of \$5,000 that was requested. Warner made a motion to approve \$2,000 per Judge for the judges supplemental, seconded by Wheeler, and passed with a 7/0 vote.
- Council reviewed the projects that were included in the Maintenance budget that totaled \$373,500 for 2025. After discussion it was decided that any projects that are to be requested should be handled with an additional appropriation request at that time rather than be in the overall budget. Maintenance Director Mark Sturtevant has done a great job with his 5-year plan and keeping the county buildings up and maintained. Commissioner Banks stated that he feels it would be appropriate to remove the projects from the budget and come before the Council for additional appropriation requests when projects need to be completed. Councilman Brewer made a motion to remove the projects from the budget and come back with additional appropriations during 2025, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- Councilman Hodges stated that he would like to discuss the 5 Elected Officials and their Chief Deputies that were left out of wage increases in 2019. Those include the Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Treasurer and Recorder. He stated that it was time to give them a bump on their base salaries. After discussion Brewer made a motion to approve a \$4,000 base salary increase for the 5 Elected Officials and have them be included in a cost-of-living increase that will be given. Seconded by Hodges, passing with a 6/1 vote with Argerbright voting against.
- Councilman Warner made a motion to approve a 3% cost-of-living increase for all full-time employees whose salaries are not set by the State. Hodges stated that they should look at a larger increase than 3% as they are already behind for wages, he also stated that he would like to see the 3% dollar amount split equally with the approximate 207 full-time employees. Brewer seconded the motion, passing with a 5/2 vote with Hodges and Barrett voting against.
- The police pension for the last few years has been paid out of CEDIT as the LOIT Public Safety cannot sustain the wages that are currently being paid out of there as well as the pension. Council in agreement with Commissioners would like to have that be paid from CEDIT for 2025 and address where this should be paid from at the next budget cycle for 2026.
- Sheriff Spencer has requested 3 additional deputies for budget year 2025. Spencer stated that he would like to transition to 12-hour days and the additional deputies will help with that process as well as add deputies to allow for better coverage within the County for public safety. Councilman Wheeler made a motion to approve 2 new deputies for the Sheriffs Department, seconded by Western and passed with a 7/0 vote.
- The Auditor has requested a \$2,500 stipend that has been approved by the State for going above and beyond statutory duties. Commissioner Banks stated that he is not in favor of this request as he is not in favor of any stipends or supplements. Hodges made a motion to deny the request, seconded by Barrett and passed with a 6/1 with Wheeler voting against.


There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Argerbright adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

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Chair James Argerbright

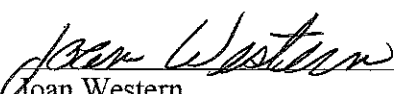

Vice Chair Thomas Warner


Nicholas Brewer


Kim Wheeler

Thor Hodges


John Barrett


Joan Western

Attest:


Tiffany Deakins, Auditor