

**COMMISSIONER MEETING
SPECIAL SESSION
April 15, 2026
6:00 PM**

ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS:	Andy Beck, President Tom Helmer, Vice President Rick Woodall
COUNCIL:	Stephanie Campbell, President
COUNTY ATTORNEY:	Jim Ensley
AUDITOR'S OFFICE	Kristina Berish
AUDIENCE:	18 Individuals

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on April 15, 2026, at 6:00 PM in special session. The meeting was held at the Putnam County Courthouse to further discuss SB 270 with township trustees. Beck opened the meeting. The pledge to the flag was given.

TRUSTEES – NEW LAW CHANGE SB 270

Beck did roll call of what trustees were present. He explained the meeting was called to further discuss the upcoming law changes for the township trustees. Ensley stated the law is Indiana code 36-6-1.5 & 1.7. The points will be announced by Department of Local Government & Finance (DLGF) by 12/31/26. There will be a window of opportunity for a dispute by trustee. Final list of points 7/1/27. July 1st is when IC 36-6-1.7 kicks in. The Commissioners have until 10/1/27 to decide how to merge the townships. If a trustee does it voluntarily, you cannot do it in a year that there is a general election which is happening in 2026. Voluntarily you will need to start 1/1/27. If you have started to do it voluntarily and 7/1 comes it is still in same process. This will take precedence over the Commissioners making the decision.

Woodall said he had a lot of questions regarding the whole process. How it is determined what trustee will be over the new townships has yet to be determined. And if the name of townships will be changed. There are still a lot of gray areas in the process that they are waiting on the state to clarify. He has been in contact with Johnson County, last year they merged four. He is trying to get information from them on how they did it.

Karen Heavin Warren township trustee who is voluntarily merging said she would need to go through the process this year to create a 2027 budget due to the guidelines of the statute since the process cannot start until 1/1/27. She questioned if utilizing the county attorney was still an option for the trustees. Woodall asked if she had funding available for an attorney. Heavin does but does not want to spend money unless she must. Woodall said it would depend on what all would need to be done if the county attorney could do it. And, we will most likely have a new county attorney next year since the current one is running for judge.

Heavin asked when the Commissioners were looking to have an answer from the trustees if they wanted to voluntarily merge. Woodall said they did not have a deadline. Any townships that have not by 7/1/27 it will automatically become the Commissioners decision on how to proceed. She asked for clarification from the board in the next 90 days if the county attorney would be available for them to use for the process.

Jeff Alexander Madison township trustee voiced his concern about his township and their fire department. His township was in a unique situation. He also appointed a member to the Greencastle School board.

John McPherson Washington township trustee brought up the point when townships are merged one board member goes with the new designated township. If there were four merged together then one township would not be able to have representation.

Greencastle township trustee said he would be looking for guidance on how the appointments would go for the school board. Greencastle schools are different than the other schools in our county in how the board is created. Ensley suggested that he contact the city attorney.

Beck said there were still a lot of unanswered questions. The Commissioners will be doing further research. The state needs to give better guidance. And we must wait until we have the official score for each township made by DLGF. It was agreed that there was no point in having another meeting until after the first of the year. The Commissioners will reach out to each of them as they learn more information.

ADJOURN

Woodall made the motion to adjourn. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.



Andy Beck, President



Tom Helmer, Vice President



Rick Woodall



Attest: Auditor's Office

Kristina Berish