

**BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET HEARINGS
August 14, 2017**

Name:	Representing:	Title:	Present:
Laura DeDomenic	District 2	President	Present
Bill Lentz	At Large	Pro-Tem	Present
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence	At Large		Present
Chris Ogle	District 1		Present
Mark Gorbett	District 3		Not - Present
Jorge Morales	District 4		Present
Matt Miller	At Large		Present
Chris Monroe	- -	Attorney	Not - Present
Barb Hackman	Auditor	Secretary	Present

The Bartholomew County Council met on August 14, 2017 at 12:00 p.m. in the County Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana. The purpose of this meeting was to begin the 2018 Budget Hearings.

President Laura DeDomenic called the meeting to order.

Chris Ogle gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The first hearings on the agenda were the Community Corrections budgets. Community Services Director Brad Barnes presented the Court Services (001-35) budget. This budget shows roughly eighteen-thousand dollars (\$18,000) to twenty-thousand dollars (\$20,000) increase. There was a question regarding fiscal versus calendar year budget. They already know the raise for probation officers by the State for the next year. He is working with the Auditor to change how the Salary Ordinance for the department is listed. It was asked that since they follow the State guidelines for the salaries, do they follow a State personnel policy or the County's policy. They follow the Bartholomew

County Court Services Personnel Policy. Jorge Morales asked if they had deleted any programs that were unnecessary or did they just keep growing. Director Barnes stated they have removed several programs that, after time, they saw were not needed. Jorge Morales hopes that Court Services is included in the programs that are being developed to combat the opioid issue in the community. Director Barnes stated that Judge Benjamin has made certain that they are included in the discussions. He also anticipates that Position #4 will be less in 2018 as the person in that position will be retiring in September of this year.

The next budget to be discussed was the Youth Services Center as presented by Youth Services Director Anita Biehle, Judge Kelly Benjamin and Director Barnes. They are hoping to increase the retention of employees. There is a new nurse position. They do take the shelter kids to doctor appointments and such, but not the detention kids. Jorge Morales stated that because they house kids from other counties, they were able to place five-hundred-thousand dollars (\$500,000) that last year they collected in housing fees back into County General. The only increases were in the salary line items. The only salary increase greater than three-percent (3%) is for Director Anita Biehle. They did change it a few years ago to make this position a probation officer. This would be about ten-thousand dollars (\$10,000). Chris Ogle stated that in her four (4) years in this position, she has saved the County more than she will be paid so it is a no brainer in his opinion. There was discussion regarding costs versus reimbursements. There are currently four (4) in the detention side and five (5) in the shelter side.

October 16, 2017

The next budget to be discussed was the Alcohol and Drug Program as presented by Director Barnes. It calls for two (2) positions. This is funded through user fees by those sentenced to the program. They currently have an open position but there could be shortfall if the position is filled. They estimate that they are only collecting forty-percent (40%) to forty-five-percent (45%) of the fees.

The next budget to be discussed was Adult Probation as presented by Director Barnes. This is another user fee fund. It was stated that they need help by County General to pick up a position from this fund as well as all the insurance. The User Fees just cannot sustain the funding required. They would like to see Position #12 taken to County General. Anticipated income would leave the fund approximately one-hundred-ten-thousand dollars (\$110,000). Chris Ogle asked if every position is a required position by the State. Director Barnes stated that he is presenting a budget that fits the needs of what the Judges are requiring. Chris Ogle asked if the problem is that we can't collect the fees or is it that the fees are too low. Director Barnes stated the fee schedule has not increased in years and they are collecting at the maximum of the schedule, but that is combined with individuals that are unable to pay the fees. The insurance fees were figured on actual numbers, not estimates.

The next budget to be discussed was the Supplemental Juvenile Probation as presented by Director Barnes. There were no questions.

