

June 9, 2020

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL
May 12, 2020

Name:	Representing:	Title:	Present:
Matt Miller	At Large	President	Present
Bill Lentz	At Large		Present
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence	At Large		Present
R. Scott Bonnell	District 1	Pro-Tem	Present
Laura DeDomenic	District 2		Present
Mark E. Gorbett	District 3		Present
Jorge R. Morales	District 4		Present
Chris Monroe	- -	Attorney	Present
Pia O'Connor	Auditor	Secretary	Present

The Bartholomew County Council met on May 12, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the County Commissioners Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana. Members physically in attendance were President Matt Miller, Bill Lentz and R. Scott Bonnell. Also present were IT Director Scott Mayes, Commissioner Larry Kleinhenz and Chris West, of the Auditor's Office. Those Council Members attending via Zoom were: Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence, Jorge R Morales, Laura DeDomenic and Mark Gorbett. Auditor Pia O'Connor and Council Attorney Chris Monroe also joined via Zoom. Others in attendance via Zoom were: Chief Deputy Auditor Dalene Pattingill, Highway Engineer Danny Hollander, Assessor Ginny Whipple, Recorder Tami Hines, and Mark Webber of the Republic. There were 4 other unidentified people on Zoom in attendance.

President Miller called the meeting to order.

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The first item on the agenda was the approval of the meeting minutes of March 10, 2020. **Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mark E Gorbett seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item on the agenda was a Request of Additional Appropriations in the Highway Department for the Highway Restricted Fund (1173) for \$511,166. Engineer Hollander stated this is done every year with remaining money that is carried over from the previous year. This will be for overlay and chip-n-seal. **Laura DeDomenic made a motion to approve the request for \$511,166 as presented. Jorge R Morales seconded the motion which passed unanimously.** (A roll call of votes was taken.)

The next item on the agenda was a Request of Additional Appropriations in the Highway Department for Funds Local Roads & Streets (1169) for \$293,866. Engineer Hollander stated again that this is money that was carried over from the previous year. They did just receive a Community Crossings Grant for \$1,000,000. It is a \$1 to \$1 match so most of this will go to the match. **Bill Lentz made a motion to approve the request for \$293,866 as presented. Laura DeDomenic seconded the motion which passed unanimously.** (A roll call of votes was taken.)

The next item on the agenda was a Request of Additional Appropriations in the Highway Department for Funds Cumulative Bridge (1135) for \$1,390,094. Engineer Hollander stated once again that this is money that was carried over from the previous year. **Jorge R Morales made a motion to approve the request for \$1,390,094 as**

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presented. R Scott Bonnell seconded the motion which passed unanimously. (A roll call of votes was taken.)

The next item on the agenda was a Request of Additional Appropriations for an AEI Sports Grant (8927) in the amount of \$1,500. Auditor O'Connor explained that Heather Mallow had applied to the Heritage Fund for this grant. This is to allow the funds to be placed where they need to be. (President Miller noted that IT Director Scott Mayes, County Commissioner Larry Kleinhenz and Tax Administrator Chris West were in attendance.) **Jorge R Morales made a motion to approve the request as presented. R Scott Bonnell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.** (A roll call of votes was taken.)

The next item on the agenda was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Commissioners Rental Fund (4906) in the amount of \$34,550.44. Auditor O'Connor stated this is from rental income received for the building at Fox Pointe and the Marr Road building. The funds are used for property taxes and condo association fees (Fox Pointe) as well as maintenance and renovations to County buildings. **Jorge R Morales made a motion to approve the request for \$34,550.44 as presented.** R Scott Bonnell asked if this was only for property taxes. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated they had to do some renovations to the Marr Road building. **Bill Lentz seconded the motion which passed unanimously.** (A roll call of votes was taken.)

The next item on the agenda was 2019 financial year end results as presented by Auditor O'Connor. She stated that we had spent less than was actually budgeted for

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2019. Some of this may have been carried over to 2020. We started 2020 in good financial shape and we still are in good shape. The money not spent could be moved over to the Rainy Day Fund but she would suggest that they do not move the funds until we have further information regarding the effect that the COVID-19 has on our Income Tax. The unanimous consensus of the Council was to leave the funds in the General Fund until we have a better picture of the financial impact to the County.

