

**VIGO COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**Sunshine Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 5:00 P.M.**  
**Council Chambers, Vigo County Annex**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

President Aaron Loudermilk called the meeting to order at 5:00.

**Calling of the roll**

R. Todd Thacker – present, Vicki Weger - present, Marie Theisz - present, Travis Norris – present, Brenda Wilson - present, David Thompson - present, and Aaron Loudermilk - present.

**Public Comments**

There were none.

**Communications from elected officials, other officials or agencies of the County**

There were none.

**First reading by summary reference of proposed ordinances and resolutions**

- i. ROC 2022-02, Additional Appropriation 2022-02: Health Department - vehicle
- ii. ROC 2022-04, Additional Appropriation 2022-03: Drug Free Community – appropriation into Operating Expenses
- iii. ROC 2022-06, Additional Appropriation 2022-05 – Contractual Services: Courts
- iv. ROC 2022-05, Additional Appropriation 2022-04, Salary Ordinance 2022-01 – Delete 4 part time positions and add 2 full time positions: Clerk's Office
- v. ROC 2022-07, Additional Appropriation 2022-06, Salary Ordinance 2022-02 – Add position; Juvenile Court & CASA
- vi. ROC 2022-08, Additional Appropriation 2022-07, Salary Ordinance 2022-03 – Add position: Guardian Ad Litem
- vii. ROC 2022-09, Additional Appropriation 2022-08, Salary Ordinances 2022-04 through 2022-10 - Salary Adjustments: Jail
- viii. ROC 2022-10, Resolution 2022-03 - County Tax Abatement Scoring System

**Reports from committees**

There were none.

**Resolutions and Ordinances other than appropriations.**

- i. Resolution 2022-03, ROC 2022-10: County Tax Abatement Scoring System

Marie Theisz explained that in going through several tax abatements since she had been on the Council, she discovered that there was no actual scoring system in place to assist both the Council and organizations seeking to apply for tax abatements. She had suggested creating such a document. There was support in going forward with this process from other Council members. This process had initially been started by a former Council member who had worked with Steve Witt with the Economic Development Commission and Martha Crossen on the City Council, Council Administrator Kylissa Miller and others. Starting with the documents previously drafted and consulting with Mr. Witt, Ms. Crossen, and Kylissa Miller, and using suggestions from other Council members, she has come up with the a proposed checklist/scoring system/application that can be used going forward. She would like to vote on this next week, keeping in mind that adjustments can be made if needed. It is hoped that eventually this can be put on line in the future. Vicki Weger asked how this would mesh with what the City is putting together. Cheryl Loudermilk, who is a member of the City Council, advised that there had been no discussion regarding updating their forms at this time. Brenda Wilson expressed her appreciation for all the work that has been put into creation of this work.

#### **Ordinances relating to appropriations.**

##### **i. Additional Appropriation 2022-02; ROC 2022-03: Vigo County Health Department**

Joni Wise, Administrator of the Vigo County Health Department, and Mike Grayless, Vector Control Supervisor, were present for this request. They are asking for an additional appropriation to purchase a vehicle from the vaccine administration funds received from Health and Human Services. This is out of the settlement received January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021 in the amount of \$133,203.57. They should be receiving within a week the July 1 through December 31 settlement money. Travis Norris asked how the pricing of the Grand Cherokee Laredo being requested compared to the Durango that many of the other departments have purchased. Mr. Grayless said that Vigo Dodge could not give him a price on a Durango because it's not on the government bid list this year. David Thompson asked if there were guidelines on how this money could be used. Ms. Wise stated that she had included the letter from Dr. Box showing the guidelines for use and this request qualified. The vehicle being replaced is a 1994 Crown Vic that does not have a working odometer and it can no longer be replaced/repared because it is obsolete. Marie Theisz asked if this would be for general purpose use or something specific. Mr. Grayless stated that it would be general purpose. Todd Thacker asked what other vehicles were on the list of choices. Mr. Grayless was not familiar with the list but had looked at other vehicles and this was the best pricing he could find.

##### **ii. Additional Appropriation 2022-03, ROC 2022-04: Drug Free Community**

Brandon Halleck said that this is the yearly appropriation of the Drug Free Community funds. These are fees that the Courts collect, not taxpayer dollars, from various court-ordered programs. After collection by the Courts, the monies are disbursed to the County level at 75% and the State takes 25%. Of that 75%, the local Coordinating Council then grants it out, per state statute, to prevention, treatment, and law enforcement agencies.

