OWEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES JUNE 26, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.
2nd Floor of the Courthouse Commissioner's Room
Live Streamed on YouTube-Owen County Government

Leonard "Sam Hobbs" 01/01/2025 – 12/31/2028
David Risk 01/01/2025 – 12/31/2028
Norman Warner III 05/29/2025 – 12/31/2026

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER

- Opening Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer were given.
- Meeting called to order by Commissioner Hobbs.
- Present: Commissioner Sam Hobbs, and Commissioner Norman Warner.
- Absent: Commissioner David Risk
- Auditor Sheila Reeves County Attorney Tony Overholt
- Department heads, elected officials, and members of the public.

OPENING REMARKS

- Commissioner Hobbs recognized Sergeant Detective Nathan Martin of the Owen County Sheriff's Office, who was recently injured in the line of duty.
- The Board expressed gratitude for his recovery progress and asked the public to continue keeping Officer Martin, his family, Sheriff's Office personnel, EMS, and Dispatch staff in their thoughts and prayers due to the traumatic nature of the incident.

OFFICER MARTIN PAY CONTINUATION

- Commissioners discussed the fact that Officer Martin currently receives only 66% of his wages through Workers Compensation while recovering from his injuries. Hobbs noted that other employees placed on administrative leave continue to receive full compensation and expressed support for ensuring Officer Martin receives his full salary during recovery.
- Motion by Hobbs, second by Warner to supplement Workers Compensation benefits to provide Officer Martin with full salary continuation during his recovery period and to establish a formal policy for future incidents 2/0 approved.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

- Commissioners were unable to approve minutes from the previous meeting because only Commissioner Warner had attended the prior meeting and Commissioner Risk was absent from the current meeting.
- Approval of prior meeting minutes and executive session minutes from May 15, 2026, was deferred until the next meeting when sufficient members would be available for approval.

CLAIMS AND PAYROLL
The following claims and payroll totals were presented:

Category	Amount
• Payroll	$333,879.80
• Regular Claims	$624,089.28
• Out-of-Cycle Claims	$110,594.09
• Total Payroll and Claims	$1,068,563.17

Motion by Warner to approve Claims and Payroll second by Hobbs 2/0 approved

FINANCIAL REPORT
- Auditor Reeves presented updated financial reports reflecting settlement distributions and supplemental funding adjustments. Reeves advised these updated figures would be used extensively during upcoming budget preparation activities.
- Reeves noted and Commissioners agreed the County's financial position had improved considerably over recent years and emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate fund balances to satisfy State budget requirements and preserve future spending authority.

OLD BUSINESS

Jail Project Update
Commissioners reported that the Jail Committee met earlier in the day and that progress continues on the proposed jail project. Updates included:
- Completion of surveys and boundary work.
- Completion of geotechnical and environmental studies with no significant concerns identified.
- Completion of property appraisals with values returned at approximately:
  - $1,800,000
  - $1,650,000
- A joint Commissioner-Council meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2026, to continue project discussions.

Property Closing Extension
- Due to ongoing project work and scheduling needs, Commissioners considered extending the property acquisition closing deadline.
- Motion by Warner Second by Hobbs to amend the property closing date to occur on or before July 31, 2026, 2/0 approved.

Sewer Extension Discussion
- Commissioners discussed the proposed sewer extension required to serve the future jail site, extending service to the Fifth Street lift station. Discussion included:

Sewer Extension Discussion -con't-

- Potential partnership with the Town of Spencer.
- Use of future Public Safety LIT revenues.
- Estimated project costs approaching $2 million or more.
- Potential long-term savings to the County if the Town completes portions of the project infrastructure.

Human Resources / Administrative Assistant Position

- Commissioners discussed the proposed Human Resources and Administrative Assistant position.
    - Auditor Reeves noted the County's need for formal HR support, especially policy-related work, and stated that HR functions should be treated as a top priority.
- Discussion included whether the County should create:
    - One combined HR/Administrator position; Two separate positions; or One full-time position and one part-time position.
- Commissioners discussed the need for someone to assist with: County HR policies; Employee-related matters; Email and communication coordination; Bid and quote coordination; Project follow-up for Commissioners;
- Support to the Auditor's Office where legally appropriate.
- It was noted that Addie had advised that HR and County Administrator duties may not align well as a single position and that she was not aware of other counties successfully combining both roles. Commissioners discussed reviewing both job descriptions again before the next meeting and possibly placing the matter on the July 13 Council agenda for funding consideration.
- No final action was taken. Commissioners agreed to continue reviewing the position descriptions and revisit the issue at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Proactive MD Agreement

- Auditor Reeves presented the Proactive MD annual report and related Business Associate Agreement. The agreement would allow Proactive MD to pull statistics and remain HIPAA compliant while preparing updated cost information.
- Motion by Hobbs to approve the Proactive MD Business Associate Agreement second by Warner 2/0 approved.
- Motion by Warner to authorize the Board President to sign the agreement with a single signature second by Hobbs 2/0 approved.

