**Vigo County Council**

**Minutes**

**Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

**Council Chambers, Vigo County Annex**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Auditor Larry Hutchings called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Calling of the roll**

**Present:** David Thompson, Brad Anderson, Steve Ellis, Brenda Wilson, Vicki Weger, Nancy Allsup

**Reorganization**

Auditor Larry Hutchings stated that he was opening nominations for President of the Council. Brenda Wilson made a motion to elect David Thompson as President. Brad Anderson seconded the motion. Vicki Weger moved that the nominations be closed. With no other nominations and a voice vote of 6-0, the motion was unanimously passed and David Thompson was elected President. David Thompson opened the floor for Pro Tem President and Brenda Wilson motioned to nominate Brad Anderson. Steve Ellis seconded the motion. Vicki Weger moved that the nominations be closed. With no other nominations and a voice vote 6-0, the motion was unanimously passed and Brad Anderson was elected Pro Tem.

The next order of business presented by President David Thompson was the adoption of rules. The proposed rules for this year had been distributed to the Council. President David Thompson confirmed with Council Attorney Michael Wright that the rules have to be adopted within the first 60 days. Michael Wright noted that after 60 days from today, if changes are to be made, it takes two-third of the Council to change the rules. If the Council would like to make changes in the first 60 days, a simple majority can modify any rule. The rules are the same rules as adopted last year with updated dates. Vicki Weger confirmed action. Mr. Wright stated that a motion to approve rules would need to be stated. Vicki Weger motioned that the rules stay as they stand and Brenda Wilson seconded the motion. With a unanimous vote 6-0, the rules were adopted. Roll call was taken again by Auditor Larry Hutchings.

Next was adoption of tentative meeting schedule for 2025, a copy of which had been provided to the Council. President David Thompson noted that there was a schedule with no December meetings and a schedule with December meetings, to be voted in by the Council. President David Thompson opened discussion to the Council to decide. Brenda Wilson confirmed that in the past, the Council didn’t have December meetings and President Thompson confirmed that was correct and there were also no meetings in July for budget meetings. Steve Ellis asked that if the Council voted to not have a December meeting if they could go back at a later time and add a December meeting and President Thompson stated that they could. Vicki Weger confirmed that the Council did have a December meeting the previous year, 2024. President Thompson confirmed. Brenda Wilson motioned to not have a December meeting and Nancy Allsup seconded the motion. Roll call was taken and the motion was unanimously passed with a voice vote 6-0. David Thompson presented that the second loose sheet in the book given to Council had the dates of when meetings needed to be published. No further questions from Council.

**Communication from elected officials of the County**

President Thompson opened the floor for communication from any elected officials in the county, there were none.

