

March 6, 2023

Council Chambers
Vigo County Government Center
Terre Haute, Indiana

President Mike Morris called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Morris said the Commissioners had come up with an outline for plans for the American Recovery Act after a lot of hard work.

Chris Switzer said that a lot of people had asked how they came up with the data for this. THRIVE met with every community in our region when it came to READI grants. THRIVE met 2 times in Terre Haute, and 2 times in rural Vigo County to gather data. Commissioners also got a lot of data from the See You in Terre Haute Community Plan. Data was taken from THRIVE's current and ongoing housing study, and from the READI Regional Plan. The Commissioners feel like they have enough data to move forward with a plan or guide for the ARPA funds. The proposed Plan reads as follows:

Housing - \$5,000,000

The COVID-19 pandemic kickstarted a major housing demand, as many were fleeing urban areas and finding new quality of life opportunities in the Midwest. This increased demand of housing continues and it is evident in Vigo County more than ever. In Vigo County, we have an aging housing stock, a mismatch of supply and demand, and very little new home construction. This, paired with an increase in median listing prices for homes jumping more than 20% and rent increasing, home ownership is coming out of reach for more and more people. The Vigo County Commissioners are requesting \$5 million for programming, potential incentives for developers, and matching funds for potential funding opportunities that might be coming down the pipeline. The state's recently conducted housing study indicates a statewide issue and the need for initiative in and around communities. The local housing experts are communicating this same concern for more opportunities. Mr. Switzer said Mark Clinkenbeard has taken the lead on this. He is in the housing business and has a lot of knowledge. He will be having a roundtable on March 6 with a group of local homebuilders. With that in mind, Vigo County received \$1.8 million on top of our personal ARPA funding and the City's \$5 million ARPA funding, so there is a total of \$11.8 million to potentially incentivize development and housing in this community.

READI – Description

The Wabash River RDA received \$20 million in funding from the State through the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative, also known as READI. Due to the matching component, this \$20 million dollars incentivizes approximately 100 million dollars in investments throughout the 6-county region. Nearly half of that investment is right here in Vigo County – projects promoting quality of life, tourism, workforce training, and talent attraction and retention. The Commissioners see a great benefit in providing support in the match requirements to ensure these projects move forward, giving these projects that extra step that they need to move across the finish line.

ISU Early Childhood Learning Center - \$3,000,000

Childcare. Through various studies within West Central Indiana, we know that this issue of childcare and what it means for our workforce, is an important topic. The See You In Terre Haute Vigo County 2025 Community Plan, the Resilient study conducted by Thrive West Central, the great work that Chances and

Service for Youth has done in data collection, various workforce roundtable discussion with manufacturers, community leaders, and more – all of this data points to a need. A need that this project - the Indiana State University Early Childhood Learning Center - aims to fill. This READI project addresses one of our number 1 concerns as a community and as a region. Our small businesses are asking for help. Our manufacturers are asking for help. This is a timely concern. It's getting people back into the workforce. We've had the opportunity to address the manufacturers in a facilitated conversation aside from these other platforms, surveys, and data points, and we've heard directly from the manufacturers. The Commissioners request \$3 million dollars for the ISU Early Childhood Learning Center, recognizing that this is a comprehensive early childhood learning project that has the opportunity to impact anyone in Vigo County that could use these services. ISU is in a unique position to expand these services with their early childhood learning education programming and the space that they have to dedicate to this initiative.

Terre Haute Children's Museum - \$75,000

Chris Switzer said that the Children's Museum saw major hardships through the pandemic. We all recognize this and it's important to realize that anything ARPA related has to have some type of response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We saw the Museum work through some major hardships, pivot, recover, and continue to be a vital part of our downtown community. As we have expanded Downtown Terre Haute with the Terre Haute Convention Center, the upcoming Larry Bird Museum, and all of the other museums within walking distance of our downtown development, this provides another opportunity for us to sell Downtown as it relates to giving families a place to enjoy outdoor activities within their visit to the Terre Haute Children's Museum. The Commissioners request \$75,000 to support the Terre Haute Children's Museum's feasibility study to determine the best plan of action for closing 8th Street and turning that into an interactive outdoor play space for children and their families. This project is a perfect example of setting ourselves up for success to pursue other funding opportunities and mechanisms, and even creating an opportunity for READI 2.0 funding to help accomplish this bigger initiative moving forward. To note, this would close 8th Street from Wabash to Ohio for playground equipment. With anything that receives government funding reminder, the State of Indiana used ARPA funds to fund READI projects. It also has to be related to the Covid-19 pandemic. They received \$150,000. We're matching \$75,000 for them to have a feasibility study that sets them up perfectly for READI 2.0. Also, they have 100 Men Who Cook and Top Chefs where they get most of their money for the full year to operate the museum.