**iii. Additional Appropriation 2022-05, ROC 2022-06: Courts**

Judge Lakshmi Reddy and Brandon Halleck presented this request. They have submitted a grant application to the Division of Mental Health and Addictions for around \$300,000 for a two and one-half year project. This is a holistic approach to help families to strengthen them to help children become emotionally healthy. Families are in crisis and they can't get the help they need. Courts do not function to be able to do that. The best way to accomplish this is with a social worker. The concept has been around for a long time but no one wants to put the money into it. Judge Reddy feels that unless we invest in our children, there will not be jails big enough to house enough people. They are asking for a small amount now but she does plan to ask for more in the future. They are asking for \$25,000 to start the process of hiring a social worker. CASY has \$20,000 in reserve to assist in this process and they are optimistic that they will get the grant. Either way, they plan to go forward with the project. Mr. Halleck stated that they had seen an increase with mental health issues with children, with COVID making matters worse. Having a social worker will help guide families with getting services/support that they need. If awarded this money, the Community Foundation has agreed to give them \$25,000 also. If this grant is awarded, it would begin July 1, 2020 and go through December 31, 2024. Beyond that date, they hope to have worked out a local sustainability plan for funding. They plan to document how the program is working. Brenda Wilson asked if they knew of anyone else doing anything similar that might have some of the supporting data? Judge Reddy said that although the concept has been around, no one has seen fit to put any money into it. Discussion continued regarding concepts of the program and how it would work. David Thompson asked when they will know if they received the grant. Mr. Halleck said that with July 1 being the start date, and the application being submitted on March 1, he believes they should know by the first of May. Marie Theisz asked about partnerships and if they had talked with the VCSC. Mr. Halleck said that they would work with the schools. The plan is to work with children ages 5-17.

**iv. Additional Appropriation 2022-04, Salary Ordinance 2022-01, ROC 2022-05: Clerk**

Leanna Moore, Chief Deputy Clerk, and Brad Newman, Clerk, stated that they are asking to take four of their part-time positions and turn them into two full-time positions. They are finding it very difficult to fill part-time positions in their office due to the fact that there are no differences in the duties required of their part-time employees and full-time employees except for rate of pay and benefits. It is hard to justify to the part-time employees that they are paid significantly less than the full-time people and do the exact same jobs just for working one day less per week. People will not work for the part-time rate of pay (\$12.85 per hour) any more regardless of how many hours they work. They have had many interviews, and hired people who don't show up. Most people want full-time positions because of better rates of pay and benefits. There will be an additional cost to the County for this change but it will not be substantial. Two full-time positions would bring in more qualified people to consider and bring some stabilization to the Clerk's Office. Todd Thacker asked how many current full-time people they have. They currently have 32 full-time and 8 part-time. Mr. Thacker asked if this change would

affect the feeling of the current part-time people or if the current part-time people wanted to be part-time. Mr. Newman gave a brief history of the numbers of part-time people and how and why the numbers are what they are currently. If this change takes place, they will still have part-time people who wish to remain part-time and will have plenty of work for everyone.

