

SEPT 2025 MONTHLY BULLETIN

Board of Commissioners meets Tuesdays in the 4th floor chambers of the City County Building.

Sept. 2: Renewal of the Five Start Program Contract: This is a curriculum for kids at the Juvenile Justice Center. The program is ok with [in.gov](https://www.in.gov). It's supposed to reduce disciplinary incidents and improve behavior but there is no county oversight of this Program and there are no local measures of how the program is working. The Five Star program is also in 5 schools in SJC.

The BOC also approved \$316 each for 18 high-backed, deluxe leather executive chairs for the auditors office!

Sept. 9: Please plan to attend the APC meeting Sept. 16, at which the 1057-acre Meta data Center proposal will be discussed. No one wants another data center here, least of all New Carlisle/ Olive township. In his public comment, Dan Caruso stated New Carlisle has done its part. IF the proposal moves forward, though, META should be required to guarantee the property values of EVERY home within a 3-mile radius.

The main topic was the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) 7-year contract renewals with Rite of Passage (ROP). ROP has been running our JJC programming since 2015, and reports yearly to the Dept. of Child Services in order to continue getting funding from DCS. All 3 contract renewals passed, as ROP will be paying quite a bit more money to our court system. SJC provides meals, utilities and security for the JJC, and leases the property to ROP. Yet, as Nancy Duncan alertly pointed out, NO ONE has gotten any feedback or reports about whether the ROP programs are effective! (Has anyone talked to the kids in the JJC or their parents?) Commissioner Morton agreed with Nancy, and requested key indicator reports from ROP. *This idea needs followup, as the contracts started Sept. 1st and were not amended at all to require reports from ROP.*

Sept. 16: Raises for the Home Detention Case Mgr, Probation Officer 1 (2 positions?) and a decrease in pay for the Controller, from a DOC Grant for fiscal year July 1 2025 - June 30 2026. Grant money is to be kept in a separate fund, and requires monthly financial reports and progress reports. AS a condition of this grant, SJC agrees to establish and maintain a Community Corrections Advisory Board pursuant to IC 11-12-2-2. *This needs followup!*

SHERIFF: Steve Noonan presented, Sheriff Redman present on line. The current provider is only providing about 25% of the staffing required.

a) Approval of Health Care Service Contract with Quality Correctional Care from Carmel IN (this company services 72 of the 92 counties in Indiana) for St Joseph County Jail Inmate Healthcare Services for NP or PA 40 hrs/ wk, MD 4 hours/week., 80 hrs mental health provider coverage weekly, 40 hrs/ week DON, 40 hrs weekly of Health Service Administrator, 40 hrs weekly of administrative asst, 420 hrs weekly of nursing staff LPN/RN, 252 hrs weekly of med pass QMT/MA. TB testing, AIDS/HIV screening, Xray, prenatal and postpartum services, pregnancy testing, blood sugar testing, drug and alcohol screening and detox services, and 14-day health assessment as required by the Indiana Jail Standards.

EMA:

a) Early Outdoor Warning Siren Updates: Al Kirsits: new antennas have been installed at several locations, with updated equipment. Considering battery backups. This new system is excellent and will be the most robust system in the state: "radio waves on steroids", will tie in with businesses and schools.

Very pleased with West Shore Services.

Sept 23 TIF funds of \$184,856 will pay for 3 new poles and siren heads compatible with our current emergency siren system. Biden's American Rescue Plan money paid for 5 other new sirens.

Health: As they have for the past 10 years, St. Mary's College nursing students will continue to have public health rotations through our Dept. of Health. Both hospitals also offer nursing clinical rotations, but public health nursing is needed also.

Dan Caruso publicly commented that there were inconsistencies in the META presentation by Brandon Dickenson's presentation to the APC in number of acres needed and number of data centers planned. "It's way past time for a rule that there is to be no new rezoning of agricultural property in New Carlisle/ Olive Township!

