

Vermillion County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

January 05, 2026

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

- I. Call to order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- III. Roll Call – All present
- IV. Approval of Minutes from December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
**Peebles Motion**  
**Hess seconds**  
**All in Favor, motion carries**
- V. Approval of Claims from Dec 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026  
**Pebbles Motions**  
**Hess Seconds**  
**All in favor, Motion Carries**
- VI. Approval of Payroll Dec 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026  
**Hess Motions**  
**Pebbles Seconds**  
**All in favor, motion carries**
- VII. Public Comments:
  - Doug Bohannon, Universal, Indiana. One question we had was, did you guys get your meeting and Tim Yocum with Wabash Valley Resources that you talked about at the last a meeting.

Peebles- I did. Yes.

Bohannon- What did you think of them?

Peebles- It was just an informational meeting. Just talked things over.

Bohannon- Bill come out and picked me up one day last week and I took him out there and showed him where everything was going to be and everything.

I got some prints and everything on the road that they were going to take to go out there and I just can't see that happening. You guys coming on your benefits package?

Dunavan- I think the commissioners are all working on reviewing information. I know Penney Carpenter sent us something the other day from Doug Martin, I believe from Universal, something they'd put together.

There's been members of the community that's reached out to us, said they would help on it. I don't think we're anywhere prepared to have one drawn up, per se, between us three, but I think there's a lot of, you know, good questions raised in December. A lot of research we have to do and a lot of things that we'd like to collectively put our heads together and say, "Hey, before we ever would send something back, we want to get input from people that matter and from the commissioners and the constituents."

Bohannon- We got some people that got a lot of experience with it that can help us out just that have done it and know what we need.

Dunavan- I would say you could email the commissioners. We have a universal one. It's like all at Vermillion County Commissioners and it comes to all of us. Or send it to us individually. It doesn't matter. But yeah, if anybody has anything, feel free to send it to us. We're all open to read and digest all the information that you have.

Bohannon- Appreciate your support and we'll get you what we can and let us know if you need anything. Give me a call.

- My name is Christy Mayer. I'm with the office of Attorney General Todd Rakita. I'm an outreach representative with his office and I'm just here to just to connect with people in Vermillion County. I'll let you know just a little bit about what our office does.

As the state's official law firm, we work to uphold laws when they're passed by the Indiana General Assembly and fight for liberty, fight for justice, fight for freedom in our state.

As an outreach representative, I live just across the river in Parke County and look forward to connecting with you as needs arise in the future and getting to know about some of the issues that are going on in your county so that I can share those questions, comments, and concerns with your attorney general, Todd Rakita, and partner with you in ways to help serve all Hoosiers.

There're so many pieces involved with the office of attorney general. There are over 400 employees with this office for everything from appeals to protection of consumers to data privacy. Our office puts out different Bill of Rights pamphlets to help educate Hoosiers to protect them from bad actors across the board.

One of the things that we do in addition to those protections and those education pieces is we reunite Hoosiers with unclaimed property. So, if you've never lived on Indiana Unclaimed, I encourage you to do that. And if you're a woman and you've been married, you have a maiden name, check your maiden name as well. I just recently checked my maiden name and I've been married over 20 years, but I found almost \$2,000 under my maiden name checking Indiana Unclaimed. So, I encourage you to get your money back from Indiana Unclaimed.

And I have cards to share if you would like one. and I'll be around for a little while after the meeting if you have any questions or comments or anything that you want to share. So, thank you. I appreciate your time. I appreciate what you guys do here.

- Curt Phelps- Guys, I appreciate everything you're doing. I know it can be tough. Everybody's got jobs. Everybody's got family. Everybody's got a life. And you guys are going over and above. Appreciate all the support and everything. And I want you to know that you have our support as well. I don't I'm kind of a gutsy individual. I'm a Tea Party Indian is what I call myself. I dump the tea in the bay right now. I don't care. I'd go to the governor's face tomorrow and tell him he isn't doing it. We aren't doing it. We don't want it. Quit trying to push stuff on citizens. They go to these places that have, you know, we have low industry. We don't have a there's; sparsely populated areas and they take advantage of that kind of stuff. And those are the mentality of the monsters that we deal with. I guess the main thing that I wanted to let you all know is we are here 100% to back you. There's a whole lot of people out there that are not here that have the same feeling. You know, the last meeting was the first meeting I've come to. That's kind of the reason I've talked to you at work a few times. Bill, and I want you guys to know that, you know, you do have our support, one of our staff. Please continue the fight. Say no. Thank you very much.

