

Vermillion County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

July 1, 2025

Commissioner's Courtroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Courthouse

- I. Call to order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- III. Roll Call – Hess absent
- IV. Approval of Minutes June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025  
Peebles motions, Dunavan seconds  
All in favor, motion carries.
- V. Approval of Claims from June 03<sup>rd</sup>, 06<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> 2025 and July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025  
Peebles motions to approve all but June 6<sup>th</sup> 2025, Dunavan seconds  
All in favor, motion carries

- I. Approval of Payroll June 06<sup>th</sup> 2025, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2025 and July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025  
Peebles motions, Dunavan seconds  
All in favor, motion carries

VI. Public Comments:

- Eric Scheidler- Soil and Water I just wanted to give a real quick update on our water sampling event that we just had during the County Fair. We had good participation again this year. We had 63 households that had their water tested for bacteria, nitrates and then we have a metals package that includes arsenic, copper and lead and all the results are back.  
The metals reports should go out too.

Folks with who provided us their emails tomorrow and then those that didn't provide their emails, they'll get their results back via the US mail. So, whenever it gets there and we are because we're we're in the middle of a Clean Water Indiana grant, part of that Clean Water Indiana grant does allow us to provide funds for folks to retest. Normally after this event if they have to retest for bacteria problems, they would have to pay for that. Right now, we can offer that to them at no cost and so just very happy with the event. Also, on the with the Clean Water Indiana funds, we do have several projects going on where we have folks who are taking out large acres or large pieces of mode manicured lawn and putting those into native grass and pollinator habitat and we're cost sharing that. With them at 75% of the cost of installation. So, we've got some folks that are rewilding their yard so they don't have to mow so much and put a little plug in. If anybody's interested in doing that, call the SWCD office and we can definitely have a conversation about that. But I just wanted to give you guys an update on that on the water testing and let you know we had a good, we had a very successful event. So, any questions if you have any?

Dunavan- No, I think if people want to get updates from the soil and water department they can text your keyword right to for the text my Gov.

- Buddy High - Just wanted to talk to you guys about looking at the zoning ordinances.

Some of them are basically HOA rules, laws, you know, for HOA. And we live in a country. I mean, you know, we don't have laws like that out here. I mean, you got to have farm equipment to repair farm equipment and stuff like that. Everybody don't have \$1,000,000 without buying a new piece of machinery every time that breaks. There's other one's other zoning rules that need to be looked at also.

I can't get them off my head right now. I got some other stuff going on.

I ask of you guys look at them and go through them and look at them and very close because they're kind of out of out of the ballpark. I'll say it that way.

Dunavan- Well, buddy, if you want, I know I would appreciate it. If you want to like cite the certain areas in the code or e-mail them to us. Or even you can text me. It doesn't matter that way what specific areas you want us to look at because that book is a penny. How many pages? 286 pages. So, it's a lot. But if there's certain sections or just a general area you're concerned about, just emailing to us so we can all three looks at it together.

- Mike Keely- Well, I'd like to start off. My name is Mike Kelly, live in Fairview, and I want to commend you on your letter to the Congress, I mean Senate.

Dunavan- So yes, yeah, I think Janet sent that to the commissioners, I believe, or actually I think she sent it to all county government officials.

Kelly- For doing away with 45 Q and getting your power back turned back over to the commissioners instead of the state.

Dunavan- I think we're all commissioners are in favor of local control over state and federal.

Kelly- I was wondering, did any of the other commissioners?  
I don't know that they because I just seen it today. So, I don't know. I haven't seen it. It's from Jam. Penny can make sure you say it was from Janet. Does that sound right? Yeah, it's in our e-mail. I'll make sure. OK. Yeah, I'll send. It's basically a template and you can change it or you can just sign and give it. I signed mine today, but basically ask them to repeal the 45 Q credits.

I would like to know if the other side sure I don't miss these.

Dunavan- Yeah, I know Misty's on vacation, but I'm sure Bill will look at that tonight. I'm sure he would.

Kelly - And that's all I have.