West Central Business Hub - \$750,000

The West Central Business Hub will create a comprehensive business resource or one-stop-shop for all business-related development in the West Central Indiana region. Composed of multiple organizational partners in the region, each provides expertise and services to help businesses grow and prosper. Currently, the hub exists only as an online presence. In 2020, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Team was created under the heading of the West Central Business Hub to provide local businesses with immediate answers to their questions and connect business leaders with available resources. Given its success during the pandemic, the need for a physical presence has quickly arisen. Organizations that will be located in the Business Hub include Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce, Terre Haute Economic Development Corporation, Terre Haute Convention & Visitors Bureau satellite location, Launch Terre Haute, WorkOne of West Central Indiana, and office hours for West Central Indiana Small Business Development Center. The Hulman Building has been identified as the location for the business hub due to its convenient, accessible location downtown and is large enough to accommodate all interested partners. The Commissioners request \$750,000 to transform this space into the West Central Business Hub's permanent home. Since Regional Cities funding established a push for regionalism, we have

learned that those that are most competitive have found ways to work together under one umbrella, under one roof. What this project is going to do is allow those entities who have interest in Terre Haute, Vigo County, who have interest in West Central Indiana to walk in one door and be able to have those resources all together. This project puts us in a place where we can be more competitive, where we can be more efficient, where we can be more business friendly, to those interested in doing business in Terre Haute and Vigo County.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College - \$500,000

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College is known for its equine programming. Not just the equine facility but being the only equine program in Indiana to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in equine studies, and one of approximately 20 equestrian colleges in the U.S. to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in equine studies. In addition to that, they continue to be one of the most competitive institutions not just in Indiana, not just in the Midwest, but nationally in equine sports. SMWC competes in an average of 23 shows per year with up to 8 of those being on site, bringing teams, coaches, show personnel and audiences from a number of other states to West Central Indiana. The proposed Equine Event Center will further establish West Central Indiana as Indiana's leader in equine events. They have really put a spotlight and on Terre Haute, Vigo County and West Central Indiana in a really unique way right there in Western Vigo County. They have been looking at ways in which they can utilize this best asset that they bring to the community to benefit West Central Indiana, to benefit our tourism numbers, to make sure that we are looking at new ways to bring people to our community outside of traditional tourism. This facility will allow them to do that, as it will enhance the athletic offerings at SMWC, making it more competitive in attracting talent, competitors, families, and sports industry experts to the region. The Commissioners request \$500,000 to contribute toward the first phase of the larger project of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Equine Facility. SMWC's goal is, over the course of the next few years, to become a very intentional place for people to consider when they're looking to do these types of competitions. We believe that as we grow the tourism market in West Central Indiana that the equine space at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College could be unique to Terre Haute and Vigo County and serve as an amazing asset. Chris Switzer said they had received questions via email and publicly asking why would Vigo County fund a project for St. Mary-of-the-Woods College. Many of the organizations receiving ARPA funding and READI funding (which is also technically ARPA funding) are private organizations. The Vigo County Commissioners will be utilizing the expertise of consultant Baker Tilly to help guide these expenditures and ensure compliance along the way. While ARPA dollars do have restrictions, they can be used for these types of projects. The St. Mary-of-the-Woods Equine Facility Project will benefit Vigo County tremendously. It's a tourism focused project with the ability to positively impact the number of visitors that we bring to Vigo County. The proposed equine event center will establish the West Central Region as Indiana's leader in equine events on local, state and national platforms, bringing industry and participants across the nation to Vigo County. This is a \$3 billion dollar equine industry in Indiana and SMWC and its partners in West Central Indiana Regional are well positioned to create a growth opportunity for the community which promises to expand the tourism and educational offerings to this region. This is also a big deal for West Terre Haute. West Terre Haute continues to grow in several different ways.