#### VIII. Open Issues

#### IX. New Business-

- Election of Officers  
Hess motions to keep things the same. RJ Dunavan as President, Hess as Vice President  
Peebles motions  
**All in favor, motion carries.**
- Board of Finance- Every January, there is a meeting with the Treasurer Office with Board of Finance to select bank depository for the county. A date needs to be set. Will ask Treasurer when she will be available to set up this meeting.
- WHRCC appointments- Our appointments to this board are **Les Zimmerman as the main appointee and myself as the secondary**. That way if he can't make a meeting, I would go in his place. Nobody else applied for those that position besides less and myself. So, **I'll entertain a motion to appoint those back for motion to continue those** as they were in 25.  
Peebles- I Motion

Dunavan- I have a motion on Mr. Peebles. Do I have a second?

Hess I second it.

Dunavan- I have a second by Miss Hess. Any further discussion? Hearing none, I'll call for the vote. **All in favor, motion carries**

- d. PTABOA Board Appointments- There was three applicants for that. I'll need a motion to approve those applicants.

Peebles I'll make the motion to approve those applicants.

Dunavan- I have a motion by Mr. Peoples. Do I have a second?

Hess- I'll second it.

Dunavan- Second by Mrs. Hess. Any further discussion? Hearing none, I'll call for the vote. **All in favor, Motion carries**

- e. Inee Mayhan- VSO-I just, I'm excited to share that the 2026 is going to, I'm promising some groundbreaking improvements for our veteran community here in Vermillion County. But also, I want to sincerely thank all of our veterans for their service, but also, I want to give another special shout out and I do it every month, but I had 17 new veterans enrolled in benefits last month alone and majority of them were first time Vietnam filers. So, I just want to tell all of them, thank you for entrusting me with your stories, but also, one of the things I tell every one of them, when you walk through that door, make sure you come in with your head held high.

And then also, the office is going to be closed on Monday, January 12th for the military veteran's legislative day in Indianapolis.

And then also I have the January VSO monthly newsletter if anybody wants a copy.

But, one of the things I focused on this month was what a fully developed claim is because there's two different types of claims. A fully developed claim is where I provide the veterans military medical records. I think I've covered this in meetings before. But it just the difference I see in veterans service connected disabilities getting approved first time filing instead of having to file appeals. It improves the veteran's odds so much being able for, because I request those records. I go through those records and so anything you're diagnosed with, if I can connect it to your service while you were in, I file a claim on it. So, I've got six or seven veterans right now. They all have 24 claims a piece. Every one of them was deferred. They were not denied.

So, when a claim is deferred and not denied, it just means they have the VA has conceded that yes, this is a service connected disability, but it is not bad enough yet, but it's on record. So, when that veteran's when that claim worsens as time goes on, we already have that initial brick in place and then we will build off that foundation for secondary claims and so forth.

I wound up driving 227 miles and unfortunately, I had another funeral to attend last month. I was gone to three conferences and training sessions and then I wound up working out of the Clinton American Legion on Saturday the 20th and enrolled two new veterans that day as well.

My current case load is 32 active files and I have 23 new claims for December with a total of claims outstanding right now at 260. And that is all I have right now.

I just want to put this on a side note because I was torn about whether to do it during public comment or not.

I am on the VSO, but also, I am a Vermillion County taxpayer as well, just like everybody else. And I feel like I have the right to also during public comment to speak my peace.

I identify myself as a Vermillion County veteran or a Vermillion County resident.

And so, when there are reports done, if I'm speaking as VSO, I want it to be represented as VSO. If I am speaking as a Vermillion County resident, I want it on the record that I am a Vermillion County resident and not speaking as the VSO.

Dunavan- Thank you, Inee. And I and I think the commissioners would agree with that that you know anybody that works for the county you know doesn't lose their rights to come to these meetings and speak and during public comment and say their piece. So,

we appreciate you and we appreciate anybody in the community that comes to these meetings and uses your voice. So, thank you for that.

- f. SWCD- Connie Warner and Eric Scheidler- Memorandum of Agreement – Eric Shidler from Main County Soil and Water. What we're bringing before you this evening is a memorandum of agreement.

Basically, what we've worked under for years and years is kind of a quote unquote gentleman's agreement that the county would provide for employment and space for the soil and water district. So, what water districts across the state are doing is basically taking that spoken agreement and just putting it down into formal agreements with the county.

