

June 9, 2020

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL
March 10, 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 March 10, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the County Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana.

President Miller called the meeting to order.

Bill Lentz gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of the meeting minutes of January 14, 2020. **R Scott Bonnell 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 for a Salary Ordinance Amendment for Court Services (1122) Position #26 Financial Assistant to set the range from \$1,399.87 to \$1,553.72 as presented by Court Services Director Brad Barnes. This is an increase but it will be absorbed within the budget. **Mark E Gorbett made a motion to**

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approve the request as presented. Jorge R Morales seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was a Request for a Salary Ordinance Amendment for Youth Services (1000-34) Position #30 Administrative Assistant to set the range from \$1,399.87 to \$1,553.72 as presented by Court Services Director Brad Barnes. This is also an increase that will be absorbed within the budget. The increase in job duties over the years is one reason for the request as well as to keep this position in line with other similar positions. **Mark E Gorbett made a motion to approve the request as presented. Laura DeDomenic seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item on the agenda was a Request for a Salary Ordinance Change for Youth Services (1000-34) Position #10 Probation Officer to \$1,475.20 as presented by Court Services Director Brad Barnes. The bulk of the funding comes from the State Department of Corrections. Due to the increase in health insurance costs, the salary was going to be short for the year. This will allow it to be paid at its correct, full amount. They wish to set it up under 1000-34 for the remainder of the fiscal year. **Jorge R Morales made a motion to approve the request as presented. Mark E Gorbett seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item on the agenda was a Request for an Additional Appropriation for the Court Interpreter Grant (8926) in the amount of \$2,525.80 as presented by Bobbie Shake. They were awarded \$1,500 for the year and they had carryover of an additional \$1,025.80. This is from a reimbursable grant for interpreters. **Laura DeDomenic made**

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a motion to approve the request as presented. R Scott Bonnell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was a Request for an Additional Appropriation for the VIP Commission (1127) in the amount of \$200,400 as presented by VIP Commission Past President Robin Hilber and Treasurer Nick Sprague. The Visitors Center had a slight increase of \$400 in their budget for 2020. Also they have made an additional request for \$100,000 for the renovation of the Kids Common's Project as well as another \$100,000 for other work at the Commons. Unfortunately, these amounts were not included in the presented requests during the 2020 Budget Hearings. Laura DeDomenic asked if they were anticipating an increase in revenue with the opening of some new hotels. Treasurer Sprague stated that in January they were but with the current health crisis, they are uncertain. Jorge R Morales asked for the current balance. Treasurer Sprague stated that there is approximately \$630,000 currently in the bank. Mr. Morales asked if they should wait as they are not certain on the collections that will be coming in. Ms. Hilber stated that the Visitors Center keeps 90 days' worth of funding on hand. They feel they are okay at this time. The Visitors Center is aware that if they do not collect the funds, they cannot be distributed. R Scott Bonnell asked if this request is to keep the doors open. Ms. Hilber stated no, this money is for special projects above the current funding. The VIP made the commitment to the Visitors Center last year and a clerical mistake was made during the 2020 Budget Hearings. Chief Deputy Pattingill stated that it was in their budget last year but not presented correctly. **Mark E Gorbett made a**

motion to approve the request as presented. Laura DeDomenic seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Laura DeDomenic asked if AirBnB's pay the tax. Auditor O'Connor stated that they do.

The next item on the agenda was the discussion of the Sheriff's Department Pension as presented by Merit Board President Susan Thayer Fye. President Fye stated the Merit Board has been doing updates to documentation and other items. They review the pension account on a monthly basis. The Merit Board has an annual presentation on the Pension Fund. They have been working on the proposed amendments for about 4 years. There are 2 retirement accounts that they are dealing with. They are both very well-funded having earned about 20% last year. Tonight, the Sheriff and Chief Deputy are not here because this is a Merit Board issue. The first proposal involves a Sheriff's Deputy that is killed in a Line Of Duty Death (LODD). Currently the surviving spouse would receive \$200 per month and surviving children would receive \$30 per month. They are requesting to change this to \$1,000 per month for surviving spouses and \$200 per month for surviving children. The Merit Board would make the determination as to what qualifies as a LODD. They were looking to include a Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) but they have removed that item. There is a separate one-time payout of \$25,000. Mark E Gorbett asked about when the funding to the children would end. Ms. Fye stated that the cut-off age is 18 for children. Looking at other Counties in Indiana, the highest spouse payout is \$1,000 per month and the highest payout for children is \$1,000 per month, but no County has the \$1,000 for both spouses and children. Matt

