

COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING – MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Brian Baird at 10:00 a.m. Kevin Walls and Ron West were present.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Baird gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment – *(limited to agenda topics and 5 minutes per person)*

There were no public comments.

Opening of Sealed Bids for Johnson County Park Dunn Arena Interior Painting Project

Tiffany Costley, County Attorney, opened the sealed bid and read it aloud as follows:

Connor Fine Painting, Inc. – Indianapolis, IN	
Base Bid – Lump Sum	\$189,675.00
Alternate #1 – Lump Sum	\$0.00
Voluntary Alternate #1 – Lump Sum – Modified SOW	\$96,420.00

Routine Matters – Consent Agenda

By a single motion, the Commissioners approve the following items, which may include annual contracts, grant application forms, ratifications, change orders, ordinance, resolutions, and meeting minutes. Any items listed on the consent agenda may be removed by a Commissioner and moved to the regular agenda.

A. Approval to Apply for Grants

- 1. Health – Indiana Department of Health Public Health Emergency Preparedness BP3 2026-2026 (BASE/CRI) Grant*

B. Ordinance 2026-O-2: An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 2022-O-1 Establishing County Council Districts for Johnson County, Indiana

C. Minutes:

- 1. 2/9/2026 – Regular Meeting*
- 2. 2/9/2026 – Executive Session*

Mr. Walls moved to approve the above requests as presented. Mr. West seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

Elected Officials and Department Heads

A. Health

- 1. Ordinance 2026-O-1: An Ordinance Amending Title 16 of the Johnson County Code of Ordinances for Fees – Second Reading*

Betsy Swearingen, Director, was present to discuss Ordinance 2026-O-1. Mrs. Swearingen stated that her and Taylor Webster, Assistant County Attorney, cleaned a few things up and added some things that were previously missed.

Mr. Walls moved to approve the above request as presented. Mr. West seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

B. Animal Shelter

1. Approval of Donation of Property Agreement

Miss Webster, stated that she worked with Cari Klotzsche, Director, and the SBOA to make sure that everything was okay and good to go with this agreement.

Mr. West moved to approve the above request as presented. Mr. Walls seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

C. Highway

1. Approval of Rock the Block 2026 Event on Saturday, April 25, 2026

Daniel Johnston, Highway Engineer, was present to request approval for the Rock the Block Event. Upon approval, a demnification hold harmless agreement will be submitted. All the county checkpoint agencies have reviewed and approved and supported this event.

Mr. Walls moved to approve the above request as presented. Mr. West seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

D. Planning and Zoning

1. Approval of Flood Buyout Property Lease and Maintenance Agreement with Kenneth and Kim Streeval for 8382 South US 31, Edinburgh

Michele Hansard, Director, was present to discuss the property lease and agreement. She stated that she has provided a 10-year continuous lease for 8382 South US 31 in Edinburgh, which is one of the properties that was acquired through the flood. The adjoining neighbors, Kim and Kenneth Streeval would like to continue their 10-year lease on the property.

Mr. Walls moved to approve the above request as presented. Mr. West seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

E. Board of Commissioners

1. Appointment of Board Member to White River Township Fire Protection District Board (White River Township Seat)

Mr. Baird stated this was a term that expires on 12/31/2027. Mr. West recused himself from the appointment. Mr. Baird asked Mr. Walls for a recommendation. Mr. Walls suggested putting this out for advertising, due to lack of applications received. Mr. West suggested to table this discussion. Mr. Walls agreed to table for one to two meetings.

Mr. Walls motioned to table the appointment until their 3/23/2026 meeting. Mr. West seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

2. Resolution 2026-R-1: A Resolution to Assign County Administrator Duties Under Indiana Code 36-2-2-14

Mr. West moved to approve the above request as presented. Mr. Walls seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

3. Claims and Credit Card

Mr. West stated he did have one question for the Sheriff, but the Auditor's Department, as they always do, supplied him with the necessary information that was needed. But, just for public knowledge it was for \$1500ish for a semi competition, and he thought "what are they doing driving semi's" but was informed it was for dog training. He stated he always tries to find something for the Sheriff, but it's getting tough; he is doing such a great job.

Mr. West moved to approve requests as presented. Mr. Walls seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

New and Old Business

A. Acceptance of Quote and Award of Contract Pursuant to IC 36-1-12-5 for North Annex Basement Project

Mr. Baird stated they have three quotes that have come in for this project. He stated the issue is, they have water coming in between the foundation and the wall in the North Annex. Indiana Foundation was the most responsive and lowest bidder, so Mr. Baird recommends they use that company so they can get on the schedule as soon as possible. The bids that were received are as follows:

Indiana Foundation	\$13,757.28
Acculevel	\$13,785.87
Advanced Foundation	\$21,490.00

Mr. Baird moved to approve the above request as presented. Mr. West seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