**v. Additional Appropriation 2022-06, Salary Ordinance 2022-02, ROC 2022-07: Juvenile Court**

Glenna Cheesman, Director of Vigo County CASA, advised that they had received notice from the Criminal Justice Institute that there will be a 20%-25% cut in their funding for CASA that they will be applying for (by April 1). This is a \$64,000 cut to their current grant they are requesting. The current grant also does not include the pay increases they need to make for their positions be compensated accordingly. They would like to ask the County to absorb two full time positions, one that is currently under VOCA and convert one of the part time positions that is currently under their Guardian Ad Litem from the State CASA program as a full time position. This would reduce their current request to VOCA by over 64%. VOCA funding comes for two years. This would take that amount off. They already have people in the two positions they are requesting be moved to full time so it would just be a transition. They also have a person in the part time position being requested to be made full time. It would open up funding in GAL currently to pull off another position from the VOCA funding. While confusing, it will allow them to do sustainability and still allow them to access funding under VOCA. She then provided statistics of achievements since she had been appointed director, including children served and the number of volunteers they have and their contributions. This grant expires September 30. They are asking the County to pick up the two full time positions starting October 1 and carrying them through. As an alternative, it has been discovered from working with the Auditor's Office, that they have funds from a previous administration that were not spent. These are excess funds that had been rolled over into a cash line item for the CASA program. They would like to offer to use these funds to pay for the two positions from October 1 through December 31 with the Council picking it up and making it a full time position January 1, 2023. In that way, it will not impact this year's budget. Further facts and figures were provided to the Council. For their VOCA funding, their grant has to be submitted by April 1 and they have to show that they have this grant cut. The announcement of the grants will be made sometime later in June or July. There was a lengthy discussion. Council Administrator Kylissa Miller suggested that perhaps if the alternative funding was used that would require these funds not be appropriated this year, a Resolution could be adopted, if the Council was in support of doing this, and in that way Ms. Cheesman would have something to submit with her grant. They have to show a reduction in their grant and show where the positions are going to go so they can show that not only have they met their grant goals, they have also obtained sustainability for the two positions because the County is going to take them because they have met their goals. That would be huge in them obtaining further funding. Aaron Loudermilk asked if a Resolution would be a strong enough commitment for grant purposes. She thinks it would. Discussion continued. Aaron Loudermilk stated that it seemed to be apparent that the Council was in support of this matter but they wanted to do what needed to be done now in order to help her out. Discussion continued.

**vi. Additional Appropriation 2022-07, Salary Ordinance 2022-03,  
ROC 2022-08: Guardian Ad Litem**

This request is included with the prior discussion.

**vii. Additional Appropriation 2022-08, Salary Ordinances 2022-04  
through 2022-10, ROC 2022-09: Jail**

Sheriff John Plasse was present and stated that all members should have a copy of the answers he had prepared to the Councils' questions and would be happy to answer any questions or clarify anything that was unclear. Todd Thacker asked Sheriff Plasse if the Council agreed with the proposals before them, would they be in good standing with the Federal Judge. Sheriff Plasse stated that he could not speak for the Judge and did not know what she would or would not accept. Attorney Craig McKee was asked for his opinion on the answer to Councilman Thacker's question. Mr. McKee spoke about the ratio of inmates and staff and the fact that the number of staff is lacking. As of today, 68 was the appropriate number of jailers needed but the current number employed is 40. In order to increase that number, he believed the Judge is looking for some effort on the County's part to fill those spots. As Sheriff Plasse responses to Council's questions showed, it can be more than just salary. The goal is to attract and retain a full staff to supervise a jail that's operating at 80% capacity which is considered full size under Indiana guidelines. David Thompson asked whether there had been any discussions about changing the schedule. The possibility of 12 hour shifts and number of days worked and days off was discussed. Sheriff Plasse said that with the current staffing, it would not be feasible for either of those changes to work. The reasoning was briefly discussed. Sheriff Plasse noted that a recent employee survey showed that the majority would be in favor of going to 12-hour shifts but with staffing levels as they are, that just cannot work at this time. Vicki Weger asked where employees went to work when they left the County employ. Sheriff Plasse noted that from 2019-2021, 12 employees went to work for the federal prison, 5 went to the Terre Haute Police Department, 10 went to other agencies, 11 were internal transfers, and 20 were involuntary terminations. 4 recently left for other issues, one of which was for illegal drug use. They are getting applications but are losing them faster than they come in. This is a nation-wide issue not just for them but for all employers. There was a lengthy discussion about how many employees would be needed in order to go to implement different shift times.

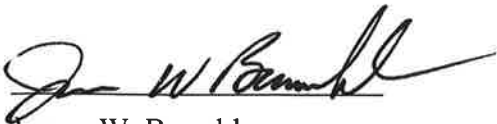
Brenda Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m. Travis Norris seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote of 7-0, the motion was unanimously approved.

**MINUTES OF THE VIGO COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**SUNSHINE MEETING**  
**MARCH 1, 2022**

*Presented to the Vigo County Council, read in full and adopted as written this 12<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022.*

Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		R. Todd Thacker	
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>			
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		Vicki Weger	
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>			
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		Marie Theisz	
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>			
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		Travis Norris	
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>			
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		Brenda Wilson	
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>			
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		David Thompson	
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>			
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		Aaron Loudermilk, President	
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>			

Attest:



James W. Bramble  
Vigo Auditor