

# WGL QUARTERLY PROGRAMMING

January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 through March 2024

- The Allen County commissioners cannot move forward in building the new \$317 million jail facility after County Council voted against funding for the bond and construction today. The council voted 5-2 vote, to deny funding for the jail. U.S. District Judge Damon Leichty ordered the commissioners and sheriff's department to address unconstitutional conditions in the current Allen County Jail following a lawsuit with a former inmate and the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana. Leichty previously approved the approximately \$317 million jail facility project as the long-term solution for the situation.
  
- The town of Burket will not get all of the 2024 budget it asked for. The state of Indiana recently informed the town the public hearing held on Oct. 22 was an illegal meeting because there was no quorum. Due to that, the town will receive the same amount in 2024 as it did for in 2023 for its budget, which is \$96,900.
  
- East Allen County Schools' custodial, maintenance and transportation staff will receive bigger paychecks this year, following a school board vote this week. Pat McCann, chief financial officer said starting hourly pay for school bus drivers was increased by 5%, to \$21.18 from \$20.17. Bus drivers and technicians can also earn a \$500 attendance incentive stipend. It corresponds to the teacher contract attendance stipend. The agreement states drivers could be asked to delay their run and do another route before their original route, allowing the burden of missing drivers to be balanced across attendance areas. This is limited to four times per quarter and no more than once a week. Superintendent Marilyn Hissong introduced Janet Good as the district's new transportation director effective Jan. 5. She succeeds David Myers, who retired Jan. 1 after more than 23 years with EACS.

●In the first three days of filings for the May primary, nine Republicans have filled out the paperwork for a Kosciusko County elected office.

Melissa Boggs, of Warsaw, chief deputy for the clerk of the circuit court, is running for clerk as incumbent Ann Torpy can't run again due to term limits. Michelle Puckett, of Mentone, incumbent county treasurer, has filed for re-election, as has incumbent county coroner Tyler Huffer, of Warsaw. Tracy Wilson, Leesburg, filed for county coroner Friday afternoon. Rachael Rhoades, Pierceton, and Delynn Geiger, Warsaw, are seeking county council at-large seats. Those three positions are currently held by Joni Truex, Kathleen Groninger and Sue Ann Mitchell.

Marcia Baumgartner, Milford, has filed for county commissioner of the northern district, which has been represented by Brad Jackson for more than 25 years. Nate Scherer, Syracuse, also filed for the commissioner job. The county surveyor post is being sought by James Moyer, Etna Green. Candidate filing runs through noon Friday, Feb. 9.

●The wife of Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry has died.

Cindy Henry, the first lady of Fort Wayne, passed away Saturday night at the age of 67.

The John Perlich released this statement Sunday afternoon on behalf of the Mayor:

***CINDY HENRY PASSED AWAY PEACEFULLY SATURDAY EVENING SURROUNDED BY HER FAMILY. CINDY HAD A CARING HEART, A LOVING SPIRIT, AND AN INFECTIOUS LAUGH. HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY ARE IMMEASUREABLE, AND HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS WILL MISS HER. MAYOR HENRY AND HIS FAMILY THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS, BUT ALSO ASK FOR PRIVACY AS THE BOTH GRIEVE AND CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF THEIR BEAUTIFUL CINDY.***

Mayor Henry had shared with the public in October that Cindy had been battling pancreatic cancer.

●The Werling Family Pond is open to the public this winter. From 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday night, teens around the Fort Wayne area come over to the family's pond to play pickup games of hockey. Werling said the idea started by word of mouth through Werling's high schooler and social media. "My husband and I love seeing all the kids out here just having a good time, a lot of the kids don't even know each other they just come from around this neighborhood," said Werling. Even some members of the Women's soccer team from Huntington College got in on the fun! Werling and her husband enjoy watching the crowd come together to have fun out on the pond, and they hope the tradition continues to grow.

● Southwest Allen County Schools and Warsaw Community Schools are leading the area with programs to involve the communities both school corporations serve. SACS scheduled seven two-hour sessions, which mostly meet in the evening, and a four-hour daytime session that includes tours of Homestead High School, Woodside Middle School and Covington Elementary School. Warsaw's program includes five lunch-and-learn events throughout the year along with an opportunity for ambassadors to shadow a principal. Both districts cap their programs with a graduation ceremony in May. Warsaw's inaugural class prompted some changes this year, including adding information about school board governance and making sessions 30 minutes longer. Southwest Allen County Schools Superintendent Park Ginder said "We're trying to help them understand the big picture of what happens not just during a school day, but what it takes to support a school." "I have a waiting list that could fill the next two to three years, which is great," said David Hoffert, Warsaw superintendent. By offering an in-depth look at district operations, Warsaw's ambassadors program is broadening community members' understanding of the district and the services it provides, Hoffert said. Participants have told him they were unaware of the district's full impact because their perspective was previously limited to their time as students or to their children's experiences. To learn more about both school districts through their respective programs, contact the superintendents office.

● OrthoWorx and Warsaw Community Schools have struck a deal and are collaborating on a program that will give students the chance to prepare to hold a career in the orthopedic manufacturing industry. At the wrap of their junior year, program participants will interview with the companies to be placed into internships through their senior year. The prospective program participants will also go through an interview process to be accepted. The program will be available to a select group of juniors and seniors starting as early as the 2024-2025 school year.

● A federal judge on Friday rejected a request to block an Indiana law establishing a so-called "buffer zone" around law enforcement during official duties, a measure that includes both the public and the press. Under House Enrolled Act 1186, law enforcement officers were granted a 25-foot buffer zone from bystanders around police activity. Authors and supporters of the measure said it would keep law enforcement safer and those who violate an officer's order could be charged with a Class C misdemeanor.