County Council: meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays
September 9 County Council Public Hearing:

BILL NO. 78-25: A RESOLUTION TO PROTECT FAIR AND TRANSPARENT REDISTRICTING
PETITIONERS: JENNIFER SHABAZZ, MARK CATANZARITE, DIANA HESS AND BRYAN TANNER

Thirteen people in chambers spoke in support of the Bill, and three more spoke in favor online. No one in person or online spoke in opposition. The consensus was that state action to redistrict mid-decade is a clear effort to disenfranchise a significant proportion of citizens in the state and more specifically in the county. Criticisms of redistricting also included the question of constitutionality of such an initiative, the morality, and the cost.

Tradition and Stability

Douglas Hunt, a state senator for twenty years, told the Council that if you believe in the founding principles of our country, you must hold to the ten-year census and districting process. He suggested the mid-decade initiative reflected a lack of discipline and should be quashed. He urged the Council to vote for the Resolution.

Dan Kmitta commented that the population at large views gerrymandering as a serious problem throughout the country, that Indiana currently ranks at the bottom in the country for voter turnout, and argued that redistricting is unconstitutional and will be seen as a totalitarian power grab.

Respect for Constituents in the Minority

Aileen Wehren pointed out that Trump won about 60% of vote in IN, but Republicans hold 80% of seats in the Indiana state legislature. Further redistricting will only further disenfranchise 40 % of the electorate.

Cost

Spending (the projected) \$30,000/day for redistricting is fiscally irresponsible, as well as illegal, as it conflicts with the mandates of the Indiana Constitution.

Morality

Lori Camp: Redistricting sets an example of cheating and stealing for our children. Asks council members to do the morally correct thing.

Board of Health 9/17/2025:

First, a moment of joy: our DOH DID get a grant to buy and distribute a number of child car seats at an upcoming EMBER program. EMBER is the DOH's increasingly popular prenatal/ postnatal education program. The BOH President John Linn attended the 1-year celebration of EMBER, and finds EMBER "impressive!". Now, families getting educated by the EMBER program will have a chance to get free car seats fitted for their children by the 3 certified DOH team members.

Next, my context for you is in italics and was not specifically stated in this meeting. This BOH meeting was notable regarding vaccines and one consequence of current policy. In 5-2025, the CDC (under RFK) stopped recommending routine COVID vaccination for children under age 18 and pregnant people. Therefore, insurers are not required to pay for COVID vaccination for <18 yrs/ pregnant. VaxCare, a main DOH vaccines supplier, no longer offers a COVID vaccine for ages 6 month to 4 years. Our DOH added a COVID vaccine 6 months to 11 years from a different manufacturer at \$110/ dose but will also continue the VaxCare 5-11 years COVID vaccine at \$66/ dose. Our DOH will vaccinate regardless of ability to pay.

Like several vaccines, the recommendation is that the childhood COVID vaccination series be done with the SAME manufacturer's vaccine. So families choosing to vaccinate will pay higher costs REPEATEDLY.

The higher cost of the added 6 mos-11 yr COVID vaccine is partly because that manufacturer had to prove efficacy in that age group, an expensive FDA process that is passed on to the consumer.

SJC Public Library Board 9/29/25: The main part of the meeting was the 2026 Public Budget Hearing. About 84.1% of the money to operate the county libraries comes from property tax money. The rest comes from local taxes, service charges, fees, and fines. The total operating budget is \$23,345,114 for next year, of which personnel salary and wages is 65.5% = \$17,329,376. This budget is based on the prior 18 months, department requests, anticipated building infrastructure and programming needs. SEA 1, passed this year by our Indiana General Assembly, will reduce library funds by \$1.3 Million even as costs are increasing. In addition about \$2.8 Million will be removed in 2028 from county tax changes. As a result, capital projects will be constrained.

Area Planning Commission: Unanimously voted down the request by META for rezoning of over 1000 acres in New Carlisle/ Olive Township, due to public pressure.