

**MINUTES
FOUNTAIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JANUARY 6, 2025
9:00 A.M.**

The following Fountain County Commissioners were present at the meeting:
Aaron Fruits, KW Rice, and Tim Shumaker.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by Aaron Fruits to approve the minutes of the Commissioner's meeting of December 16 and December 27, 2024 as presented.

Vote: 2-0

CLAIMS 1-69 (\$255,448.56), Unpublished and Payroll Claims

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Aaron Fruits to approve all claims.

Vote: 3-0

Covington/Veedersburg Public Library Board Appointment

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by KW Rice to appoint Sandra M. Frey to the Covington Veedersburg Public Library Board for a term beginning January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2028.

Vote: 3-0

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Tim Shumaker to appoint Aaron Fruits as President of the Board of Commissioners for 2025.

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by Aaron Fruits to appoint KW Rice as Vice-President of the Board of Commissioners for 2025.

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Aaron Fruits to appoint Tim Shumaker as Secretary of the Board of Commissioners for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

A motion was made by Aaron Fruits and seconded by Tim Shumaker to appoint KW Rice as President of the Drainage Board for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

APPOINTMENTS

A motion was made by Aaron Fruits and seconded by KW Rice to appoint Ethan Myers as the County Attorney for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by KW Rice to approve Garth Kagels as the EMS Director for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Tim Shumaker to appoint Jason Lewis as County Highway Superintendent and Travis Covault as Assistant County Highway Superintendent for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by KW Rice to approve Bob Cates as Veteran Service Officer for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by KW Rice to appoint Aaron Fruits to the LEPC Board for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Tim Shumaker to appoint Aaron Fruits to the Board of Finance for 2025.
Vote: 3-0

A motion was made by KW Rice and was seconded by Aaron Fruits to appoint Tim Shumaker to the Community Action Program Board for 2025.
Vote: 3-0

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Tim Shumaker to appoint the following to the Insurance Committee for 2025.

Aaron Fruits	_____
Commissioner	Council Member

Kim Johnson	Lisa Spiering	Vote: 3-0
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(The council will appoint a member along with the Auditor and the Payroll/HR Clerk.)

JAIL COMMITTEE

A motion was made by Aaron Fruits and seconded by KW Rice to appoint the following to the Jail Committee for 2025.

Tim Shumaker	Vote: 3-0
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EMA ADVISORY BOARD

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Tim Shumaker to appoint Aaron Fruits to the EMA Advisory Board for 2025.
Vote: 3-0

DISTRICT PLANNING COMMISSION

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Tim Shumaker to appoint Garth Kagels to the District Planning Committee for 2025.
Vote: 3-0

PLAN COMMISSION

A motion was made by Aaron Fruits and seconded by Tim Shumaker to appoint KW Rice to the Plan Commission for 2025.
Vote: 3-0

REGION 4 WORKFORCE

A motion was made by Aaron Fruits and seconded by KW Rice to appoint Tim Shumaker as the Region 4 Workforce System County Chief Elected Official to serve as a member of the Region 4 Workforce Service Area's Executive Council.
Vote: 3-0

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE BOARD

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by KW Rice to appoint Rodger Foster to the Alcoholic Beverage Board for 2025.
Vote: 3-0

TRUSTEES OF FOUNTAIN COUNTY EMPLOYEE BENEFIT TRUST

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by KW Rice to appoint Aaron Fruits as trustee for the employee benefit trust.
Vote: 3-0
(The council will appoint a member along with the auditor and the payroll clerk.)

E-911 BOARD

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by Aaron Fruits to appoint KW Rice to the E-911 Board for 2025.
Vote: 3-0

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Appointment

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by KW Rice to appoint the following to the Board of Zoning Appeals Board: Campbell White

Vote: 3-0

Ethan Myers will review the length of time for each appointed member.

Advisory Plan Commission (APC) Appointments

No motion was made at this time. They will discuss at next meeting after discussing with individuals who are interested in joining board.

FOUNTAIN COUNTY FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2024 – as submitted by Auditor

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by KW Rice to approve the 2024 Fountain County Financial Report.

Vote: 3-0

FOUNTAIN COUNTY CAFETERIA PLAN HEALTH INSURANCE

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Aaron Fruits to approve the Fountain County Cafeteria Plan for 2025.

Vote: 2-0

Tim Shumaker abstained

MILESTONE INVOICE

Tim Shumaker had asked Jason Lewis about this and it is not the County's responsibility. Brad Crain stated that the most important part of Stringtown Road was left out. He asked Tim if he agreed with that 500 feet being County ground. Tim respectfully disagreed. Brad asked whose ground it would be. LTAP is the one who sets this, but Brad Crain believes they made an error. Tim said if Brad can get something from LTAP saying they did make an error, the County will pay. Brad said he will talk to LTAP and INDOT and try to get something so that this can be resolved. They will discuss further once Brad is able to get some information from LTAP.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Ambulance- Garth Kagels

Garth said that truck should be done sometime in March 2025. They are looking into another body shop due to issues with current body shop. There are a lot of employees ill. One retired EMT passed away, Tom Butler. The Commissioners were sad to hear of his passing. Roger Azar asked about the sewer project. Garth said they have not marked fiber optic as of last Friday. He was thinking it goes east to Sheriff's dept. Tim said the last 2 times he has used Fountain County's service employees were well prepared and great.

