OWEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES JANUARY 8, 2026
2nd Floor of the Courthouse Commissioner's Room

Live Streamed on YouTube

Commissioners present: Sam Hobbs, Dave Risk, and Norman Warner

Also present: Auditor Sheila Reeves

County Attorney: Tony Overholt

The Opening Prayer was given, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Election of Officers

- Auditor Reeves: The first order of business is the election of officers. First is the President. I'll take nominations for President. Risk made a motion to elect Hobbs for President, seconded by Warner 3/0 approved.
- Risk made a motion to nominate Warner for Vice President seconded by Hobbs 3/0 approved.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

- Commissioner Hobbs noted a correction to Resolution 2025-017: The minutes reflect 29 approvals, but the correct number is 2/0."
- Motion by Warner to approve minutes as corrected seconded by Hobbs 2/0 approved
- Abstention: Commissioner Risk ("I was not present at that meeting.")

Approval of payroll and claims

- Payroll $315,245.04
- Regular Claims $424,209.19
- Out of Cycle Claims $22,258.84
- Total $761,713.07
- Motion by Warner, second by Risk to approve payroll and claims 3/0 approved

Policy 401 – Timekeeping (AOD Policy change)

- Lindsay Denton, Payroll Deputy explained a need for policy change due to the complication of shifts for Coroner, EMS, Sheriff Department, have all requested to go back to paper time keeping.
- Clerk requested to include election and registration.
- Motion by Hobbs to adopt revised Policy 401 including EMS, Coroner, Sheriff, and Election & Registration second by Warner 3/0 approved.

- Commissioner Hobbs clarified intent: “This is not about loosening accountability. This is about acknowledging how these departments operate so payroll can be processed.”

Financial Condition & Budget Discussion

- Commissioner Hobbs stated the Board would briefly discuss current budget conditions for public awareness prior to the Financial Report. He noted the County Council would address budget matters at its Monday meeting.
- Auditor Reeves reported receipt of final budget figures from the DLGF and advised of state-imposed reductions totaling:

- Election & Registration: $33,536.00
- Highway: $599,753.00
- Cumulative Capital Development:120,122.00

❖ Reeves stated the June 30 cash balance is the primary factor used by DLGF in setting budgets and noted that prior-year claims continue to impact cash balances, particularly in the Highway Fund. Although Highway allocation increased from the initial Form 1782, a $599,753.00 shortfall remains. Auditor Reeves noted the County relied on a $700,000.00 additional appropriation in the prior year and stated she would begin providing monthly financial reports. She identified Election & Registration and Highway as the most critical funds at this time.

❖ Commissioner Risk stated that the Highway Department was more than $1 million in deficit when the current Board took office and that the current Highway budget is insufficient to significantly improve road conditions. Risk emphasized the need for adequate funding to address long-term infrastructure needs. “We inherited a Highway Department that was already over a million dollars in the hole. What you’re seeing today didn’t happen overnight.”

❖ Commissioner Warner stated progress has been made but challenges remain if the Highway budget is not fully funded.

❖ Commissioner Hobbs emphasized transparency: “The public deserves honesty. We can’t pretend roads are fine when the funding isn’t.

Jail Project Review – Issue Summary

- Jail project budget includes sewer construction only from the facility to the manhole**.**
- The Town of Spencer advised that jail construction would require upgrading the 8-inch sewer line to a 12-inch line from the manhole to the Fifth Street lift station**.**
- Estimated additional cost of required sewer upgrade: approximately $2 million**,** not included in the current jail project budget.

- Utility easements and coordination remain outstanding and are the responsibility of the developer and contractor**.**
- Additional geotechnical testing was conducted at the proposed quarry site; results are pending**.**
- Additional critical information continues to be requested from the developer and contractor.
- The Board will not proceed with any land transaction or land swap until testing results are received and the site is confirmed to be stable, suitable, and financially feasible**.**
- The Board emphasized the need to avoid acquiring property that may not be suitable for jail construction.
- Updated information is anticipated, with a public update expected at the January meeting.

County attorney – 2026 appointment

- Commissioner Hobbs stated that **Anthony Overholt** wishes to continue serving as County Attorney in 2026 under an unchanged contract that provides cost savings to the County.
- Motion by Hobbs moved to appoint Anthony Overholt as County Attorney for the Commissioners 2026. Second by Risk 3/0 approved.
- Contract was presented for signatures appointing Overholt as counsel to the Board of Commissioners in 2026.

Board of Commissioners meeting has been recessed, convening the Board of Finance meeting.

