

WHEREAS, in the opinion of the County Auditor, the public interests required that the Lake County Council, should be called to meet in special session at this time, for the purpose of considering First Reading for the 2026 Budgets. A written notice was sent to each member of the Council, and proper advertisement made, and all other acts performed in accordance with the laws governing such matters.

And now in obedience to such call, come Christine Cid, President, David Hamm, Pete Lindemulder, Ted Bilski and Randy Niemeyer, County Councilpersons, together with Tom O'Donnell and Ray Szarmach, County Council Attorneys. Councilman Charlie Brown was in attendance via WebEx. Councilman Ronald Brewer was absent.

ORDINANCE #1512

Section 1. Be It Ordained by the County Council of Lake County, IN., that for the expenses of the County Government and its institutions, the following sums of money are hereby appropriated and ordered set apart out of the several funds herein named and for the purposes herein appropriated, and shall be held to include all expenditures authorized to be made during the year unless otherwise expressly stipulated and provided by law.

	Appropriation Requested	Appropriated
Coroner's Motherhood & Infant Health Initiative Program Grant/SUID/SDY Grant Fund 8126		
<u>Coroner's Office 1007 (Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)</u>		
62255 Pathology Supplies	\$2,383.16	\$2,383.16
LC Superior Court Division III VTC All Rise Mentor Court Network Fund 8420		
<u>Lake Sup Crt-County Division Rm 3 4004 (Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)</u>		
63233 Travel – Lodging	\$600.00	\$600.00
63234 Travel – Trans/Other	\$200.00	\$200.00
63235 Travel – Mileage	\$200.00	\$200.00
Gun Safety Education and Gun Safety Locks Fund 9125		
<u>Prosecutor 9001 (Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)</u>		
62410 Other Supplies	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
63390 Other Services	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
63995 Other Services & Charges	\$500.00	\$500.00
64490 Other Equipment	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00
Prosecutor's Careful Carter Gun Safety Literacy Grant Fund 9128		
<u>Prosecutor 9001</u>		
63310 Printing	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00
63390 Other Services	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00

Adopted this 16th day of September, 2025.

TRANSFER OF FUNDS CERTIFICATE

I, the proper legal officer of Lake County Council, Lake County, IN., hereby certify to the Auditor of Lake County, that the Lake County Council, approved the following transfers:

	Requested	Approved
<u>Jail 8002 (Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)</u>		
Public Safety CAGIT Non-Revert Fund 4010		
From: 4010-63610 Building & Structures	\$374,764.00	\$374,764.00
4010-63630 Mainten & Service Cont.	\$160,711.00	\$160,711.00
4010-64490 Other Equipment	\$65,525.00	\$65,525.00
To: 4010-62250 Health Care & Lab Supplies	\$601,000.00	\$601,000.00

and that such transfer does not necessitate expenditure of more money than was set out in detail in the budget as finally approved by the Department of Local Government Finance.

This transfer was made at a regular public meeting according to proper ordinance, a copy of which is attached to this certificate.

Dated this 16th day of September, 2025.

Additional

(Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)

	Made Motion	Seconded	
<u>Coroner’s Motherhood & Infant Health Initiative Program Grant/SUID/SDY Grant Fund 8126</u>			
Coroner’s Office 1007 (\$2,383.16)	Niemeyer	Hamm	Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion carried 6-yes, 1-absent.
<u>LC Superior Court Division III VTC All Rise Mentor Court Network Fund 8420</u>			
Lake Sup Crt-County Division Rm 3 4004 (\$1,000)	Bilski	Hamm	Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion carried 6-yes, 1-absent.
<u>Gun Safety Education and Gun Safety Locks Fund 9125</u>			
Prosecutor 9001 (\$6,750)	Lindemulder	Hamm	Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion carried 6-yes, 1-absent.
<u>Prosecutor’s Careful Carter Gun Safety Literacy Grant Fund 9128</u>			
Prosecutor 9001 (\$7,300)	Lindemulder	Hamm	Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

Transfers

(Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)

	Made Motion	Seconded	
<u>Jail 8002</u>			
Public Safety CAGIT Non-Revert Fund 4010 (\$601,000)	Niemeyer	Brown	Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Coroner’s Office 1007 – Create New Line Item – Coroner’s Motherhood & Infant Health Initiative Program Grant/SUID/SDY Fund 8126 (Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)

Niemeyer made the motion, seconded by Lindemulder, to approve the creation of the following new line item:

62255 Pathology Supplies

Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve creation of new line item carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

Niemeyer – The coroner did not reach out to me for this at all but since it was deferred last meeting, I’m going to continue on with it.