Rose-Hulman Ventures - \$500,000

For 20 years, Rose-Hulman Ventures (RHV) has fueled innovation and economic growth in Indiana. Led by a team of highly experienced engineers, software developers, designers, and supported by student interns, RHV harnesses the power and resources of Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology (RHIT) to bring new ideas to life. RHV is a hub for innovation in which students have the opportunity to work with industry experts and businesses in developing prototypes, software, conceptualizing ideas and

developing them to into real, tangible solutions. RHV has served over 200 organizations across the nation from right here in Vigo County. The Vigo County Commissioners are requesting \$500,000 to help in the relocation of RHV from their current site to the 46/42 intersection. RHV is currently located about 7 miles off of Rose's main campus on a beautiful 100-acre campus on the southeast side of the community, limiting immediate access to crucial campus resources and interaction with students and Rose faculty. Through this project, Rose will construct a new campus for RHV and design a space allowing students to have more direct access and capabilities of interacting with these projects. This leads students to have more access in terms of building space and square footage and more intentional time for their projects, understanding that as students, they have little time to spend to outside of the classroom. This project connects their work and experience at RHV to their course curriculum in a more fluid, intentional way and eliminates their commute times to Rose-Hulman. RHV's new space will house all its current business units in addition to new units such as a Civil Engineering Test Lab, a Biology Lab, a Prototyping Lab, Test Engineering, and Applied Optics. These new features will allow RHV to increase its capabilities, offerings, reach, and impact for its students and the businesses it serves. The more these students have hands-on experience, the more likely we can retain them. Not only is this essential for the student experience and growth of ventures, but it positions RHV at in the heart of the community spearheading innovation and growth for our local economy. With a beautifully designed architectural cornerstone in our 46 corridor, this will position RHV directly in the midst of our community, allowing our local businesses to engage with their team and utilize their capabilities often. The infrastructure supports this movement and with the continued growth of the 46 corridor, this project allows RHIT to put Vigo County on the map in a new way. This will be one of the most progressive technological hubs in Indiana, allowing RHIT and Vigo County to be the face of technology in ways we haven't before. Even with Rose-Hulman's continued growth and advancement, right now RHV feels a little further away from our community. This will put it in a place we believe it truly belongs to best serve the community, the students, businesses and beyond.

Swope Art Museum - \$250,000

The Swope has certainly come to be the cornerstone of Wabash Valley art and culture. So much so that the museum has been coined as one of the "10 best places to see art in smaller cities" by USA Today. The Swope serves a national audience, with most attendees coming from a 75-mile radius of Vigo County with an average of 13,000 visitors per year. One of the Swope's pride points is it's free admission, allowing everyone access to great art for all. With READI, the Wabash River RDA invited all museums in the community to play a role in how our region's proposal was put together. With that being said, the RDA and the Commissioners were happy to see that the Swope Art Museum wanted to continue their growth. And with this growth trajectory, the Swope has implemented a capital campaign. Today, the Commissioners are requesting \$250,000 to support the campaign in 2 major ways. Creating a more accessible Swope Art Museum so that people with disabilities can access all aspects of the museum in its entirety safely and comfortably. The Swope resides in a 1901 three-story, 30,000-square-foot building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building and its amenities have withstood the test of time. Today, the museum is in need of improved physical access for all, especially electrified door access and a modern elevator to replace the four-passenger elevator currently in use, which, by the way, is one of Indiana's oldest operating elevators built in 1948! An updated fire stair tower would also grant full use of the third floor that overlooks much of downtown Terre Haute, creating a functional and refurbished third floor. The renovated space will serve as a flexible space for art classes for all ages, starting as young as two years old, along with a space for gatherings, fundraisers, workshops, and more. The vision here is to have a multi-use facility with restrooms and a catering kitchen that would complement downtown's hospitality industry.

Vigo County Juvenile Justice Center - \$2,000,000

Increasing programming for incarcerated youth is really about decreasing recidivism in our jails and being able to support kids at a younger age by helping them with programs and services. There have been many conversations relating to the jail and how to move forward better than we have in the past. Providing funds that support the Vigo County Juvenile Justice Center is a small step in the right direction. Currently, engineering firm DLZ is finalizing a study on what the Vigo County Juvenile Justice Center might need to better support our youth. Whether that be increased bed capacity (currently having 19 secure beds), addressing the need for LGBTQ+ needs (as there is no LGBTQ+ wing in the facility), a separate wing to house those who are charged as adults, and a medical wing. Currently, the facility does not have a medical wing or pod to separate kids who are sick which can increase the potential spread of diseases like COVID-19. The Vigo County Commissioners are requesting \$2 million dollars to support the Vigo County Juvenile Justice Center on the programming, resources, mental health services and other services to best serve our youth. Our Juvenile Justice Center is 1 of only 13 juvenile centers in the state. Because of that, we have kids from over 30 counties across the state who utilize the Juvenile Center right here in Vigo County. This facility impacts many children, not solely Vigo County kids. This is about youth programming, mental health programming, benchmarking other like communities and juvenile centers, and looking at how other communities are addressing these opportunities so we can continue resourcing our youth and help them become productive members of society.