That's what we're bringing before you. Now is just a formal agreement. Just kind of solidifies what we've always been doing. If you didn't see the one that I sent later today, I did make a couple of small changes. One was I just showed where soil and water districts are established in Indiana code 14-3-32. The other one was I did add a letter "A" under the commissioner shall provide and that's just for the minimum of one position for soil and water. So, with that I'll entertain any questions you might have on that memorandum of agreement.

Dunavan- I don't have any questions there. Pretty standard. Like I said, like Eric said, you know, this is just put in writing that we what we've done for years. So, I don't think there's anything crazy about it. I'll entertain a motion to approve the memorandum of agreement with soil and water as presented to the board of commissioners tonight.

Hess- I'll make a motion.

Dunavan- I have a motion, Mrs. Hess. Do I have a second?

Peebles I'll second.

Dunavan- I have a second, Mr. Peebles. Any further discussion? Hearing none. Call for the vote. **All in favor, Motion carries**

Connie Warner- Board Chairman- For a couple of announcements- Thank you all very much for allowing me to have that opportunity. Just to let you know that for every dollar that's invested in soil and water in Vermillion County. We have the report here that says the benefits are \$6.95.

So, we think that's a pretty good return. We do have our financial statement if there's anything you'd like to see that outlines that.

Just looking forward to a great soil and water year. We have a kindergarten day at the fairgrounds that we find is be one of our things and it's amazing what our kids don't know about what goes on there and we have a great relationship with so many different entities extinction. And we're also part of a bigger umbrella like you are.

And also, would like to invite you to our annual meeting which is going to be Tuesday, February the 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at the Vermillion County Fairgrounds. And we're going to have the South Vermillion Choir there showcasing some of our local talent, get the kids out, and just a good night to just have good food and relate and thank the people that have supported so on the water through the year.

- g. Joshua Tolen- SEA 433 Overview explain CVSO Accreditation Standard and impact.  
Not Present

- h. Josh Gaskill- SJCA- What I've got before you are a general services agreement, professional services agreement. Just to kind of recap our company, we're a civil engineering firm. We specialize in bridge work preservation and this agreement would basically allow the county to if they would request work in that category, we could provide a task order and be able to perform any work there.  
If there's any questions about the agreement, be glad to take them.

Dunavan- So, essentially, the council where they gave us that \$40,000 for that engineering line item and last year, we had signed specifically with like one engineering firm. Going forward, you could use it for that where like Josh stated that they won't do

anything unless the commissioners assign a task order. But, you know, looking on here, if we needed a survey or we needed something done, they would they wouldn't have to come to a meeting or if the highway department needed to use them and there's funds available, you just assign a task order and be done with it. So, a lot of companies do this.

Some counties have five or six of these signed. That way, they can just pick whoever they want to call or whoever is available. Some of them may not be available when they call.

Josh- So, sometimes it be referred to as an on-call agreement, but there's no value associated to the contract because we would have to provide a task order and you'd have a cost estimate beforehand before signing it.

Dunavan- I don't have any other questions for Josh. I entertain a motion to approve the SJCA agreement before us.

Hess I'll make a motion.

Dunavan- I have a motion on Mrs. Hess. Do I have a second?

Peebles- I will second the motion, but I do have a comment. Who would be the contact person? Tia? That would contact to get rolling on something or would that still need to come through us to....

Dunavan- So, for the for the highway department I think it would be the board of directors with Tia but with us signing this you know somebody there would you know agree to you know hire Josh's firm here to say "hey, go do this" and if the commissioners have a project it'd be for us or if another agency in the county said, "Hey, can we have something done?" If we have the funding or they have the funding, you know, we can sign that." But with that task order, someone's name is going to be on that dotted line before any work is done. So, internally at the highway department, it might be Tia, it might be one of the directors. But we can talk to them about that. But, it wouldn't come back through the commissioners every meeting because it's already been approved for them to do it. It's just that task orders.....

Peebles- Maybe by a recommendation from the highway board of directors to the commissioners to do that if it was a certain amount.

Dunavan- I mean and then that's internally up to us. This is just saying that they don't have to come every, you know, meeting to come get something approved.

Peebles- If we've got three or four groups pulling out of that \$40,000, that may not last very long if that's what we have set up for.

Dunavan- I don't know. There're three or four groups. For us, it would just be the highway department and the and the commissioners. But I mean for us it's just if we need something done, we've already got a task or not a task order, an agreement signed where we wouldn't have to wait if majority of us agree to say, "Hey, there's another kayak launch you need surveyed and that's \$1,500." We would just sign the task order and be done.