Highway- Jason Lewis

Jason brought the Community Crossings financial commitment letter for 2025. The match would be approximately \$444,501.00. This is for 8.8 miles of road. He would like to let the Commissioner's look over the letter. Tim asked what road. Jason had planned on River Road in Covington, but after review he has decided to do 800 South between 41 and Sugar Mill Lake Road and Schoolhouse Road. Traffic counts were high and the rating was worse. Ratings are done through software. Aaron said there is money set aside for the new garage and they are all on board. They want to get started right away. KW Rice said he would like to sit down with Jason and see what needs done and look at some other facilities also.

Emergency Management and Security – Tina Holmes and Bill Lathrop

Judge Campbell has bought kits for each department and would like to get employees to enroll in a stop the bleed class. They would also like to do a CPR class. This would cost roughly \$20 per employee. Garth would do the

class. Aaron Fruits said that he had talked to Dr. Hesler and he said he may be able to get a grant for this. Tina will contact Dr. Hesler and see what he has found.

Bill Lathrop would like to look into putting a safe room on each floor. This would require 2 ballistic doors on each floor. Bill said he would check into this if they were interested. Due to how the entrance is now located, there is no way to get out. The Commissioner's agreed to revisit once Bill finds out the price of doors.

EMA director

This was not voted on at this meeting because it was done later in the year for 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Schrock-

Mr. Schrock would like to see transparency. He would like Fountain County to lead by example. He would like to see public trust increased and for taxpayer dollars to be maximized.

Bill Brewer

Mr. Brewer asked if the on and off ramps at the 74 bridge are State property. Brad Crain said that is incorrect. He said he called the state and this is County. Bill said this made no sense to do the all the road and leave that portion. Jason said it was his error and he will get it corrected.

Brad Crain

Tim and Brenda did away with WEGA the last meeting of the year. Brad believes it should be reinstated. County money has already been invested. We need an economic development, maybe not funded as much. WEGA has a board. Aaron said questions should be directed towards Tim. Tim stated there is no money funded for it. Tim said he has heard nothing but complaints and nobody is working together. He said they have done great on the project in Attica. He said Attica has worked very hard. Tim said this is a private entity. Brad said he is on the board of Greater Lafayette Commerce. He would like to see a new Commissioner attend. County money was funding a private entity. Tim said they ended it due to conflict. Aaron Fruits said there has been zero talk of terminating the WEGA board. Aaron Fruits said he has no interest of getting rid of WEGA. Tim asked if there is no money funded so how will it be paid. The Council will still have to pay \$250,000 due to being one year out. Dudley said he thought there was money in a different fund. It wasn't under a WEGA line item, but there should be other money. Aaron agrees that he would like to keep WEGA. They will look into if it can be reinstated. Bill Brewer said he sees information on Fountain County Watchdog (Facebook). He wanted to know how this go on that site. Aaron said he has no idea.

Kelly Carlson stated that part of the \$250,000 is included in the \$750,000. She said the Council agreed that if they did not think this was the way to go after the trial period, they would find a different avenue. Kelly agreed that the county needs economic development, but not sure about the private group. Brad Crain that the board members should be from each part of the county. Aaron is looking into the reinstatement.

Carol Owens

Carol would like to see the Commissioners and the Council work closely to read contracts. She would also like to know what is being done with Maple Corner. Aaron stated he would like to sell it. He said it was bought to move Courthouse employees during renovations. The firm now states employees

do not have to move. He would like to put the money toward the Highway Garage. Aaron would like to work with the Council on getting this resolved.

Council has extended their moratorium on ERA and Tax Abatement. Aaron would also like this extended.

Bill Brewer

Bill would like to encourage to not vote 2 additional years. He said KW Rice made some broad statements regarding solar. KW stated he still stands by those statements. Bill would like the Commissioners to contact universities to investigate. He stated the County needs industry.

Kelly Carlson said that when the Council originally discussed the trail with Dale White, they said if they had the money, they would do it. Bill said Dale showed him minutes from November where the Council voted to approve. Kelly also said that the moratorium was extended so the APC could correct the ordinance. Bill also questioned who paid for the plaques that were contributed to employees. Kelly Carlson stated she paid for those out of her own pocket.


Jeff Fishero stated they are looking at opening the Kingman Ditch. Roger Azar and Jeff will attend the Kingman council meeting. KW Rice will also try to attend.

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE TUESDAY
January 21, 2025
AT 9:00 A.M.**

A motion was made by KW Rice and seconded by Tim Shumaker to close the meeting.

Vote: 3-0

Next:
Ordinance 2025-1
Resolution 2025-1


ATTEST