The next budget to be discussed was Circuit Court as presented by Judge Kelly Benjamin. Judge Benjamin explained that the Judges have been working with the

October 16, 2017

Prosecutor and the Sheriff in trying to maintain a good working system. Each entity is important in the circle. They want to make certain that they are spending tax dollars efficiently and effectively. They are looking at pre-trial processes and special courts. Judge Benjamin had a power point presentation she used during this discussion showing yearly case increases and other information. It is not possible for one of the departments to fix the drug problem - it has to be done together. We have to start long term planning. The first appearance public defender being requested is not someone who will be defending in court cases, but will be there only when the defendants first appear. Jorge Morales asked that a copy of the presentation be made for the Council members. Judge Benjamin went through her budget line items. There was discussion about a contract they have been trying to cancel for two (2) years. This contract involves items such as the Indiana Law Library. Judge Benjamin explained the increases in her budget, including an increase that would allow them to attend a conference next year in Houston, Texas.

The next budget to be discussed was the Circuit Court IV-D Incentive Fund as presented by Judge Benjamin. There were some slight increases that were discussed. The equipment money is for different chairs for defendants that are going to jail. They want to purchase chairs that are connected to each other so as to avoid an incident like what happened with the defendant throwing chairs in Judge Coriden's court last year.

- BREAK -

Jeff Jones of the Alliance for Substance Abuse Progress (ASAP) spoke to the Council explaining the purpose of the Alliance. They are drafting recommendations for the County in the fight against the drug problem in the community. Once that is completed and accepted, then they will move forward to the implementation of the recommendations. They have been working with the various groups throughout the community to create these recommendations. This issue affects every citizen in the County whether directly or indirectly. He believes the citizens will need to make some investments to accomplish the goal of meeting these needs.

Julie ?, Vice-President of Community Partnerships and Corporate Responsibility at Columbus Regional Health spoke to the Council. She stated that CRH is stepping up to deal with this problem in a very serious way. They have additional costs of security and multiple other costs. They are seriously evaluating establishing a new Detox center. The only way CRH has any money at all is through their patients. Because of that, they cannot be the agency that subsidizes the court system. They will continue to do their part.

The next budget to be discussed was Superior Court I as presented by Judge Jim Worton. He did not have any presentation to give. He is only looking at the three-percent (3%) raises for his staff. Jorge Morales asked which job had been increased from a part-time to a full-time position. Judge Worton stated it is Position #4. It is helping quite a bit. With the addition of the full-time position, they still need the part-time position. That part-time position deals with the public.

The next budget to be discussed was Superior Court II as presented by Judge Kitty Coriden. There was not much change in the County General budget. They had reduced a couple of lines. The new software has changed the entry process in that what use to take a couple of minutes now takes about fifteen minutes to accomplish. They had hoped that the scanning would reduce the time but it has increased it. She has told her staff to do only what they have time to do. The discussion moved to the Public Defender Superior Court II Fund. There is a little more than one-hundred-seventeen-thousand dollars (\$117,000) in this fund. Auditor Hackman stated that they did increase their Public Defender amounts by three-percent (3%).

- BREAK -

The next budget to be discussed was the Prosecutor's Office as presented by Prosecutor Bill Nash and Office Manager Brenda Mijares. They started with the Prosecutor IV-D Incentive Fund. Prosecutor Nash stated that they will be back for an additional appropriation later this year as they do not have enough funds for insurance and PERF. Budget wise, across the board he has asked for a three-percent (3%) raise for the employees. There was discussion regarding the amount of insurance costs. They always budget for the worst case scenario being family plan. They did put one new laptop in their budget. They do that because these funds are reimbursed by sixty-six-percent (66%) by the State. They then discussed the Prosecutor budget. This budget is something like ninety-seven-percent (97%) employees. Other than the raise for

employees, the only other change is an additional one-thousand dollars (\$1,000) in office supplies. The other two (2) budgets are simply three-percent (3%) raises.

As the Council was ahead of schedule, they opened the floor for discussion. Jorge Morales stated that they have always given money to the Sheriff but after Judge Benjamin's presentation, they need to look at the Courts and Court Services as well. The drug issue is a long term problem nation-wide. There was discussion regarding the CenterStone funding. They discussed putting a Council member on the board. President DeDomenic noted that the Statute states it is a Council member of their home County which is technically Monroe County. They don't have a Council member from Monroe County on the board, but if they do, then that would meet the requirements. A drug court is very similar to a veteran's court. If you are in veteran's court and you do as you are told to do, then you can graduate in eighteen (18) months and the charges are dropped. Chris Ogle is a mentor with the Veteran's court. He also mentioned that CRH had said they have no money, but yet they have recently purchased two (2) pieces of property for over five-million dollars (\$5,000,000). President DeDomenic pointed out that those two (2) properties will now be tax exempt. Jorge Morales stated that County Assessor Lew Wilson told him that the only building that the hospital did not pay taxes on was the hospital itself. Chris West, Real Estate and Tax Billing Administrator in the Auditor's Office, stated that Lew Wilson assesses the property. There are other buildings owned by the hospital that do not pay taxes. It was asked why the hospital does not house the County nursing department as they use to. Other hospitals house their county's nursing