- Inee Mayhan- VA Officer - I just wanted to give everybody an update of for the month of June. I currently have 46 active veteran files and for the month of June alone I have filed 109 claims and I've had six walk insurance in regards to veterans that have all filed claims different amounts and then I've also done 22 other appointments and home visits for the month of June. So, we've had, I've had a very productive month.

Also, American Legion Post 108 in Saint Bernice have been honored with the request from the late Mayor Jack Gilfoy to conduct the flag retirement ceremony. This is a significant event and it will take place on Friday, July 4th at 3:00 PM at Sportland Park.

We are extending an invitation to all veterans, Boy and Cub Scouts, along with the Girl Scouts who would like to participate in this ceremony. As most of you know, we have 5 American Legions in Vermillion County which is awesome, but a lot of all of a lot of our members out of all 5 posts are aging and so these guys have bared that responsibility of attending all of the funerals and so that that's been our backbone of the American Legion here in Vermillion County, you know, for a lot of years. But we are losing those guys and gals. So, we are looking for people who would be willing, you know, to step up and instead of.

Honors falling on just like 1 American Legion Post. I would like to start like a countrywide honor guard. That way it would help any veterans or anybody who would want to participate in this honor guard. Who are, you know, retired, whatever have that extra time because I know a lot of our veterans are younger, and so they're still busy, you know, with their kids and home life and working and all of that. So, if anybody's interested in that, please reach out to the office and let me know.

And then also I was able to attend the Vermillion County Fair up until the storm night when I lost power and then I have storm damage to clean up the next day. And then

also I've been working with Thrive West Central in identifying homes that need rehab with the owner-occupied rehab grant. And so, after the 4th of July umm, I'm going to start putting boots on the ground and I'm going to be hitting like the rural areas around Universal Centenary and working my way northward to the rural areas of the county.

Just to make sure, hopefully nobody falls through the cracks, but that's my update for this month.

Peebles- What, what kind of what kind of turn around are you getting through the VA to, to, to answer these claims?

Mayhan- Honestly, most of the claims I have done in June are Agent Orange and Tara claims. I had a veteran in yesterday and I wound up filing 28 different claims for this person and then also I had a female veteran and I wound up having 15 with her but, she wound up having some other issues also, so we're working on; I have referred her to legal services for also for a lawsuit because. Her family has been affected from toxic exposure so.

Yeah, I've sent out, I think 8 Indiana Legal Service referrals to veterans in different capacities also. It's been 10 plus hours every day.

Peebles- As a veteran, I want to say I appreciate the work that you're doing to help my brothers and sisters and thank you.

Mayhan- And also, I've been talking to the women more than the guys because the women make their husbands brothers come in when you guys don't want to. So, I've been making sure I talk to the moms and everything because it just, you might feel great now, but it just takes 1 diagnosis and they've went downhill fast. So, I encourage everybody to get in. I don't care what years were you were in, how long you were in, if you were National Guard, reserve, whatever you signed the paper, get into the office and see me ASAP.

VII. Open Issues: NA

VIII. New Issues

a. Pasture Hay Lease- First on the item is Pastor Haley's on the county farm.

Before we open a discussion bill, we have two proposals for the.

Pasture ground one from Dunham Farms and their proposal is for a 20-year lease. The 1st 10 years would be free, they would fix the fence and then from years 10 through 20 it would be a \$3000 a year proposal and then the second one is from Ellis Farms, their proposals for 25 years and in lieu of payment we had first, they had first talked about a payment and then they had altered that per, I want to say my request, but I asked them to do that. And instead of payment of cash they would do quarter of a beef is that right quarter, quarter of a beef, value of that beef is approximately \$1300. And they would do that for the whole life of the 25-year lease. And in doing so, the commissioners would then raffle that off to a county resident would be a free raffle the county residents would apply for and then we would raffle that off. So, someone in the county would get that beef that was in theory raised on county pasture ground.

And then with this also, the VTA has asked for a carve out of the pasture hay lease Les, it's 3.7 acres. Is that right? Four OK to be carved out from that. So, I'll open that up for discussion, Bill.

Peebles - I guess the discussion is who's going to put the fence around the addition to the trailhead park?