● A Fort Wayne woman was named second runner-up in the Miss America pageant on Sunday. Cydney Bridges was crowned Miss Indiana in last year. She is a registered nurse at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis and says she would not have been able to make nursing her career without the help of the Miss America organization and the some 20-thousand in scholarships she's received by competing in pageants.

●Fort Wayne is looking to smooth out uneven sidewalks. On Tuesday, Nick Jarrell, right-of-way manager with the City of Fort Wayne, presented to Fort Wayne City Council on two ordinances set to tackle the issue. The first is a 50/50 model where residents can reach out to the city and get sidewalks that go through their property repaired. The second ordinance said city will be partnering with participating neighborhood associations to grind and shave concrete rather than completely replace it, leveling the issues and saving money in the process. Both ordinances got approved in a do-pass recommendation vote for a total amount not to exceed \$400,000, and with the amount the city is saving by partnering with residents and cutting corners where they can, the Right-of-Way Department is confident those dollars will go far. “This package covers about 30.8 miles of sidewalk, and each year it grows,” Jarrell said.

●Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry will deliver his 2024 State of the City Address at noon today, Wednesday, Feb. 21 at the Grand Wayne Center, 120 W. Jefferson Blvd. Mayor Henry will highlight successes from 2023 and look ahead to plans for 2024. The theme for this year’s speech is “Fort Wayne – Leading the Way.” Mayor Henry’s speech will broadcast live on WGL, 1250AM & 105 5FM beginning at noon.

●The Syracuse Town Council members Wednesday approved Turkey Creek Township Fire Chief Mickey Scott’s request to purchase a new ambulance from PennCare, Niles, Ohio, at a cost of \$365,238. The ambulance he’s purchasing is a Braun Chief XL on a Ford F-550 4x4 Diesel.

●Wednesday, February 21, Mayor Tom Henry announced the launch of **Engage Fort Wayne**, a groundbreaking online platform designed to boost citizen involvement in city projects. Mayor Henry emphasized the platform’s role in fostering collaboration and inclusivity, stating, “Engage Fort Wayne empowers residents to play a vital role in our city’s development. It’s about giving everyone a voice and ensuring their contributions are valued.”

●Real Alloy, a leader in third-party aluminum recycling and specification alloy production, announced it will create the most energy-efficient recycling facility of its kind and it is to be located in Wabash. The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations selected REAL ALLOY to begin award negotiations of up to \$67.3 million for the construction of the facility. The project is expected to generate approximately 100 construction jobs with 9 permanent jobs in addition to securing the existing 33 jobs at the facility in Wabash.

- Fort Wayne City Utilities and New Haven have entered an agreement that officials say benefits customers in both growing cities.

For a minimum of 20 years, City Utilities will sell drinking water and wastewater treatment to New Haven after City Council members approved the contract.

New Haven each day uses about 1 million gallons of drinking water and sends about 1.4 million gallons of sewage to Fort Wayne.

City Utilities is expected to annually make about \$1.2 million for drinking water and \$1.8 million for wastewater treatment. New Haven will continue to own and operate its water distribution and sewer collection systems while buying wholesale water and treatment services from City Utilities. The contract is an extension of an ongoing relationship.

Matthew Wirtz, deputy director of engineering at City Utilities, said they have provided services to New Haven since 1977.

- A local developer hopes to curb the housing need near a southeast-side mosque through the development of an apartment complex. Zakwan Din, 33, is planning to build 83 apartment units on 6.3 acres near the Burmese Islamic Mosque on Seddlemeyer Avenue. Din bought the acreage in the 7200 block of Bauer Avenue off Tillman Road about five years ago. He plans to offer a full range of apartment sizes from studio to one, two and three-bedroom units. For price comparison, Din said the two or three-bedroom units would likely rent for between \$1,100 and \$1,300 a month. Din will need approval from the Fort Wayne Plan Commission. There's a meeting scheduled for April 8th.

- Tom Henry, who led Fort Wayne as the city's mayor for four full terms and served the community for many years beforehand, has passed away surrounded by his loving family. He was 72. In the statement from the Henry family, they said, "Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry passed away peacefully Thursday, March 28, 2024, after experiencing a medical emergency related to his cancer. Mayor Henry was a man of the highest character – a true servant leader who devoted his entire adult life to the betterment of Fort Wayne and its residents. He was also the best dad a son or daughter could ask for. We thank you for your continued thoughts and prayers, but also ask for privacy as we grieve Tom's passing and celebrate his extraordinary life and legacy."

● Gov. Eric Holcomb on Wednesday, March 27, signed a disaster [order](#) letting Indiana call on a nationwide aid compact should the upcoming eclipse stress the state's emergency response systems. Indiana expects hundreds of thousands of visitors for the April 8 event, plus plenty of in-state travel. Officials anticipate "widespread and significant impact" on Indiana's "critical infrastructure systems," including for communication, emergency response and transportation, according to the order. His disaster emergency order lets the Indiana Department of Homeland Security "enlist the support" of members of the nationwide Emergency Management Assistance Compact to "ensure statewide preparedness." The order is immediately effective and ends April 9th.

● The Kosciusko County Council on Thursday approved real property and personal property tax abatements for Louis Dreyfus Co. for five and three years, respectively. The company, which has a plant in Claypool, had sought 10 years for the real property and five for the personal. The Claypool facility is expanding and investing \$59,867,000. Of that, \$27,109,000 is for real estate improvements and \$32,758,000 is for personal property improvements. Snyder said they will employ 168 employees, adding 13 with the expansion, with salaries totaling \$959,000 for those 13. Kosciusko County residents make up 148 of the 168 employees.