**Communications from other officials or agencies**

President Thompson opened the floor for communication from any other officials or agencies. Council Attorney Michael Wright commented and stated he would like to describe a packet he had given to the Council, Auditor, and Chief Deputy Auditor prior to the meeting. Mr. Wright explained that upon taking oath for Council for 2025, the Council members became part of 2 pending lawsuits. The first was Jauston Huerta vs. Derek Fell for Vigo County Jail inmate population, which will have further discussion. The other litigation surrounded a mandate that the Vigo County Judges issued in 2024 that relates to court staff classifications and salaries. That case is set for mediation approximately 30 days from now. Mr. Wright wanted to give a brief description of each matter and clarified that in no way would any Council member be help personally responsible nor would they be tied to any personal affairs of the Council members. The cases are only related to the official capacity as members of the Vigo County Council. Mr. Wright continued in relation to the jail litigation. Mr. Wright referenced Bill Watson, Director of Court Services, who was in attendance. Mr. Wright stated that Bill has been, for some time, pursuing some grant funding with Indiana Department of Mental Health Association. Mr. Watson has asked Michael Wright to prepare a letter providing that if the state approves the grant funding, and the facility is constructed, the county understands it’s obligation to fund the operating expenses associated with such a facility. Michael Wright has prepared said letter and stated that it needs to be submitted with the grant application that Bill is pursuing with the state. This is a formality, per Michael Wright, but the formality happens after the funding has been awarded and is not binding at this time. Michael Wright asked for any questions. He submitted that the county is asking for a 260 bed work release facility to alleviate the pressure on Vigo County Jail. Vicki Weger asked Mr. Wright to describe the nature of inmates who would be placed in this facility. Mr. Wright said that it is up to the Judge’s discretion on who gets placed where. The Prosecutor’s office can also have recommendations as well as the Public Defender or private attorneys. It is ultimately the Judge’s determination. Mr. Wright commented that it would be more for inmates wrapped up in using drugs as opposed to selling drugs and inmates who are not violent offenders and inmates who are capable of returning to the work force and trying to get a better pattern for following rules. He stated that Bill Watson works with Community Management to utilize evidence based practice to achieve good outcomes, which is what Mr. Watson would be looking to do with this new facility. President Thompson confirmed that this vote needed to be made this evening to continue. It was supposed to have been decided last December 2024 but the administrator had resigned and there had not been a replacement. Commissioner Mike Morris brought Bill Watson to the podium and suggested that he can offer information, for new members, especially. Mr. Morris said that it had been a long process. Brenda Wilson asked Bill Watson when the facility was projected to be complete. Mr. Watson stated that it would be determined once the Council has approved to move forward with the request. He stated it would expand and focus more on mental health and substance abuse treatment. The current facility has 130 beds and is full every day. The greatest population of that are people with mental health and substance abuse needs with the dual services. These extra beds would allow the facility to get to more people faster and who are sitting in the jail for 7, 10, or 15 days. Mr. Watson stated that women are sitting longer than that because there are currently only 20 beds for women. Some women are waiting 3-6 weeks after sentencing to get to the facility due to lack of bed space or services. Mr. Watson stated it’s been a year to a year and a half since they have brought on their own Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and that has helped a lot to provide services at a faster rate to get inmates assessed and set up with Medicaid, medications, and treatment services. President Thompson asked Mr. Watson if the land has already been purchased for potential facility along with finalized design and Mr. Watson confirmed yes to both. Mr. Watson stated that the new facility would be staff friendly which has been discussed and it would limit the number of Correctional Officers needed to bring on, opposed to the smaller one that was looked at. Mr. Watson stated that he would only have to bring on 7 Correctional Officers with this design to double capacity, the smaller facility would have needed close to 15 more with the way it was designed and laid out. President Thompson confirmed that this is a subject that they have been discussing for a while with previous Council but with the election the grants have been delayed. Brad Anderson asked Council Attorney Michael Wright if he had the letter with him to review and Mr. Wright then presented it to the Council. President Thompson asked if Brad Anderson had a motion. Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve and Brenda Wilson seconded the motion. President Thompson gave Council members a moment to review presented letter for questions. There were no further discussions or questions. Roll call was given. The letter was unanimously passed with a voice vote 6-0.

No other comments from other officials or agencies.

**Appointments**

President David Thompson confirmed the given appointments and did not need to read them off. He noted that the bottom 3 appointments on the grid for Annual Budget Committee had been left blank until last position for Council was filled but that it would be done by the next meeting in February. Brenda Wilson motioned to accept appointments and Vicki Weger seconded the motion. Roll call was given. The appointments were unanimously passed with a voice vote 6-0.

**Public Comment**

There were none.

David Thompson motioned to adjourn and Brenda Wilson seconded. Upon a voice vote of 6-0, the motion was unanimously approved and meeting adjourned.

*Presented to the Vigo County Council, read in full and adopted this 9th day of January, 2025.*

Nay

Aye

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|  AbsentAye David Thompson\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_AbstainNay |
| Brad Anderson\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_AbstainAbsentAye |
| Steve Ellis\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_AbstainAbsentAyeNay |
| Brenda Wilson\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_AbstainAbsentNay |

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|  AbsentAye Vicki Weger\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_AbstainNay |
| Nancy Allsup\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_AbstainAbsentAye |
|  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_AbstainAbsentAyeNay |

Nay

*Attest:*

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Larry T. Hutchings II

Vigo Auditor