Infrastructure - \$2,100,000

This project was brought before the Council last year. Nothing has changed there, although they did accomplish a few of those projects so some of them might be a little new. It had been planned to bring this request before the Council on March 7 but it will be pulled from the agenda. They are going to put the projects out to bid again since they are a year older. This has to do with culverts that are 70-80 years old, ditches that haven't had action or work done in a very, very long time, and things of that nature. The Vigo County Commissioners are requesting \$2.1 million to help address those projects that Larry Robbins, our County Engineer, has identified as projects that need priority action.

Terre Haute Humane Society - \$250,000

The Commissioners, in partnership with the City of Terre Haute, have been having conversations on how to best help the Terre Haute Humane Society support the Vigo County Sheriff's Office and the Terre Haute Police Department as they bring in animals to the shelter. In doing so, the Commissioners, request \$250,000 in partnership with the City of Terre Haute to help the Humane Society build onto the back area of their facility so that the Vigo County Sheriff's Office and Terre Haute Police Department have their own direct access location to bring in those furry friends who need support. This will provide more efficiency for the Sheriff's Office and Police Department so they have their own designated area to quickly transport, drop off, and continue about their duties where needed. The Humane Society continues to be in need of more space. When Code Enforcement, the Sheriff's office, the Police Department, or any citizen within the community calls and asks for space to bring in an animal, space and resources continuously becomes a concern to serve and house these animals. Oftentimes, they physically don't have room and some have to be turned away. Our goal is to help resource the Humane Society so that they can have more direct access to be able to handle these matters in a more efficient and humane way. Mike Morris said that part of this would be for a surgery room for spaying and neutering. Previously there were some programs going in the county but during the Covid-19 crisis, those programs stopped. There has been discussion between some local veterinarians and the Humane Shelter and to have a surgery center there is a way to help regain control of our animal well-being in the County.

Small Businesses and Non-Profits - \$1,000,000

During the pandemic, our nonprofit and business community were all hit very hard. We feel like it is in the best interest of our nonprofit community, daycare and business community that we don't leave them behind in regard to the opportunity to help them in any way that we can. If there were nonprofits and businesses that were negatively impacted by COVID-19, working with the United Way of the Wabash Valley and potentially others, we would like to form a partnership that would allow Vigo County to participate in ways that could help those that did not receive COVID-19 relief. We are going to prioritize those that did not receive COVID-19 relief to make sure that they are moving in the right direction. Essentially no nonprofit and no small business left behind is the concept. The Commissioners request \$1 million dollars for nonprofit, daycare and small business support. To do this, we understand that we are going to have to develop grants and programs that help us with the prioritization. We understand that the county government is not in a position to lead grant programming but we do have those in the community like United Way of the Wabash Valley that can. This is their area of expertise. The goal here is to allow them to work with us and the Council to make sure that there are things in place if they are suffering and did not receive funding. If they did not receive this assistance, we want to be able to help them move on and continue to hopefully sustain and thrive in Vigo County. After meeting with Abby Desboro and Danielle Isbell, Co-Executive Directors of the United Way, while nonprofit and small business support is important, so is child care and so are other agencies that might have suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic in moving forward. We would like to allow them to, maybe, guide us in the direction to best spend that \$1 million.

Happiness Bag - \$750,000

Happiness Bag is the Wabash Valley's ONLY recreational and educational facility for individuals with disabilities. They just recently celebrated their 50th anniversary. You may know Happiness Bag through their training and coordination of the Vigo County Special Olympics, but they really do so much more than that. Through their unique services, Happiness Bag directly serves about 250 individuals, ages 5 and up. They serve about 100-125 individuals daily through their Medicaid waiver programs including the adult day program, which is the service that utilizes the entire facility the most. They have been in their current building since 1997 and are experiencing a great need to expand their facility. Last July, they broke ground to kick off a fundraising initiative for an expansion plan that was approved in 2020. To clarify, they broke ground on fundraising only, not the facility yet. In fact, fundraising had been ongoing since 2017 when the need for a new facility became apparent. The Commissioners request \$750,000 to support Happiness Bag's expanded facility. This new facility expansion will be about 11,000 sq. ft. (nearly the size of the current facility). It will allow Happiness Bag to potentially hire 10-12 full time and part time employees on top of what they already have, expand the number individuals they will serve in daily programs, reduce limitations on sports and recreational activities, provide more options for 3-7 year olds through early interventions and early sport introductions, and really just allow them to continue to provide excellent recreational and educational programming for individuals with disabilities – a much needed resource for our community.