Dunavan- Yeah, if, well, are we in favor of one of the leases over the other?

Peebles - The Ellis Lease

Dunavan0- OK,

Peebles- that's a little bit more money involved.

Dunavan- I mean, yeah, well, especially value wise. If that's the case, could I have maybe VTA and someone from Ellis come up and we can discuss this fence?

Because I think that is one of the questions and I think they've all got the documents so.

- Joe Ellis on behalf of Phil Ellis and Ellis Farms, our proposal was all new fencing, nothing repaired in those areas. A nice high-quality woven wire fence. I think it would make the property look nicer. It would so we wouldn't be repairing that old however, many 50-year-olds some of that fence is now we did not include in that going around a possible VTA area here, so we would probably want to adjust that.

Like I said in the proposal, the beef is a 13 at this moment, roughly \$1300 worth of packaged beef  $\frac{1}{4}$ . It'd be your steaks and roasts and hamburger and then it would be up to you, the commissioners, to designate how you want that to go. Whether it go to 1 entity raffle off or go to a food bank or whatever the commissioners wish to do with it was the proposal. And we calculated over the life of it, that's probably about a \$31,000 value of beef. And then of course there's about 33,000 or maybe I may have switched those two numbers up, new fence.

Well, yes, fence is achieved if you build nice new and we could continue to bandage it and look like it's been done in the past. But there comes a point in time you just need to replace

Peebles- and its infrastructure to that piece of property that is needed that that repair.

Dunavan- Yes. So, Joe with the Vt as proposal is do you feel that in your proposal that you would put any new fence on this or we?

Ellis- I think we would absolutely have to adjust what we plan to do. There would be some area on the east side that would not need fence any longer of course on the West side. There would need to be new fence and also on the South side something would need to be done there too, but there's new relocated or whatever.

And what I would tell you is I'd leave that up to the, if we were doing that, we would leave it up to the entity that we hired to do the fence.

Whether to move or not and any other question is whether you locate the fence on there's a wet ditch there that whether you locate the fence on the east side or the West side of that ditch.

Dunavan - So, will this change your value?

Ellis- I mean would you put more money in the fence then or would it be about the same? In total to do the whole project, because essentially, you're taking one straight line and you're making an L shape out of it.

Dunavan- OK, so, so let me ask you that. Let me ask you this then. So, since you were comfortable with the farm lease proposal, you proposed 25 years if this is more money in fence would trade off and adding more years to the lease help with that?

Ellis- Sure, yes, time would add value. I might need to think about it a little bit, but maybe the and I'll talk with Phil some more about it. But potentially if the trails wanted to pay for some portion of fence, there would be above and be different or additional beyond what we had already planned on doing that for sure be beneficial that there's some loss of high-quality grass to utilize there. Would be some of the better quality in the area, so there's lost value there.

Dunavan- Bill, do you have any questions for Joe? Peebles I, I don't.

Zimmerman- Well, in our proposal, which I've furnished everybody, including you guys. We have decided it would be helpful to the process if we were to relocate the existing fence on the South side of the park property. It I don't know what level of fencing you're

going to, but this is creiseal post every other one steel. This is the full size I think. What is it? 48 or 46 44-inch hogwire with one barbed wire. It's a good fence. We've got 6-inch Creiseal terminal post. Everything's in there. We would be happy to relocate that section of fence and probably basically move that to the South side of the newly allocated property. And then we could go ahead and turn the corner and head down as far as that fence would carry us. We're happy to do that part to meet you all halfway.

Dunavan- Joe and Elsa's thing the fence being relocated. Would that work for your pasture or would you rather?

Ellis- Generally, we build a little different. Steel posts will rot out quicker than the Crusoe post, so there's a shorter lifespan and especially in more sitting soils in a lowland area like that, so. We would build it to a little, I would say a higher level.

Dunavan- OK, OK.

Zimmerman- And I think the other way that we've tried to come to the middle in this whole process is to keep the gate in its current position and move the fence or propose our original proposal which run the fence down the West side of the Creek and, and make a new water gap. But there's a good water gap there that we built years ago and, and, and a gate that's there which would provide access to that back part of that pasture. And so in the other part of that would be we would want to locate the fence east of the Creek and the tree line far enough so that if trees fell down in a storm that they would not hit the fence tear down.