Mr. Baird stated he had a statement to make. He stated that with his State involvement with the Indiana County Commissioners and the AIC has taken him to new levels and heights of embarrassment for our State. And with being involved with that, he wanted to release a statement which has already been publicly released to some news outlets. He also stated that most of the counties in the state of Indiana are doing this, and we are not the only ones; we are just the standard in which all others are compared as we move forward in this. He said he has been at the State House for the past three weeks fighting some ridiculous bills that hurt the public, endanger our safety and welfare in this County, and our health. There's a lot of issues with what has been going on. In 2024 the Indiana General Assembly passed a bill that hurt us on septic systems which is what we mostly have in this County; they cut us off on being able to help keep those things safe and do some things. Fortunately, they were able to gain back some of that ability, but this bill goes even further. House Bill 1001, which Mr. Baird wants to make clear that every one of the representatives in Johnson County and the State Legislature voted for this bill, which endangers the health, safety and welfare of our citizens in Johnson County and other counties. He stated he worries about our County because that's what he loves and that's what he represents. As County Officials and members of the Indiana County Commissioners Association, they believe it is imperative that the public be informed regarding the passage of HB 1001 out of the Indiana Senate Judiciary Committee on February 18th, 2026. Under the guise of supporting affordable housing, members of the Indiana General Assembly, including Johnson County Representatives, voted to remove local control under both county and municipal planning and zoning ordinances. HB 1001 removes the ability to maintain oversight and regulate design elements, including the number of rooms, setbacks, parking spaces, parcel density, and square footage of residential structures without

regard to the size of the parcel containing the proposed structure. HB 1001 also mandates certain types of housing, including duplexes and mixed use to be allowed in residential and commercial zoning without regard to an approved comprehensive plan. Removal of local oversight will directly affect septic systems, public health, traffic, storm water, and the capacity of county services. In addition, local units will no longer be allowed to increase permit fees or charge impact fees that were put in place for counties to handle and correct infrastructure needs that is the inevitable result of increased traffic and development. Most concerning, the bill removes the public hearing requirement put into place for allowing reading or for allowing the residing citizens the ability to have a say and a voice concerning growth within their own communities. A one-size-fits all zoning mandate from the State does not reflect the realities of rural, suburban, and urban counties across Indiana. There are always unique circumstances requiring expertise and oversight from local planning and zoning experts. Johnson County is committed to being partners in solving Indiana's housing challenges. We simply ask for the ability to do so responsibly with the tools needed to serve our communities effectively. To be clear, nothing in HB 1001 seeks to reduce interest rates for buyers, buildings, construction, or development costs, nor mandate any savings from removing local fees that are passed on to home buyers. We will hold the local electorate in the General Assembly accountable for not adhering to Johnson County rules and will not continue to support representatives who continue to vote for legislation that harms our citizens and takes away private property rights. We are calling on all local officials and citizens of Johnson County to join us in our strong opposition by reaching out to their House Representatives and State Senators in opposition to this harmful legislation that is scheduled to be heard on the Senate floor Tuesday in the General Assembly. Mr. Baird stated that this was the most egregious bill that he has had to deal with in the last four years while being involved at the State level. He has never seen a General Assembly that attacks and tries to destroy local government as this assembly has; we have representatives that should be taken out of the system that they are in, voted in with someone else that will do the job to support and to supply the things we need in Johnson County and all counties all over the state. He states that he is terribly disappointed and has no respect for any State Legislature that would substantially hurt the welfare and safety of our citizens in this county. It is unbelievable; it is unconscionable, and he does not care who they are and does not care how long they have been there. It is time for them to go. And he includes every local representative we have in the State Legislature.

Mr. West stated a point he made to Senator Bray is that every county, city and town has spent an awful lot of time and money in producing master plans that fit their community as the citizens and residents of those areas would like to see those communities develop and go forward. This bill HB 1001 basically throws all of that out the window and makes those efforts to no avail. But here's the irony that we see in these types of legislation. The things that the legislators are proposing in this legislation can be adopted by any city, town or county. Any city or town or county that wants to go to this kind of measure can do so voluntarily, but to force every county to adopt such extreme measures is beyond belief. Mr. West states that he concurs 100% with Commissioner Baird. It is time to really look at our local representatives both in the house and in the Senate and begin to make decisions going forward on their election or re-election regarding home rules. If they are not going to go to the State House and represent us fairly and equitably, we need to give that serious consideration.

Mr. Baird asks the public to please engage and to contact your local representatives in both the House and the Senate and let them know how disappointed we are and how dangerous it is. Mr. Baird also wanted today to say that in the vote that came out, Representative Craig Haggard did vote against this

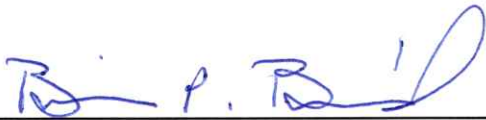
bill, and he appreciates that and his concern and his voice for us. He also states that Senator Bray has been a big help at the State and has been very open to meeting and working with him. Senator Bray nor Senator Walker have yet to vote for or against this bill currently. The names of the representatives and legislators that did vote for this bill are available online. Mr. Baird stated that it is troubling as a Commissioner, which he has been doing for 14 years, knowing that every one of the legislators from our area voted for HB 1001. He also stated this is important to him, this county is important to him. It means a lot to him to keep everyone safe and to watch out for everyone.

Mr. Walls stated that he supports what both Mr. Baird and Mr. West has said, there is not much to add, as they pretty much summarized it, and asked for everyone to please reach out to their local representative, tell them your feelings, because your investment means a lot to you, and that will be in dire jeopardy very soon.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Walls moved to adjourn. Mr. West seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

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Brian Baird



Kevin Walls



Ron West

Attest:

Elizabeth A. Alvey
Auditor