Hess- And is that the So since Tia kind of manages the budget anyway, she would kind of manage the budget for us.

Dunavan- Well, the 40,000 The question is I haven't seen the budget sent back to us from the council yet. I don't know if they stuck that in the highway department or if they stuck that in commissioner's core under professional services. So, if it's under professional services be under our umbrella and highway department still in theory ours but we have a system set up there with the board of directors that they would manage that.

Peebles- So that's a two-year agreement.

Gaskill- Yes. Section 12 will show you the term of it but it is a two-year agreement. That's the default one that we typically provide. Can always communicate if there's desire to have some other kind of ter.

Peebles- I think we'd be fine with a two-year agreement.

Dunavan- I mean again there's no tie to cost. There's no paying anything. It's an on call that still has to be approved by a task order. So, we could sign nine of these.

Peebles- We have a very limited budget. So, I doubt you 18 centers off what we're going to pay you.

**All right. If there's no other questions or comments, I have a motion by Mrs. Hess and a second by Mr. Peoples. I'll call for the vote. All in favor, Motion carries**

- i. Rise Appointment- First of all, we'd like to thank Mr. Mahalik for his dedicated service to the Vermillion Rise Board of Directors. He attended his resignation now earlier I want to say in December. We want to thank him for all his hard work and dedication.

With that the board of commissioners had asked the remaining four members of the board to email the commissioners a recommendation of a board member and they have done that. They are recommending **Adam Winland** for the board. Adam is here tonight in attendance.

I'll leave that up to the board of commissioners if there's a motion to entertain or if anybody has any questions for Mr. Winland.

Peebles- I would like to make a motion that on the advice of the rise board that we appoint Adam Winland to the rise board.

Hess -I'll second that.

Dunavan- All right. I have a motion by Mr. Peebles and a second by Mrs. Hess. Only discussion I'll add is I think Adam is a good board member. He did apply online and if you know looked at that I mean he's a great businessman, owns a business here in the county, lives here. I think it' be a great asset to the board and I think the other four members are doing their due diligence in selecting a good candidate. So, if there's no other discussion, I'll call for the vote. **All in favor, Motion carries**

- j. Vermillion County Handbook- Last meeting I discussed with you guys that the board had met in December. There were some clarification errors corrected with the sheriff's department. Vacation time.

It was agreed to let up to one week be rolled over into I believe sick time.

There was one thing about a part-time employee receiving some benefits that was struck. That was a mistake in the handbook.

We just need to make sure that we approve this in December. I went through the minutes and we didn't actually approve it. So, I'd like to get that approved tonight and that way Billie can have an updated copy approved by the board on January the 5th so she can send that out to the employees.

Peebles- I'd like to sit down with Billie and go over that handbook. I'll make an appointment and come in talk.

Dunavan- That that's fine. You guys in your emails will have a copy I think it was sent to you guys two or three weeks ago. They are highlighted in yellow.

I went through and highlighted the changes. There might be three or four of them. But, there the handbook committee was unanimous except for I think there was one section where there might have been one dissenting vote but other than that everything else was unanimous consent.

So, in December there was no objection to any of this. There was just no formal vote of and I would prefer to have a formal vote by the board to let Billie know and all the county employees know that that was approved by the board of commissioners. So, I didn't hear any objections in December, but after I went through and looked at it, it wasn't voted on.

So, was it the opinion that you want to wait till next month?

Pebbles- Well, we can we can pass it and I can go in and sit down and discuss.

Dunavan- We can always amend any....

Pebbles- If there's anything in there that I would like to amend. I would like to have that opportunity in future to bring it up for discussion.

Dunavan- I would review that and just talk to Billie if you got any. I'll entertain a motion to approve the handbook changes as the as presented.

Hess I'll make a motion.

Dunavan- I have a motion by Mrs. Hess. Do I have a second? A second.

Pebbles- Seconds.

Dunavan- Any further discussion? Hearing? None. I'll call for the vote. **All in favor Motion carries**

- k. Turkey Farm Less Raffle- Last year, we raffled this off for the first time. The county collected \$1,000 from that lease raffle and we at last meeting gave that out to two nonprofits. The question I'm not really looking for a vote tonight unless the commissioners want to act on this, but I briefly discussed with you guys that the intent of this was to raffle this off every year.

Our current lease has brought to our attention that, hey, if you would allow this person to extend the lease, they would invest money into it, food plots, mow it, clean up the brush, stuff like that.