Quadient Postage Machine Contract

- Commissioners reviewed the annual postage machine contracts. Auditor Reeves stated the machine serves all departments, with her office processing postage for the County

Quadient -cont-

- offices. The Quadient contract was described as an annual renewal with a modest increase from the prior year.
- Motion by Warner to approve the Quadient postage machine contract second by Hobbs 2/0 approved.
- Motion by Warner to authorize Board President Hobbs to sign the contract with a single signature second by Hobbs 2/0 approved.

LOW County Software Agreement

- Commissioners reviewed the annual LOW software renewal. Auditor Reeves stated the system continues to serve the County well and that the renewal price remained the same.
- Motion by Warner to approve the LOW software contracts totaling $161,243.00 second by Hobbs 2/0 approved.
- Motion by Warner to authorize Board President Hobbs to sign the LOW software agreements with a single signature 2/0 approved.

Highway Department Discussion

- Superintendent Chad Walker discussed recent severe weather impacts and ongoing road conditions and maintenance challenges throughout the County.
- Storm damage and heavy rainfall had significantly delayed maintenance schedules. Certain locations have become safety concerns requiring immediate attention.
- Additional contractor assistance for patching and repair work may need to be explored if staffing and budget conditions allow.

Highway Equipment Lease Agreements

- Highway Superintendent Chad presented lease renewal agreements for two existing Caterpillar motor graders. Due to current financial conditions, the Highway Department recommended renewing the leases rather than replacing the equipment. The County has maintained the graders since new and has complete service and warranty histories on both units.
- Equipment included:
  - 2020 Caterpillar 14015 Grader — Serial No. EB2000218
  - 2020 Caterpillar 14015 Grader — Serial No. EB2000217
  - Walker noted that ownership of the graders would be transferred to the County at the conclusion of the lease term.
- Motion by Warner, second by Hobbs to approve the lease agreements for both graders. Motion carried 2-0.
- Motion by Warner second by Hobbs authorizing the Board President Hobbs to execute the lease documents with a single signature. Motion carried 2-0.

Highway Department Job Descriptions

- Commissioners reviewed updated job descriptions for Highway Department personnel, including Highway Superintendent, Operations Coordinator, Equipment Operator and Laborer
- Highway staff indicated they had reviewed the descriptions and had no concerns.
- Motion by Hobbs, second by Warner to approve the revised job descriptions and forward them for salary and classification review by County Council 2/0 approved.

Additional Highway Discussion

- Commissioners discussed obtaining contractor bids to assist with road repairs and pothole patching as budget conditions improve later in the year.
- Highway staff also reported that one missing road sign had been recovered and discussed the possible use of GPS tracking devices to help deter future theft or vandalism of County property.

STATE BOARD OF ACCOUNTS REPORT

- Auditor Reeves provided an update regarding the County's annual State Board of Accounts examination. Highlights including:
- The County received only one audit finding during the current examination cycle.
- Significant improvements have occurred in financial reporting and fund management over recent years.
- Highway Department financial challenges continue to stem from historical unpaid claims and delayed reporting practices from previous years.
- The County continues working to improve financial accountability and reporting processes.
- Reeves further advised that temporary reductions in gas tax revenues could significantly impact Highway Department revenues during the upcoming months and may affect road maintenance scheduling and project planning.

PUBLIC COMMENT – NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS

- Diane Nichols addressed the Board regarding ongoing neighborhood concerns involving property maintenance, environmental issues, and public safety. She requested updates regarding air quality testing and ongoing cleanup efforts in the area and expressed concerns regarding nuisance properties and law enforcement matters.
- County officials advised that IDEM had recently (end of the day) provided preliminary information and that additional updates would be shared as they become available.
- Code Enforcement staff reported that several properties are currently progressing through the ordinance enforcement process and that additional actions are being taken as permitted under established procedures. Commissioners thanked Diane Nichols for her comments and encouraged continued communication with County departments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS -cont.-

- Jeff Marks discussed the Jail project planning and financing, urging Commissioners to do their homework before making decisions and consider the County infrastructure future needs.
- Make Highway maintenance priorities.
- Budget planning.
- Future County growth and development considerations.

Courthouse Veterans Memorial Project

- Commissioners announced the temporary closure of the north courthouse parking lot June 28th & 29th to allow for installation of Veterans Memorial improvements, including memorial pedestals, benches, and a new ADA-accessible flagpole.
- Commissioners also noted that large patriotic flags would be displayed on the north and west sides of the courthouse for the Fourth of July holiday and in recognition of the nation's upcoming 250th anniversary. The project is expected to be substantially completed prior to the holiday.

Miscellaneous Business

- Commissioners discussed the disposal of obsolete copiers and proper destruction of electronic records prior to recycling.
- Commissioner Warner also shared a letter from a local student in the State thanking the County for assistance with a school project on Owen County history.

Adjournment

- There being no further business to come before the Board:
    - Motion to adjourn approved. Meeting adjourned.