Dunavan- OK.

Ellis- One other comment, I'd want to look at some water availability there. I don't exactly remember how it works there, but we might potentially want to put the fence on the West side and actually keep the animals out of. It's a web ditch, it's not really a Creek, so there is a title in it. So, it I need to go look at it at the fence guy, look at it, decide which way you want to go with it as our preference number.

Bill, any comments? Peebles- I have no comments.

Peebles- I know, I know why I've asked for compromise on this so that we can move forward to, you know, the remaining trails get started, a little piece of the county farm. I'm, I'm seeing that in action tonight. So, **I would like to make a motion that we go with the Ellis lease and that before the 1st fence post is put in for many trails and Ellis's are out there saying this is where they're going so everybody knows exactly the location they're going and move forward that way.**

Zimmerman- Would you call for some discussion on that?

Dunavan- Well, yeah, I'll second the motion and then potentially maybe amend the motion depending on some discussion. Les go ahead.

Zimmerman- Well, and my only concern with running the Finch down the West side is you are going to have to have a water gap. Water gaps are challenging certainly, for me, if your people can do a new water gap, there is an existing water gap and we were trying to take advantage of that. And it's even hung on a swing. I mean, it's just kept it clean. It'll work for years.

Dunavan- The only thing I might ask, Bill, is that due to this potential, I say loss of good pasture ground to the farm and their proposal was for the entirety, is that if we would consider amending the motion to extend the lease from 25 years to 30 years, that way that would give them a little bit more value. And it's since they've lost a little bit of ground and potentially with the fence cost, I don't know if they're going to move that fence to the South or if they're going to have to you know, put that new fence woven wire in.

Ellis- I'm open. I'm open for suggestions. So

Dunavan- OK, I mean, would you be in favor of that then open it to 30? Ellis, do you

have any?

Ellis- Very possibly, yeah.

Would you say that you're going to pay for the fence that you put in?

Zimmerman- No, I said we would relocate the fence that we are going to remove. We're going to relocate. We will relocate the fence that we own or that we put up previously.

Ellis- Actually, I might ask that you pay for the cost of the fence on the West side. Ordinary fancy couple, it's a few 100 feet of fence.

Zimmerman- I understand and I would I would throw that back at you. It's just a few 100 feet of fence. And I think in typically with fencing law

Ellis- right now I'm investing 37,000.

Zimmerman- I understand. But typically, I build my half, you build your half and we're actually building probably more than half of it.

Dunavan- Well, Bill, if we're, if we're in favor of this moving forward, what about adding this to the like I'll, I could be the designee, work with both parties to get this signed in the next couple weeks and work out any if there's any major obstacle they'll come back before the Board of Commissioners. But if not, we could work this out as long as we go and approve the lease and the VTA working together to get this thing moving.

Peebles -Well, it's an it's an opportunity and I'd hate to see it be lost over 4 acres. I don't. I don't think it'll be lost, I think.

Zimmerman- Obviously, you know the Vermont travels. We, we do everything on a volunteer basis. We work on behalf of all the citizens of the county. I get nothing for this. Well I get I get some pain.

Peebles- And I appreciate what you've done with promoting Trans Alliance. Thank you.

Dunavan- I think if we can approve it tonight and then designate me as the point of contact to work with less, the VTA and Mr. Ellis of Ellis Farms to make sure the fence gets done, work out any small minor details and then get a signed contractor before next meeting. **OK, so I'll call for the vote. All in favor, Aye, motion carries. Thank you, guys.**

**Peebles motions**

**Dunavan seconds**

**All in favor, motion carries**

b. Kayak Launch Updates-

Kayak launch updates DNR on the Anwrights Bridge up by Forest Glen. DNR will be installing that the first week of August is what they told me. We have a meeting next Monday on site.