departments. Jorge Morales stated that he had always stated with the Community Corrections programs that when the Grant funding went away, so did the positions/program. He is reconsidering his opinion if it involves alcohol and drugs. Matt Miller asked if anyone else is considering the other tax. Chris Ogle stated that if we do not add a tax we have to cut people. Matt Miller stated if other people are considering the tax then we can continue the conversation but if they are not considering the tax then this conversation is useless. President DeDomenic stated that she has talked with Mayor Lienhoop and he would be open to discussion about an inter-local agreement to assist with funding if a Public Safety tax is passed by the County Council.

- BREAK -

The next budget to be discussed was the Cooperative Extension Budget as presented by Elisabeth Smith. ? Smith asked for a three-percent (3%) raise. They are asking to increase an educator position from sixty-one-percent (61%) to seventy-five-percent (75%) which would be about a ten-thousand dollars (\$10,000) increase. They discussed working with Ivy Tech and their ag program to get a work study program going again. That hasn't been in place since 2015. The numbers were incorrect on the budget worksheet. The total was correct but the numbers were in the wrong line items. The educators are contractual employees that are listed in Professional Services. They work through Purdue. If the third amount is left at sixty-one-percent (61%) there would still need to be a slight increase for a small raise Purdue has granted. The total for that line item would be eighty-nine-thousand sixty-three dollars (\$89,063). Harriet Armstrong

was asked what additional duties she would be doing if she is increased from sixty-one-percent (61%) to the seventy-five-percent (75%). Ms. Armstrong stated she has started doing “dining” events with corporations to educate employees on healthy eating. President DeDomenic asked if other Extension Offices support for-profit businesses by going into private companies and presenting programs. Ms. Armstrong stated that they do programs for anyone who asks. Chris Ogle stated it is not our responsibility to pay to help a private company educate their employees. Ms. Armstrong stated she is helping the employee be healthier which in turn helps them to show up for work and pay their taxes. It was asked if they coordinate with CRH regarding their Health Communities program. Ms. Armstrong stated they do coordinate their efforts. Local 4-H enrollment had increased by one person this year. Most counties are reporting that their enrollment has declined.

The next budget to be discussed was the Park Board as presented by David Apple. They raised their labor costs based on the same formula as last year. Everything had been increased by a little bit. Some of the 200’s increases were due to the additional restrooms at Dunn Stadium. The Professional Services went up because he gave three-percent (3%) raises to the park managers. He increased utilities a little. The restroom was actually completed last week. The City Utilities also wants them to connect the existing restrooms to them and remove the finger system they are currently using. The park was annexed into the City to allow them to connect to the sewer system. The booking of the parks and facilities was discussed. It was asked if there were enough hotel

October 16, 2017

rooms for the people coming in after the closing of the Clarion. So far they are okay but they definitely need more hotel rooms. The Fairfield is under construction and that will provide some relief. Chris Ogle asked if we are making money from the concession stands. It is a split percentage with the individuals that run the stands. There are some repairs they need to do at Dunn Stadium involving lighting and painting. They left the restroom funding in as they need to change out the hand dryers and do some landscaping to the facility. Last year Heflin Park brought in twenty-four-thousand eight-hundred twenty dollars (\$24,820) and Dunn Stadium brought in seven-thousand sixty-one dollars (\$7,061). They have worked on some of the fencing at the other parks throughout the County. BMX wants a waterline put in for a wash sink for their. The money in the 2017 budget for removal of ash trees was removed before the budget was approved. They are requesting the money this year as they have trees that are potential liabilities.

The meeting was recessed at 5:26 p.m. until 12:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 15, 2017.