

WHEREAS, in the opinion of the County Auditor, the public interests required that the Lake County Council, should be called to meet in special session at this time, for the purpose of considering First Reading for the 2025 Budgets. A written notice was sent to each member of the Council, and proper advertisement made, and all other acts performed in accordance with the laws governing such matters.

And now in obedience to such call, come Christine Cid, President, David Hamm, Ronald Brewer and Pete Lindemulder and Ted Bilski, County Councilpersons, together with Tom O'Donnell and Ray Szarmach, County Council Attorneys. Councilman Brown was present via WebEx. Councilman Ted Bilski was absent.

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Lindemulder, to set thirty-two correctional officer positions to \$1 and set overtime to \$3,930,000 in the County General Fund 1001 for Department 8002. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

Lindemulder made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to set Highway Department 700212545002 salary market adjustment to \$150,000 in the County General Fund 1001. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

Brown made the motion, seconded by Brewer, to reduce part-time by \$15,000 and split it equally between the director and the assistant director in the emergency management department. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

In the Matter of Ordinance Authorizing Tax Levies (OR-1)

Brewer made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve Ordinance Authorizing Tax Levies (OR-1) on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

In the Matter of Ordinance for Appropriations, Forms 4A and 4B (OR-2)

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Lindemulder, to approve Ordinance for Appropriations, Forms 4A and 4B (OR-2) on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

In the Matter of Salary Ordinance for 2025 (OR-3)

Lindemulder made the motion, seconded by Brewer, to approve Salary Ordinance for 2025 (OR-3) on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

In the Matter of Longevity Ordinance for 2025 (OR-4)

Brewer made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve Longevity Ordinance for 2025 (OR-4) on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

In the Matter of Sheriff Clothing Allowance Ordinance (OR-5)

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Brewer, to approve Sheriff Clothing Allowance Ordinance (OR-5) on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

In the Matter of Per Diem Expense Ordinance for 2025 (OR-6)

Lindemulder made the motion, seconded by Brewer, to approve Per Diem Expense Ordinance for 2025 (OR-6) on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

In the Matter of Binding Recommendations/Ordinances – Lake Ridge Fire (OR-7)

Brewer made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve Lake Ridge Fire Binding Recommendations/Ordinance (OR-7) on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

In the Matter of Binding Recommendations/Ordinances – Lake County Solid Waste (OR-8)

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Brewer, to approve Lake County Solid Waste (OR-8) on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Bilski and Niemeyer were absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

Cid: For the South Shore Sonvention Visitors Authority, their board is going to approve their budget in early October so they will be on our Second Reading.

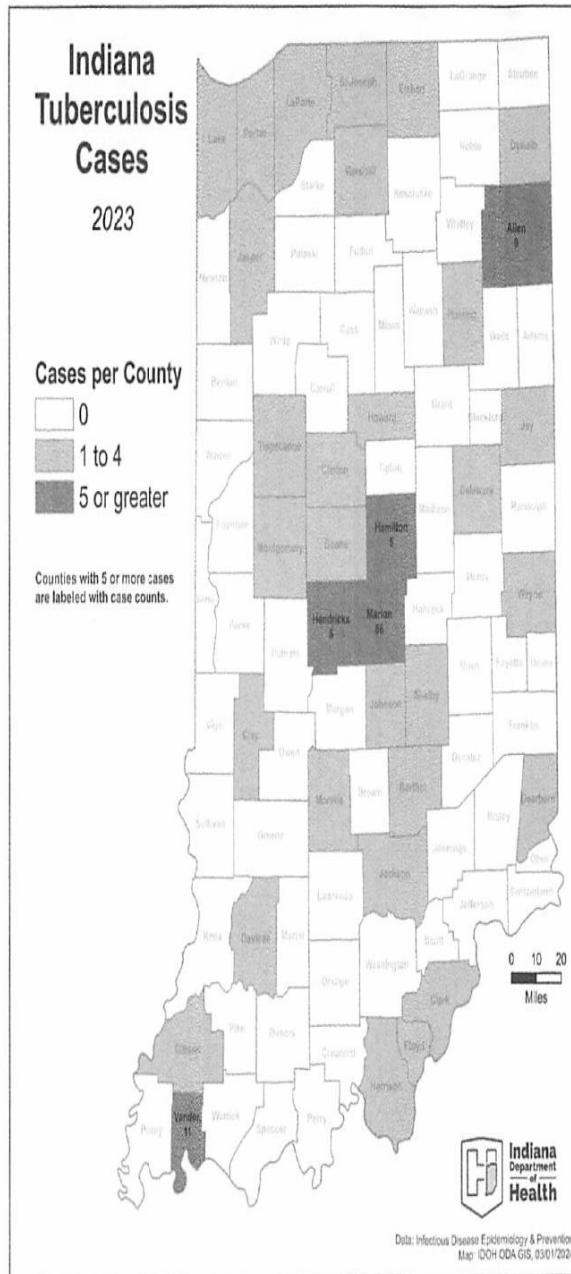
Councilman Niemeyer was present.