Auditor O'Connor presented the growth quotient projections for 2021. This shows the impact on property tax revenues. She displayed a spreadsheet showing the history of the growth quotient. Indiana payroll increased from 2018 to 2019 by 3.92%. Utilizing these numbers, our growth quotient for 2021 would be 4.21%. While this is good news for 2021, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will show in the 2022 budget process. Mark Gorbett asked if that meant that we would feel the COVID-19 impact in 2022. Auditor O'Connor stated yes. She forecasted the growth quotient for 2022, setting the calculation to 0%, where the 2022 budget would be flat from the 2021 budget. She explained that if everyone in the entire community had wage reductions of 20% for the entire year, then the budget would be flat from 2021 to 2022 for property tax revenues.

Auditor O'Connor stated that we just recently received the Supplemental Local Income Tax. The Economic Development Fund will receive an extra \$222,855; Public Safety will receive an extra \$249,010; and General Fund will receive \$1,070,249. This is based on income taxes that came in higher than projected for calendar year 2018. Mark Gorbett asked if she would have more accurate numbers for the 2022 budget during the

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2021 budget session so they can make any needed changes for future losses. Auditor O'Connor stated she should have better information at that time. She will be putting together different scenarios based on the information she receives. She will know more by July 1 and should have some direction from DLGF at that time.

The next item was discussion regarding a hiring freeze. Auditor O'Connor stated that due to the many unknowns at this time, she feels it would be wise to be cautious spending money. Jorge R Morales agreed that we do not know what effect the COVID-19 is going to have and he agrees we need to go very slow. Mark Gorbett asked Attorney Monroe whether we should do this or wait until budget time. Attorney Monroe stated that they should let the offices know that we may be cutting positions next year which would mean that not hiring at this time would be wise. Bill Lentz stated that he thinks a freeze is good but he doesn't see us having to cut current employees, maybe just not filling open positions at this time. President Miller stated that he had several phone calls from County employees and they are concerned. He thinks the Council needs to come up with a complete plan to be proactive on what the levy may look like instead of being reactive. Jorge Morales stated that if we do not have the income, we cannot add new jobs. Mark Gorbett thinks they need to give a heads up and let the office holders know that in 2021 we may not be able to fund some positions. Attorney Monroe stated that they might want to let them know as well that it is possible there may be layoffs. Jorge Morales questioned whether this was premature. Bill Lentz believes we would keep the people we have now. Attorney Monroe stated that with the unknown as to the status of

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our income funding, they should be aware of it up front. Laura DeDomenic stated that it needs to be put out as well that they may have to do as Cummins and reduce wages. Mark Gorbett stated that they need to generically state it; we are looking at this and longer down the road we may need to make deeper cuts. Right now we need to tell the office holders that they need to be real cautious with filling positions. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence stated that we need to let them know that we are pausing or freezing the hiring. R Scott Bonnell stated that he would hope to maintain the employees we have but not hire/replace personnel going forward until we have a better understanding of the situation. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence stated that she would hate for someone to hire someone this year and then 3 months later tell them that position was gone. President Miller stated that if we do implement a hiring freeze, then they need to review it on a case by case basis as some offices do not have a lot of staff and would be hurt from not replacing personnel that leave. He also stated that he is afraid of the effect it would have on recruiting for positions such as the jail if it is out there that we may be doing layoffs in 3 months or so. Mark Gorbett stated that we just need to let the office holders know that they need to be very cautious when hiring personnel, but not put a freeze on at this time. Bill Lentz would encourage no additional for the 2021 budget. Mark Gorbett stated we will still have additional appropriations throughout this year. Laura DeDomenic clarified that she understood Bill Lentz to mean no new additional employees. Bill Lentz agreed; no new positions. President Miller stated that if an office holder has an expense that is

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not an essential expense, then they need to do their best to reduce their costs where they can.