Owen County Board of Finance Meeting

- Commissioner Risk called the meeting to order.
- Election of Officers
    - President: Commissioner Risk; motion by Hobbs, second by Warner 3/0 approved.
    - Secretary: Treasurer Shelly Townsend; motion by Warner second by Risk 3/0 approved.

Packet Contains:

- Minutes of January 23, 2025, Board of Finance meeting.
- Treasurer's Investment Report
- Treasurer Townsend reported 2025 interest earnings totaling $967,514.32.
- County currently holds two CDs totaling $4 million at approximately 4.04% interest, both held at Crane Credit Union. Note investment amounts limited by overall county cash balances.

- Additional funds may be invested in the coming weeks if permitted under policy limits.

County Financial Condition

- Auditor Reeves reported the County's financial condition has significantly improved due to reduced overspending and improved oversight.
- Total county balances are higher than prior years. Emphasizing the need for continued budget discipline and monitoring of revenue-limited funds.
- Remaining ARPA balances consist solely of interest earnings, which must remain in the ARPA interest fund until final reporting.

Investment Policy & Resolution

- 2026 Owen County Investment Policy motion by Hobbs to approve, second by Warner 3/0 approved.
- 2026 Owen County Investment Resolution 2026-001 motion by Hobbs to approve, second by Warner 3/0 approved.

Void Outstanding Checks

- Motion by Warner to authorize Treasurer to void outstanding checks over two years old totaling $1,690.57 second by Risk 3/0 approved.
- The Board of Finance meeting adjourned.

Commissioner Meeting Reconvened

Tourism Commission Board Appointment

- Kimberly Baird term expired up for reappointment. Hobbs stated: "Gosport deserves representation, and this is a volunteer position. I appreciate people willing to step up."
- Motion by Warner to reappoint Kimberly Baird to a four-year term, second by Risk 3/0 approved.

Resolution No. 2026-002 Storage Units Closure

Commissioner Hobbs presented Resolution No. 2026-002

- Cease County-operated storage units, no new rentals
- No payments after January 1, 2026, prior balances remain due.
- All property must be removed by June 30, 2026.
- Access ends July 1, 2026.
- All remaining funds will be transferred to the Jail Fund 9181.
- Motion by Warner to approve Resolution No. 2026-002 second by Risk. 3/0 approved. Resolution is effective immediately.

Commissioner Hobbs stated renters will be notified, refunds issued where applicable, and that the L-shaped building housing Sheriff operations will remain

County property, with possible future appraisal and disposition of other property to support jail financing.

Executive session certification

- Commissioner Hobbs asked directly: “Can we certify that no decisions were made outside the posted notice?”
- Commissioners Risk and Warner responded: “That is correct.”
- Motion by Warner to approve Executive Session Certification second by Risk 2/0/1 approved. Abstention: Sam Hobbs (“I was not present.”

911 / Emergency Communications

- Commissioner Hobbs explained support for consultant Dave Costin: “We finally have a director. I do not want to see that person fail because we didn’t provide support”.
- The 911 Board would like to keep Dave Costin’s services with the Radio Project since Putnam County just completed the same type of project before his retirement.
- Motion by Hobbs support continuation of Dave Costin (6–12 months, Council approval required) second by Risk 3/0 approved.

Community Picnic

- BOC would like to sponsor a Community Picnic, providing hamburgers, hotdogs and b.
- Motion by Hobbs to approve the Community Picnic May 16, 11:00–2:00, second by Risk 3/0 approved. Rain date was added as May 23rd.
- Stressing No Taxpayer Dollars will be used.

Capital Improvement Plan

- County Attorney explained statutory requirements from the SBA the plan should be 2 years and other information. Overholt will be reviewing statutes and amending the current plan that will include a list of wants and needs for infrastructure and economic development projects.

Public Comment (Jill Hudson)

- Citizen concern: would like an auto reply for emails sent to Building Department, response will be set up.
- Concerns were voiced about the Hydrogeological Water using specified routes, held accountable for sales and amount of water each day. The commissioners will keep an eye on this process.

Conflict Of Interest Disclosure

- Commissioner Warner submitted a disclosure to file. Needing Commissioners approval.
- Commissioner Hobbs asked, “Did you accept any money or favors?” Warner stated he did not, he sat at a table that was sponsored by HWC Engineering for the Hendricks County Lincoln Day Dinner.
- Hobbs motioned to accept the Disclosure, no second as Commissioner Risk left early for an appointment.

Next Meeting

- January 15, 2026, meeting was changed to January 22, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned.

Dated This 22nd Day of January 2026.

Owen County Commissioners

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Leonard “Sam” Hobbs

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David Risk

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Norm Warner

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Sheila Reeves