In the Matter of Lake Sup. Ct. County Div. Rm. 3 4004 – Create New Line Items – LC Superior Court Division III VTC All Rise Mentor Court Network Fund 8420 (Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)

Bilski made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve the creation of the following new line items:

63233 Travel – Lodging
63234 Travel – Trans/Other
63235 Travel – Mileage

Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve creation of new line items carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Jail 8002 – Create New Line Item – Public Safety CAGIT Non-Revert Fund 4010 (Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)

Niemeyer made the motion, seconded by Lindemulder, to approve the creation of the following new line item:

62250 Health Care & Lab Supplies

Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve creation of new line item carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Prosecutor 9001 – Create New Line Items – Gun Safety Education and Gun Safety Locks Fund 9125 (Deferred from 9/9/2025 Regular Council Meeting)

Lindemulder made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve the creation of the following new line items:

62410 Other Supplies
63390 Other Services
63995 Other Services & Charges

Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve creation of new line items carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Prosecutor 9001 – Create New Line Items – Prosecutor's Careful Carter Gun Safety Literacy Grant Fund 9128

Lindemulder made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve the creation of the following new line items:

63310 Printing
63390 Other Services

Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve creation of new line items carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Ordinance Authorizing Tax Levies (OR-1)

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Bilski, to approve on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Ordinance for Appropriations, Forms 4A and 4B (OR-2)

Bilski made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Salary Ordinance for 2026 (OR-3)

Lindemulder made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve on First Reading.

Niemeyer – Is there any escalator in the salary or is this a flat salary ordinance from last year?

Scott Schmal – it's the salaries at the present rate for any non-contractual or mandated salary. The mandated and contractual salaries are at the prescribed rates.

Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Longevity Ordinance for 2026 (OR-4)

Niemeyer made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Clothing Allowance Ordinance (OR-5)

Cid – I noticed on the agenda its still reading “Sheriffs Clothing Allowance”, its actually “Clothing Allowance”. We removed the word Sheriff because it includes non-sheriff staff as well.

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Bilski, to approve on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Per Diem Expense Ordinance for 2026 (OR-6)

Bilski made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Binding Recommendations/Ordinances Lake Ridge Fire (OR-7)

Lindemulder made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve on First Reading.

Niemeyer – Is that budget also flat from 2025? Because there were several budgets that came in with request above the 2025 level.

Schmal – I don’t know that answer. They have their own levy so I don’t prepare their budgets.

Niemeyer asked for clarification before the Second Reading.

Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Binding Recommendations/Ordinances Lake County Solid Waste (OR-8)

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Bilski, to approve on First Reading.

Niemeyer – Is this department better suited to be rolled into public works under the commissioners or to continue as its own carve-out? I wonder, as we’re looking for efficiency, if this is an opportunity to look at this department, what it does, and its effectiveness. It has changed a lot over the years. It has a much lesser role than it used to in municipalities. It’s just an idea that I’m throwing out there, but I think we need to eventually consider how we handle this function of government. It’s an important function, but is it better to roll it into public works?

Bilski – I’d have to see more to consider that. I know that the town I live in, the City of Hobart, helps a lot with paint recycling, etc. We rely on the local communities; it's not just governed and run by the county. All the taxing units have a vested interest in the program. We would need consensus from everyone to do that.

Niemeyer – When I talk to people from the communities I represent, they say, “What does it do?”.

Executive Director of Lake County Solid Waste, Kiera Hagerman – We do service all the residents of Lake County. We have eight electronic drop locations around the county, we have eighteen tire drop-off locations, and we hold nine household hazardous waste collections throughout the year, and all of those are open and free of charge to all Lake County residents. We do leaf collection for unincorporated Lake County, and we have a leaf drop program for unincorporated Lake County. We have an education department that does all of Lake County for field trips, and they will visit classrooms to provide environmental education to not only school-age children but also adults, and we are also transitioning into more library programs. We do offer recycling grants to each of the communities where two and a half million dollars of our budget goes directly back to communities every year.

Niemeyer – It just seems like a big budget for that. Could you get me some data for the type of volume of work you’re doing?

Kiera Hagerman – Absolutely. We have a 2024 annual review report that we put out. This year we have actually doubled our participation in all of our hazardous waste collection with the number of cars that have shown up. We have been working on outreach the last few years to try to reach more residents. We are in the process of updating our twenty-year plan, so we’ll have the last five years of data compiled in a few months.

Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Binding Recommendations/Ordinances South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority (OR-9)

Cid – They are not obligated to present their budget to us until November 30th, so I would ask that you defer to November 18, 2025.

Bilski made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to defer to November 18, 2025. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to defer to November 18, 2025 carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

In the Matter of Ordinance Amending the Ordinance Restricting the Hiring of New County Employees until 9/30/2026 Ordinance No. 1511D

Bilski made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve on First Reading. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Lindemulder, to Suspend Rules. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to Suspend Rules carried 6-yes 1-absent.

Bilski made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve on Second Reading. Majority voted yes. Brewer was absent. Motion to approve on Second Reading carried 6-yes, 1-absent.

