

Miami County Council Meeting

June 17, 2025

Meeting Information

- Date & Time: 06-17-25 7:00 pm
- Location: 25 N Broadway Peru IN 46970 GAR ROOM
- Attendees:
 - President Chittum – Present
 - Councilman Wiles – Present
 - Councilman Fruth – Present
 - Councilman Sailors – Present
 - Councilman Nutt – Present
 - Councilman Allen – Present
 - Councilman Scott – Present
 - Annette Phillippo - Auditor

Meeting Notes

1. Courthouse Security and Economic Development

- **Approval of Previous Minutes**

The council proceeded with the approval of the previous meeting's minutes from May 20th, 2025. A motion to approve by Councilman Fruth was made and seconded by Councilman Sailors the motion was carried 7-0
- **Courthouse Security Plan Implementation**

Chief Deputy Vitec presented a comprehensive plan for courthouse security, emphasizing its 26-year development. The plan involves adding a third full-time deputy, Jeff Grant, and utilizing Eric Hawk as a part-time special deputy to address manpower issues. The strategy includes locking down doors, using the north entrance for the public, and restricting other entrances to credential staff. The plan was approved by commissioners 3-0 yesterday (June 16th, 2025).

The financial implications of the courthouse security plan were discussed, focusing on the salary for the new full-time deputy, which is \$56,280 annually. An additional payment of \$50,000 from the county general fund

was requested to cover the salary, benefits, and insurance for the remainder of the current year.

Councilman Fruth motioned to approve \$50,000 for county general for payroll of the third full time deputy, Councilman Sailers seconded the motion. Passed 7-0

- **Keller Logistics Tax Abatement Request**

Jim Tidd with MCEDA, representing Keller Logistics, presented a request for a 70% real property tax abatement over a 15-year period. This abatement is intended to support the construction of a 150,000-square-foot shell building at the Grissom Aeroplex. The 15-year duration was specifically requested due to the county not providing direct financial support or backing for this project, unlike others.

2. Investment in a new 150,000 sq ft speculative shell building by Keller Logistics at Grissom, in partnership with the county, to attract new businesses.

- **Keller Logistics Tax Abatement Request**

Jim Tidd with MCEDA , representing Keller Logistics, presented a request for a 70% real property tax abatement over a 15-year period. This abatement is intended to support the construction of a 150,000-square-foot shell building at the Grissom Aeroplex. The 15-year duration was specifically requested due to the county not providing direct financial support or backing for this project, unlike others.

- **Jim Tidd Introduced Brian Keller and Keller Logistics**

Brian Keller, President and CEO of Keller Logistics, grew up in the area, attending Gaston High School (graduated in 1986) and Ball State, before entering the logistics business. His company started as a trucking company and is now a full-service logistics company.

- **150,000 sq ft Shell Building Project at Grissom**

Keller Logistics is investing in a 150,000 sq ft shell building at Grissom. This is the third shell building experience for the county, designed to allow businesses to move in quickly, typically within 90 to 100 days of completion.

- **County's Financial Commitment and Partnership**

Unlike previous projects where the county or Makita owned the buildings, in this partnership, the county's financial commitment is the no-cost transfer of 20 acres of land to accommodate the 150,000 sq ft shell building, which is expandable.

- **Tax Abatement and TIF Impact**

The approved tax abatement for the project does not impact general revenue tax dollars as it is applied to the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) and RISM. Brian's investment is expected to increase the overall assessed value.

- **Keller Logistics Company Details and Real Estate Development Experience**

Keller Logistics has approximately 950 employees, operates 5.2 million sq ft of warehouse space, and employs 425 truck drivers and 354 truck drivers. Brian Keller has built four speculative buildings (two in Defiance, one in Henry County, one in Dallas, Texas), sold one, and leased others. He has built about 4 million sq ft of warehouse space over the years and currently owns 1.5 million sq ft.

- **Purpose and Future of the Speculative Building**

The 150,000 sq ft building is speculative, meaning it will be built and then marketed to a potential user, such as a manufacturer, distributor, or other business company. The plan is to lease the building, and Keller Logistics expects to retain ownership for the entire 15-year abatement period.

- **Building Specifications and Construction**

The shell building will have a ceiling height of 36 feet to the eave and will be constructed using concrete tilt-up methods. It is designed to be divisible and includes provisions for HVC, electrical, and fire suppression systems.

- **Timeline for Completion**

There is an expectation that the 150,000 sq ft shell building will be completed and ready for occupancy by the end of 2025.

- **Resolution Approval**

A resolution regarding the project was presented, which had been previously emailed out. A motion to approve the resolution 06-17-25 was made, Councilman Fruth, Councilman Sailors seconded, carried 7-0

3. Financial Approvals, Personnel Changes, and Accountability within County Operations

- **EMA Siren Upgrade and Appropriation**

Discussion about the EMA siren upgrade, initially planned for appropriations but now under rainy day funds and approved by commissioners. Jim Tidd, MCEA is purchasing a siren for Grissom. Jodie requested a \$6,000 appropriation for her payout for next time. The maintenance cost is estimated at \$1,000-\$1,500 annually, not \$70,000.

- **Mary Brown's Attorney Fees Request**

Mary Brown, the Treasurer, requested payment of personal attorney fees associated with a cease-and-desist letter sent March 2025 alleging defamation claims against her person as auditor and treasurer. She stated that defamatory statements were made against her by Commissioner Brenda Weaver, Councilman John Allen, and County Auditor Annette Phillippo. Due to a conflict of interest, the County Attorney advised her that he could not represent her so she sought her own private counsel. The total amount requested was around \$1,300 at this time. Discussion ensued regarding whether it was a personal or county claim. The county Attorney Mark Frantz stated he viewed this as a personal claim to an individual.

A Member of the audience, Elizabeth Price, raised the issue that it was a personnel issue and should be confidential and dealt with in an Executive Meeting.

Councilman Nutt stated he would like to advertise for next month, Councilman Scott seconded to advertise for the appropriation of Mary Brown's personal attorney fees. Motion to advertise was approved 6-1 (Councilman Allen opposed.) Council decided to hold an executive meeting including the Commissioners at a later date.

- **Economic Development Commission (EDC) Appointments**

The council discussed the need to appoint a member to both the City and County Economic Development Commissions (EDCs), which are three-member commissions required by state statutes to review TIF incentives. Brad Fruth expressed a willingness to serve as the new county council representative for both EDCs. Sandy Chittum asked the council to confirm Brad Fruth's appointment with both EDCs. There were no objections.

4. Grissom Inn Demolition and Administrative Updates were given by Brad Fruth for the Plan Commission.

- **Grissom Inn Demolition**

Update on the Grissom Inn demolition progress. Notices still need to be served. Council approval for appropriation from CEDIT funds will be required for bidding. An asbestos report confirmed asbestos in floor tiles, necessitating abatement. This process is moving quickly as it's delaying another economic development project. The council will be asked for CEDIT money to cover cleanup costs.

- **Public Comment - Eel River Road Sinkhole**

Peter Sahaidachny reported on behalf of a friend there is a sinkhole on 100 West (Eel River Road/Eel River Cemetery Road). His vehicle was not damaged. The question was raised if the county highway department had been contacted. It was noted that someone needs to inspect it for repair.

- **Public Comment - Highways/Interstates (431)**

A citizen inquired about issues along highways and interstates, specifically mentioning 431. It was clarified that such matters fall under Indot's responsibility.

- **Meeting Adjournment**

Councilman Fruth made a motion to adjourn, Councilman Sailors seconded. Passed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted

Annette Phillippo
Miami County Auditor