I do think there's benefits to that, but I do think if we were to move that route, you would only allow it to be a two- or three-year max, and then when you raffled it a second time, they would be ineligible for that raffle. That way, somebody new in the county would get that.

And I think also there should be a caveat if you extend this lease that there be a 2%- 5% some type of increase each year for that current lease.

But I think we could probably wait till February to discuss. I just want to bring that to you guys' attention to be thinking about and see if you want to just do the raffle like we done it yearly at a time or allow it to be up to two or three years.

So, like I said, it doesn't have to I know last year we got started late. We didn't really get it put out till I think March, but this year we're a little bit ahead of the balls.

Hess- So, we can I guess my thing would be like one question I would have is what if the next person wouldn't want to do the food plots and take care of the lawn and do all those things?

Dunavan- Then I think you do it like a yearly. I think you write it. We write this agreement to say it's a one-year raffle with the possibility to extend it up to two years or three years, but with that, and most hunters will tell you this, if they get a lease more than one year, they're going to put food plots, they're going to mow it, they're going to maintain, they're going to do that. I don't know that I know many hunters that don't do that. If they have an extended lease or an extended property, I don't know. There's probably a few out here maybe. I don't know.

But know Justin Goins one, but he's not here tonight. He could definitely tell you a little bit. But I would advise you just kind of go out, talk to people, and then next month come back with a recommendation.

Added to the agenda:

- l. Fuel Bids HWY- You have an email from the highway administrator earlier today. And Jon, we spoke at length with this. There was some discrepancies with our bidding process with the fuel bids uh with taxes being included not being included and Jon your recommendation is that it would be best because we asked them to rebid. We have those numbers for us tonight uh to reject those bids from December and then have rebid.
- Tia did ask him to rebid and we have those numbers tonight. So, could we award that tonight then? Okay.

I will entertain a motion uh to reject the fuel bid that the commissioners approved at our last December's meeting which was awarded to Keystone Cooperative.

Hess- I'll make a motion to reject it.

Dunavan- I have a motion by Mrs. Hess. Do I have a second?

Peebles- I second.

Dunavan- Second by Mr. Peebles. Any further discussion? Hearing none. Call for the vote. **All in favor, Motion carries.**

Now I will entertain a motion to approve the fuel bid for 2026.  
And you guys both have both those um bids in your email.

**Peebles-I will make a motion to go to Sunrise.**

**Dunavan- I have a motion by Mr. Peebles to approve Sunrise. And do I have a second?**

**Hess- I'll be seconding it.**

Dunavan- I have a second by Mrs. Hess. And any further discussion of the board?

All I will say is Sunrise did come in lower price with the applicable taxes. And that is the reason for the rebid is once information and Tia looked over that stuff, we found out that Keystone was not lower. So therefore, we are moving forward, saving the county money and going with Sunrise. I'll call for the vote. **All in favor, Motion carries**

- m. Vermillion Reasons Podcast- Vermillion Reasons podcast. Last year we got a grant through the community foundation. It was \$1,200 actually might have been less than \$1,200. But to continue that in 2026, it is \$1,200. I would like to ask the board if they would like to continue that and if they would delegate one commissioner to work with Jenny someone in the auditor's office to see what we have in commissioner's court to see if there \$1,200 that we could spend on that podcast.

So, I'll leave that up to you guys if you'd like to continue that.

Hess- I mean I know a lot of people listen to it. I like it. But I'm What do you think, Bill?

Peebles- I listened to one or two episodes of it, and that's be honest I mean, I just Maybe it's not my cup of tea. I don't know.

Dunavan-I think it's a good way to value Vermillion County. I think, when they first started, it was here in the county and had a lot of local people. And I think James, the one that runs it, I think is trying to get back here to do some local interviews here on campus, I should say. So, I would be in favor of looking for that \$1,200 if there's I mean I know Misty is. Bill, you have any objection?

Peebles- I don't object to it. There are there is a community out there that is engrossed with podcasts and I'm sure they look forward to seeing it every time it's on.

Dunavan-By agreement then Misty, do you want to take that up with the Auditor's office? Okay, we'll delegate Misty to that then. Thank you.

X. Adjourn

Hess makes motion adjourn the meeting

Peebles seconds,

All in favor, motion carries.

AYE:

NYE:

RJ Dun

RJ Dunavan

Misty Hess

Misty Hess

William Peebles

William Peebles

ATTEST:

Ron Dunavan

Ron Dunavan, Auditor