ORDINANCE NO. 1511D-1

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ORDINANCE RESTRICTING THE HIRING OF NEW COUNTY EMPLOYEES UNTIL 9-30-2026, ORDINANCE NO. 1511D

WHEREAS, on September 9, 2025, the Lake County Council adopted the Ordinance Restricting the Hiring of New County Employees Until 9-30-26, Ordinance No. 1511D; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County Council now desires to amend the Ordinance.

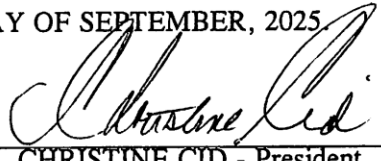
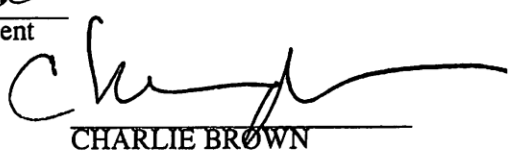
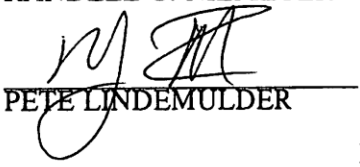
NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE ORDAINED AS FOLLOWS:

That Section 2., Notwithstanding paragraph one, this Ordinance shall not apply to the following, is hereby amended by adding the following section, to-wit:

INSERT:

2. h. Felony Public Defenders and support staff.

SO ORDAINED THIS 16th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2025

 DAVID HAMM	 CHRISTINE CID - President	 CHARLIE BROWN
 RANDELL C. NIEMEYER		ABSENT RONALD G. BREWER, SR.
 PETE LINDEMULDER		 TED F. BILSKI

Members of the Lake County Council

Additional Council Comments:

Niemeyer – The last time I was in this building, I had highlighted some of the professional service amounts that we’re spending in county government for various contracts. Obviously, this body is not the contracting body, but we are the fiscal body. One of the things I tasked our department heads with doing is showing us where their contracts are performing services that are different than what their employees perform to try and make sure that we don’t have redundancy between contractors and employees and where it is possible to reduce one or the other. I don’t think, by any means, we are out of the woods budgetarily with some of the measures we’re taking. There is still some pressure even this year on expenses. Namely, the cost of health insurance claims and premiums is going to chunk out another five million. So, we still have to continue to look for that, and before the second reading, I would like if we took a look at some of these service contracts and looked at where there might be redundancy in the various departments. I think department heads need to choose. Do you have a contractor and an employee doing the same thing? Or do we clearly identify and reduce some of those costs? I think that goes for the county council as well. We have four attorneys, and it’s nothing against anybody, but I think we’ve got to look in our own house too to see where we can gain some efficiency as well. I like all the people that we work with here, so this isn’t an attack on any one person, but we have to justify if we need four attorneys. We need to look at every position and every professional service contract and be able to answer that question honestly. Those are a couple of things; before the second reading, I’d like to see comparisons and job descriptions within departments. Christine, you’ve talked about the lack of controls when it comes totimekeepingg of employees’ time. There is such technology now with geofencing and other things that there’s really no excuse that something can’t be integrated into our Oracle system and make the task of payroll more transparent and more consistent and help us to manage some of those overtime costs that seem to pop up in certain departments quite a bit. Before the second reading, I would like to get more information and really dig into this so we can make sure we’re taking every step this year that we can.

Bilski – I couldn’t agree more about redundancy. You’ve got to look at everything, and you have to cut. However, being the husband of a schoolteacher in this state, I see these teachers working seven days a week. So, before we do anything haphazardly, what workload are we shifting on our employees? This is still a public sector. We don’t pay competitive wages, and then you’re going to double, triple, or quadruple the workload on folks? I agree to eliminate redundancy, but in no way am I willing to cut to where you can’t provide services. In this education system, and especially for special needs children, we’re ripping out the coverage and taking away the basic needs. Why? Because they say it’s a redundancy in teaching. But yet the IEPs have to be generated; one can take an excess of six hours, and one teacher could have thirty students and there’s deadlines. You’re right, you shouldn’t have redundancy. You shouldn’t have the same person doing the same job, that’s not making any improvement. But we also have to make sure that we’re not destroying our workforce either.

Hamm – Just looking in the audience, for example, I see our Surveyor, Bill Emerson and Lino Maggio (Assessor). I don’t understand what they have contractually, and that’s not my thing. That’s approved by the commissioners and the department heads.

Niemeyer – All I’m suggesting is that we take a look at it. When you have thirty million in professional service costs, and you have to reduce your budget by fifty million, as of 2028, we have to take every expense seriously.

There being no further business to come before the Council, it was moved and seconded that this Council does now adjourn, to meet again as required by law.

President, Lake County Council

ATTEST:

Peggy Holinga-Katona,
Lake County Auditor