Cid: Fiscal responsibility is our main objective when handling taxpayers' dollars and I believe this board has proven that throughout the years and we also want to be competitive with private business to retain our employees and I think with our salaries and our benefits package we can begin to be very competitive.

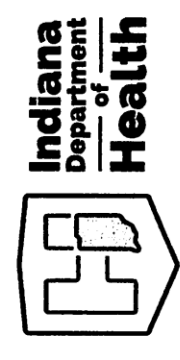
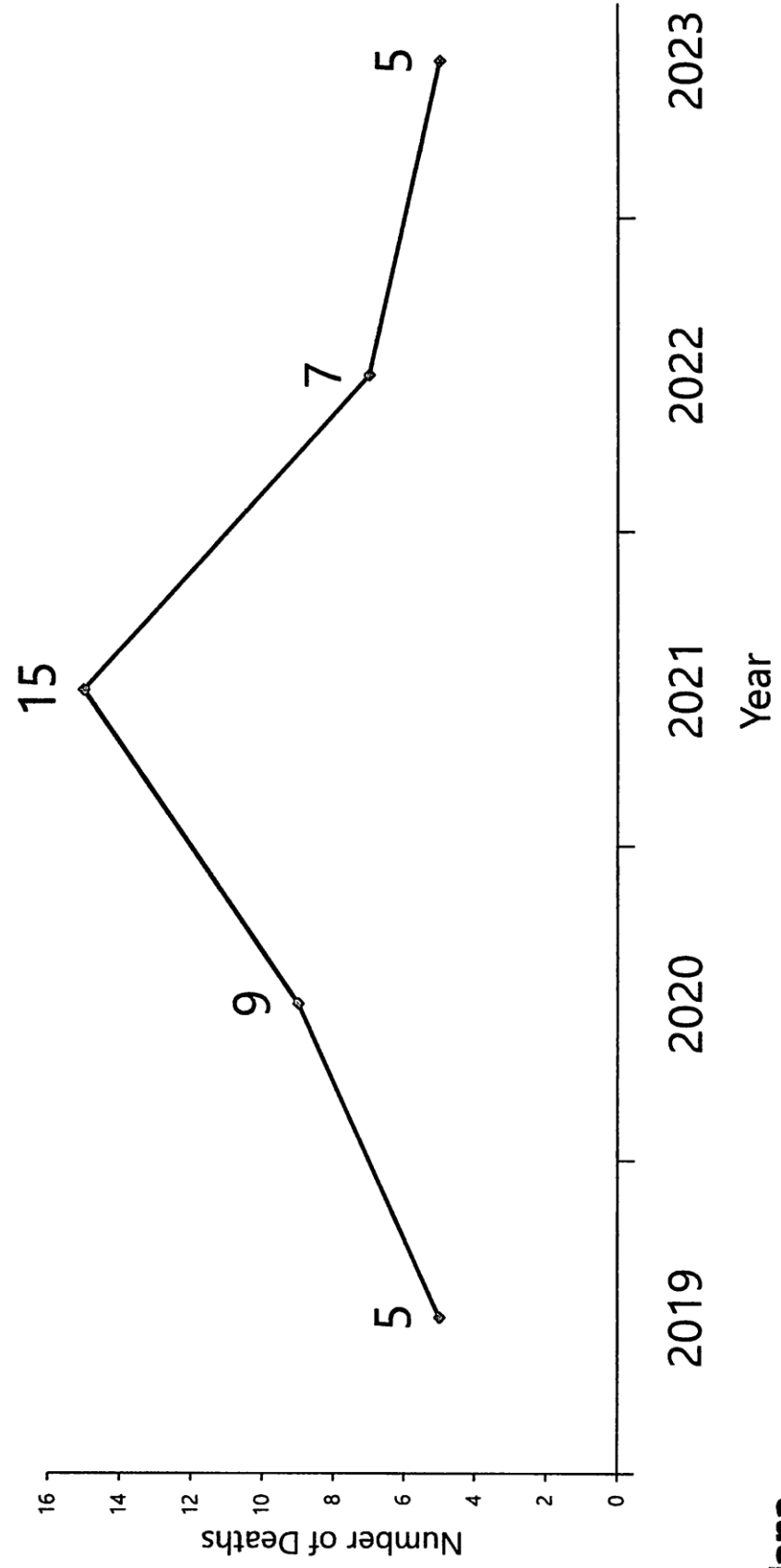
Public Comment:

Barbara Koteles of Hobart: First, I want to clear up somethingg I said at the last meeting about a 25% payback figure for Lake County taxpayers which is supposed to go to the County Health Board. Indeed, this stipulation was in SB4, but when it became SEA4, it was stricken from the bill. However, the current bill states that through property tax valuation, taxpayers are being assessed to fund the Lake County Health Department. Some in our group, business owners and those with health and financial experience were looking at the health department budget again. There are positions that are way overfunded, such as the information technology position. The average pay for one in Indiana is at 22.75/hr. or about \$48,000 annually. The tech hired by the Health department was offered a salary of \$80,000. Please check into this. I see the position of Emergency Preparedness Asst. in the budget. Obviously, we already have one. Lots of agencies in Lake County deal in Emergency Preparedness. Do we really need this assistant position? The proposed salary is \$53,000. SEA4 states that a health board can hire one School Liaison. The HB plans to hire three. How is this supported? Salary for each one is \$53,000. Please follow up on this. the health department wants to hire a fulltime TB surveillance liaison at \$48,000 per year, when according to the statistics of the Indiana state health department, there have only been four cases of TB in Lake County this year. I've included current documentation. Another site states that eighty-five percent of TB cases that were counted in the entire US during 2023 were latent TB, which isn't contagious. Forty-eight thousand for a full-time employee seems to exorbitant. Perhaps a part-time person should be hired for this job. Please look into this. At the recent council meeting, I listened to many department heads ask for three percent raises for their employees, I couldn't help but wonder what kind of raises Nick Doffin and Dr. Vavilala got. Especially Dr. Vavilala who has a full-time medical practice in Crown Point. If she can run the health board part-time while running her practice, I think her Public Health Officer position should be made part-time instead of full-time. Part time Public Health Officer are common. There is however, a program that the health department could fund that would benefit many people and be self-sustaining, and that is the vertical hanging gardens also known as Good Farm for Youth Program planned for the Juvenile Correction Center. The cost of this program, if I remember correctly, is about \$313,000. It could easily be funded through the non-core health funding of the HB. The benefits of this project would be tangible and immediate. They would extend the mental and physical health and education in our country. It would involve the Food Bank. The Health Department partners with the food bank. I pitched this idea during public comment at the recent health board meeting. Afterwards, Board President Dr. Nchekwube came up to me and told me he liked the idea. Can members of the county council collaborate with the Health Board Dept. and free up some money for this project which addresses diet, exercise and agricultural knowledge as well as community pride? I would like the council to consider it. Lake County could use \$313,000 elsewhere.

Indiana 2023 TB Cases



Indiana TB Deaths: 2019-2023



An estimated 85% of the people counted in 2023 were infected at least a year or two earlier and had what's called latent TB, when the bacterium enters the body and hibernates in the lungs or other parts of the body. Experts estimate as many as 13 million Americans have latent TB and are not contagious.

Councilman Brown: I would like to know if all of these issues dealing with the lake county health department have been presented to the proper board. The public should be aware that we are the party of last resorts. If a citizen does not get a response from whichever department they are attempting to get it from, then we will intercede. I have some concerns about issues that should be dealt with health board itself. I don't hear that these issues have been presented initially to the health board, or that the health board is ignoring the request for information.

Shelia Madjecki of Schererville: I want to tell you emphatically I think the health board has made some progress, but do they listen to us? No. Have they made a meeting that more of the community could attend? No. It's 7:30 in the morning because they have their practice to go to. We understand that, but they schedule it to such a point that they do not allow public comment, they barely get the pledge of allegiance in. I'm getting up early way earlier than I have to I go to the meeting and then they don't let you say anything.

There being no further business to come before the Council, it was moved and seconded that this Council does now adjourn, to meet again as required by law.

President, Lake County Council

ATTEST:

Peggy Holinga Katona,
Lake County Auditor