On the second launch site located by the Eugene Covered Bridge, permit is being submitted to DNR as we speak, and we are hopeful to break ground on that one with the Blueway grant later this fall. If anybody knows of any other potential kayak launch sites along the Wabash Big Vermillion, any tributaries get a hold of any commissioner the Blue Way grant awarded the Community Foundation let me thank you. I think it was 2.1 million. Half that has to be used for education, another half can be used for site. So, if anybody knows of any sites please let the commissioners know.

Peebles- I do have one question. The bridge pillars that have been painted with kayaker on it or we are we going to see if we can get one paid painted with a Native American in the canoe on one of them.

Dunavan- We, I had asked the Community Foundation that and the foundation, I won't say said no to it, but they were going to work with the artist on that and decide they're going to paint a second mural on the, what do you want to call it and rights bridge



condition. So, I told him to be nice because that's going to be called the Asanaman site. So that would be kind of nice to play into that a little bit. So, I'll reach out to Dale and Kim and bring that back up for discussion.

- c. Budget Consulting Agreement - Scott Craig with Cox, Werner Gavel and Sullivan has been providing budget consulting services for the County Council since 2019 or 2020. We don't have an updated agreement. Last one was signed a couple years ago. You can glance through, but this is all that they'll provide and they're just asking us that we approve that so they can continue to work with the auditor and the County Council on reports.

**If you don't have any issues with all entertainment? No, I'll make a motion to approve. Peebles OK. I'll second the motion.**

**Dunavan Any discussion? No, no. All in favor. Aye.**

- d. First Deputy requesting purchase of a retired laptop - There's a housekeeping item. All right. First deputy requesting the purchase of retired laptop from the coroner's office.

In your packet you'll see there was an HP laptop, the coroner's old laptop and has been swiped clean of all county business.

Our technology group, EAS has valued the laptop at \$175, Misty Sandler's request and that she purchased that for the \$175 as presented. We've done this previously with Paige Kilgore with one of her items, so there's no issues. **I'll entertain a motion to approve that purchase. I'll make the motion.**

**Peebles I'll second the motion.**

**Dunavan Any discussion? No, no, all in favor motion carries.**

- e. John Moore- Vermillion County Redevelopment- non-voting school board advisor for County Redevelopment Commissions. - what I'm handing you is.

References from the Legislative Code in regard to Commission members. What it boils down to is back in 2018, when we were created the commissioners in service at that time. Kept trying to get a non-voting advisor from North Vermillion school.

They had one that they picked that showed up for three meetings, one that showed up for one, one that never showed up and then we couldn't get anybody in either corporation interest doesn't come and now we've got a guy that says he would be more than happy to do it.

And attached to my cover page or letters from Northern Maine school board and S remain school board selecting him unanimously to be their non-voting advisor for the school board corporation. So, I'm asking you guys to appoint Doc Sutherland as the school board's non-voting advisor to the Redevelopment Commission.

**Peebles I will make that motion.**

**Dunavan- I'll second the motion.**

**Dunavan Any discussion? Hearing none call for the vote. All in favor aye, motion carries.**

Announcement: The Commissioners are pleased to announce #1 Director Jimmy Miller will be assuming the role of EMA Director effective January 1st of 2026. Mark O'Hare has notified the Commissioners of his intent to retire and we'd like to publicly thank him for a service of years and dedication of the county. Over the next few months they will be working together to transition and make a smooth transition into January.

Peebles- Do you want anything else along with those duties? He will still be the 911 director for the county as well.

Dunavan- So absolutely, Yep, we're going to be putting those duties together and with a reduction of salary as well. So, we will be saving some salary to the county. I don't have

that number in front of me. I want to say it was 5 grand in savings and doing both positions. So, we look forward to working with Director Miller. And again, I mentioned earlier, but Kylie Yocum is moving on to a new role and again we just like to thank her for her service to the county.

- IX. Adjourn
- Dunavan- I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. I'll make the motion. We adjourn.
- Peebles Second.
- All in favor. Aye. Meeting adjourned

AYE:

NYE:

RJ Dun

RJ Dunavan

Misty Hess

William Peebles

William Peebles

ATTEST:

Ron Dunavan

Ron Dunavan, Auditor