Other - \$4,600,000

Mr. Switzer said they haven't allocated anything yet for the \$4.6 million. It is really important to note that this plan is just a plan/guide to get to 2026. It is almost a given that things will change along the way. There are certain entities that are facing issues with regard to funding. This Plan will be given an Ordinance number at the Commissioners' Meeting in the morning and adopted as our plan. It will then be presented to the Council tomorrow evening and will also give them a step-by-step process which may include a basic seminar where all entities receiving ARPA funds will come together in one room and will sign, basically, a contract agreement in order to move forward stipulating what they can and cannot do

with this money, what the process will look like moving forward, and when it comes time to do an appropriation, what it will be like coming to the Council alongside the Commissioners to ask for the appropriation and the questions they might have. In speaking with Councilperson Marie Theisz, he had made a semi-promise that they would not spend money on housing. But there is an opportunity that has come about with Myra Wilkey of Mental Health American who is requesting \$750,000 from the County...\$500,000 possibly from Public Safety funds for a diversion center to be built near Liberty Village and 42 very low income housing units. The \$500,000 that would come from Public Safety would come directly from the County. The City is also giving \$250,000 and she has asked the Commissioners to give another \$250,000 to match a \$14 million grant for the 42 housing units. Those units are strictly low income. A 95% threshold must be met which means you have to be very, very low income to be able to live there. She will be at the Council meeting tomorrow night.

Commissioner Morris said they had spent many, many hours on this plan. As they go through each step, they will have to make sure they have compliance and accountability. The meeting was then opened for questions.

Kevin Southwood suggested putting a zip line across the river to generate tourism. He also had suggestions about child care being supplied by employers. Another suggestion he had was to provide windows and doors for people in exchange for a monetary portion of the cost and requiring them to supply labor to help install doors and windows for others receiving the same type of assistance.

John Burke, Associate Executive Director for REACH Services, talked about their Pathways Day Center. Pathways touches on a lot of the things mentioned throughout the ARPA funding. Pathways was opened for 24 weeks in 2022 and they were able to service 371 members of the community that are in need. The realistic number is probably over 400 because a lot of people do not sign in. They are able to help their clients with housing assistance, utility assistance, applying for SSI, applying for health care, a lot of things mentioned for ARPA funding. They have opened up a 24/7 warming center whenever it's cold and they will open a cooling center if there is a need for that. They would like to secure funding for Pathways for the services that they are already providing so that some of the funds for ARPA can be reserved for other things rather than duplicating services already being provided.

There was a lengthy discussion about child care, and the lack thereof, in the community.

Auditor Jim Bramble said he would like to see some of the funds used to reimburse the County for expenses the County incurred during COVID. There were several hundred thousand dollars incurred for medical expenses for employees, jails had medical expenses for COVID, and certainly the Health Department has related expenses. Research would need to be conducted about the amount each department spent on Covid.

Councilperson Vicki Weger said she had spoken with an individual who runs a corporation here in the County and he indicated that he has two jobs open that pay \$70,000 each. They have been open for some time and he is unable to hire anyone because people are unable to pass a drug test. This is a big problem in our community. There was a lengthy discussion about how to tackle this problem and the use of a diversion center. Councilperson Todd Thacker also had several comments about jail overcrowding and diversion centers, etc. He thinks there are a lot of things that need to be worked through. He thanked the Commissioners for having this meeting. Mr. Thacker said he intended to support the Commissioners' plan at the upcoming Council meeting. Ms. Weger expressed her thanks for

all the work that had gone into preparing this. There was also discussion about putting some limitations/requirements on tax abatements.

Commissioner Switzer said they had gathered a lot of information and just tackled the needs as best they could on how to move forward the best way proactively with the ARPA money.

With no one else wanting to speak, Mike Morris thanked everyone for coming and thought this had been very enlightening.

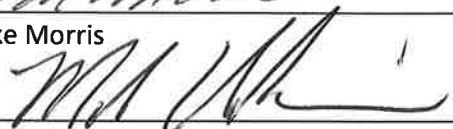
The meeting concluded at 4:55 p.m.



Chris Switzer



Mike Morris



Mark Clinkenbeard

Attest:


James Bramble, Auditor