



Minutes of the  
Clinton County Council  
Special Meeting  
Thursday, March 21, 2024  
9:00 a.m.

The Clinton County Council met in the Commissioner's Meeting Room at the Clinton County Courthouse, Frankfort, Indiana on March 21, 2024, at the hour of 9:00 a.m. for a special Council meeting, pursuant in accordance with law and publication as evidence by proof of the email and posting, and any other business that may come before it. Council President Alan Dunn called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. On call to order the following members were shown to be present or absent.

PRESENT:

Alan Dunn  
Carol Price  
Todd Corrie  
Mike Hensley  
Jeff Chynoweth  
Joe Mink  
Mary King

ABSENT:

In preparation for the meeting's primary discussion on the recently completed comprehensive Salary Survey comparison of Clinton County employee compensation relative to other government and private market compensation, President Dunn provided budget context he felt was important to consider as the Council begins the review for the 2025 budget season. While the County budget is as strong as it has been in many years, there are possible challenges ahead. First, the portion of County revenue derived from interest income likely saw its peak in 2023 due to a topping out of both interest rates and cash balance earning interest. Over his 17 years on Council, the revenues from interest rates have been anywhere from \$40,000 to \$1.9 million, with 2023 representing the high end figure. Second, the largest single budgeted item in the County budget is the premium payment for employee group medical insurance, which is currently over \$2 million per year. Because the current medical insurance policy with IUHealth Plans is a two-year contract for 2023 and 2024, there was no increase for this expense in the 2024 budget cycle. This is very unlikely to be the case in 2025 and the County should expect a significant increase in medical insurance premium cost, which could easily result in a budget increase of \$200,000 or more. Third, due to proactive fuel pricing for the 2024 budget, the line item for fuel saw a decrease of over 33% from the 2023 level, a circumstance that may not present itself again for 2025. There is therefore a significant risk for a major increase in that line item, which represents a major spending category for the County,

President Dunn feels the County is particularly vulnerable when it comes to a pull back on interest rates and the corresponding reduction in revenue that would cause. A few items at the State level are to be considered as well. Legislation has been passed effective 2024/2025 that puts limits on the rate of growth of local property tax levies. This restriction was put in place by the State in response to the very large increases in assessed value across the state in the post Covid economic recovery. These caps limit County levy growth to no more than 4%, while County expenses remain uncapped.

Finally, the General Assembly has created a task force to review all state and local taxes and tax policy. That group will report back to the General Assembly prior to the 2025 state budget session, and will likely result in recommendations for significant changes in state and local tax policies. At this time, it's hard to predict what this will look like, but President Dunn has been in contact with Senator Buchanan who is the Senate lead on that task force. Alan has asked to be a part of the task force at a local level. The concern among Council is that revenue streams may not continue as they are presently after the 2025 budget.

### **WAGGONER, IRWIN AND SCHEELE & ASSOCIATES**

Lori Seelen and Kent Irwin from Waggoner Irwin and Scheele & Associates presented information for the Council to look over (attached). Clinton County is behind on several external midpoint hourly rates for 2024 versus the survey sample set as listed:

COMOT (Computer, Office Machine Operation, Technician) 5.76%

LTC (Labor, Trades and Crafts) 9.18%

PAT (Professional, Administrative, Technological) 5.84%

CIV. POLE (Protective Occupations, Law Enforcement – Civilian) 10.01%

CIV. POLE – EMS (Protective Occupations, Law Enforcement – EMS) 9.57%

Discussion was had on several items including overtime, 32 hours with benefits, holiday comparison, 90% of health care paid by County, payroll deduction higher, department head/elected official collaboration with Council, employee performance evaluations, lower spending and efficiency.

Lori Seelen spoke regarding the scale for hiring a new employee. Carol suggested we use verbiage such as “starting at” for posting a range in salary. This is all dependent on what level the new hire is.

President Dunn thought this discussion was productive and would like to see what the cumulative fiscal impact of everyone moving to the midpoint, with salaries that are currently over the midpoint staying the same for 2025. This would give Council a starting point to work on. Council member Price and Council member Corrie would like to see the dept heads/elected partner with Council to help determine costs in their dept.

Meeting adjourned 10:32 a.m.

CLINTON COUNTY COUNCIL

Alan Dunn  
Alan Dunn, President

Jeff Chynoweth  
Jeff Chynoweth, Pro-Tem

Mike Hensley  
Mike Hensley

Todd Corrie  
Todd Corrie

Carol Price  
Carol Price

Joe Mink  
Joe Mink

Mary King  
Mary King

Attest:

Britt A. Ostler  
Britt Ostler, Auditor