The next item on the agenda was the Financial and Health Trust updates by Auditor O'Connor. She stated that we are in really good shape with the Health Trust with \$4,800,000 in the fund. She noted that they need to keep in mind that most people have not been going to the doctor due to fears of the COVID-19 virus. She is working with Cathy Dunn and Scott Fox regarding numbers for next year. As far as the Statement of Cash, she stated that we are doing well at this time as well. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that we have used the Employee Trust Account has kind of become somewhat of a savings account by increasing the portion by 3% to 5% and could be used if we get into difficult times.

Auditor O'Connor stated that the Budget Calendar she had sent out only had the header but no information on it. Chris West, from the Auditor's Office, stated that he had Dalene Pattingill send him a copy of the calendar and he had given it out to those present at the meeting. Auditor O'Connor also stated that the new Council room will be a "Zoom Room" and we will be able to utilize it for budget hearings if we are still under COVID-19 protocols. IT Director Mayes stated it will be a much more user intuitive setup, not what they are seeing today with wires stretched everywhere.

The next items on the agenda were updates by the Council members regarding Boards and Commissions as follows:

R Scott Bonnell:

County Extension Bd – nothing to report

Solid Waste Management District Bd – nothing to report

Health Bd – nothing to report

Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence:

County Parks & Recreation Bd – nothing to report

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Youth Services Center Advisory Committee – Sew Crazy has provided masks to the facility. President Miller asked Auditor O'Connor if there was any money sent to the company for the masks that the Sheriff's Department had ordered. Auditor O'Connor stated that no money had been spent and when they arrived, they were not the correct masks so the company donated them instead of paying for the return shipping costs.

Bill Lentz:

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

Cols Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Bd – nothing to report

Matt Miller:

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Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Jorge R. Morales:

County Plan Commission – nothing to report

Sheriff's Merit Bd – nothing to report

Greater Cols Economic Development Bd (proxy) – nothing to report

Bartholomew County Redevelopment Commission – nothing to report

Laura DeDomenic:

Bartholomew County Redevelopment Commission – nothing to report

Greater Columbus Economic Development Bd – Zoom meeting – effect of COVID-19 on community. City had 30 positive COVID-19 tests of employees. tele-health was discussed. Auditor O'Connor stated that our tele-health numbers are up greatly. Laura DeDomenic said they stated not to plan on having any large events before labor day.

ASAP – nothing to report

Mark E Gorbett:

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Emergency Management Bd – possible shortfalls due to COVID-10.

Shannon Hinton had secured 330 gallons of liquid hand sanitizer and maintenance will be picking it up in Indianapolis.

Jt Council Emergency Dispatch Services – possible shortfalls due to COVID-19.

Community Corrections Bd – nothing to report

Data Board – nothing to report

Drug Epidemic Committee – nothing to report

President Miller had received several calls of employees as to whether those employees that had to work would receive additional compensation while others were paid to stay home. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that they understand it is not fair to everyone but the answer is no. If they work more than 40 hours, then they will get their overtime.

Jorge Morales stated that he had several Zoom type doctors' appointments and he was curious as to how the doctors' would bill for that. Auditor O'Connor stated they would most probably bill for it as they would for a normal appointment.

Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that the Commissioners and the Auditor had been working together concerning the future income and they will adjust so that they can meet the required payments. He also stated that they had set aside \$1,000,000 for Courthouse repairs. They have committed a little over \$200,000 at this point for elevator repair and

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retaining walls. They are going to put the other projects on hold. The Highway Garage has finally been approved for the changes they have made to the plans.

Mark Gorbett asked if we would continue with the Zoom meetings until further notice. Auditor O'Connor stated yes as of today.

Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that they plan to continue as we are until the end of May. On June 1, we will open the building by appointment only. They are letting the office holders determine how best to work with the public for their particular office.

Mark E Gorbett made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Laura DeDomenic which passed unanimously.

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

By: _____
Matt Miller, President

By: _____
Bill Lentz, Pro-Tem

By: _____
R. Scott Bonnell, Member

By: _____
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence, Member

By: _____
Jorge R. Morales, Member

By: _____
Laura DeDomenic, Member

By: _____

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Mark E. Gorbett, Member

ATTEST: _____
Pia O'Connor, Auditor
Bartholomew County