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Miller asked if the amount could be higher but for a set number of years. Ms. Fye stated they can change it by making an amendment. They did not look into the Indiana State Police policies. President Miller stated that he doesn't believe there are any objections, but there are concerns about the amount and whether they should be higher. Jorge R Morales asked to see the Columbus City Police policy. R Scott Bonnell stated that the Columbus Fire Department covers children until 21 and the wife's benefit does not reduce. Auditor O'Connor reminded the Council that all County Employees have a \$40,000 Life Insurance Policy and the spouses and children would then be eligible for Social Security. Long-term disability was also added for all full-time County employees this year. Dan Davis, a member of the Merit Board, stated that this current pension policy went into effect in 1976 and all department members were happy at that time to get something. He is a little embarrassed that they have not changed it since then. Ms. Fye will look for answers to the questions that have been raised and will get back with the Council members.

The second amendment has 2 proposals that would come out of the large account. The DROP program starts on page 5. It would be a revenue neutral change. It can be considered a recruiting tool. They had over 100 applications during their last hiring process. People applying are setting up spreadsheets that compare the incentives/benefits of each department they apply to so they can easily compare them. An item mentioned at the work session stated that officers have take-home vehicles while on the job and they may need to purchase a vehicle when they retire. R Scott Bonnell stated that CFD has an

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option that at between 3 and 5 years before retirement, they can freeze their pension. This tells the department when the person is leaving which helps the department with planning for replacing the individual as well providing the retiree with a one-time payout of a determined amount on the day of their retirement. The amount is what would have been paid into the plan during the 3 to 5 years. It is based on the age and years of service. Mark E Gorbett stated that the Sheriff's Department has a maximum number combination that someone like TA Smith would not be for the DROP Programs as it based on age and time with the department. TA Smith is already past that maximum number combination. A younger deputy could sign up for it. It is a one-time option. Laura DeDomenic asked if it was revenue neutral. Ms. Fye stated it was. **Mark E Gorbett made a motion to approve the DROP Program item. Laura DeDomenic seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The final amendment is a change to the main pension account and they are requesting a change in the definition of vested. Currently, to be vested a Merit Officer has to be employed for 8 years and 1 month. They are requesting to change this to just 8 years to be vested. Ms. Fye stated that all Constitutional term-limited offices are vested after 8 years. Stan Brown had provided the following information regarding vesting time frames: 35 counties require 8 years to become vested, 45 counties require 10 years to become vested, 10 counties require more than 10 years to become vested and 2 counties require 8 years and 1 month to become vested. Bill Lentz is curious as to how Bartholomew County compares to other entities. How is the length factored in to the

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actuarial computations? Last year was a great year for the plan as far as earnings, but it gets factored over 5 years to smooth things out. This also means that a bad year would be factored out over the 5 years. This is to reduce any sudden spikes over the long-term course of the pension performance. Mark E Gorbett is still unclear on the Chief Deputy position as to whether it is a Merit or non-Merit. He stated that position does not fall under the Merit Board for discipline but does fall under it for the Pension. He suggested that the Merit Board address this issue in the Merit Board Rules. Ms. Fye agreed that would be a good place to clarify this issue. Mark E Gorbett stated that the Chief Deputy position can be anyone. He has an issue that a Sheriff could place a person with no law enforcement experience in the position of Chief Deputy and they would be a part of the pension plan. He does not feel that is right. He thinks the Merit Board should address this possible issue as well. Jorge R Morales agrees. Ms. Fye has heard the same comments from current Sheriff's Department employees. Dan Davis believes that there is a specific Indiana Statute, somewhere around 36-8-10, that specifically addresses the pension plan for a Chief Deputy. Ms. Fye stated that she would work on the questions that have been raised. If any other questions arise in the next week, she asked that they be forwarded to President Miller who can then get them to her. She hopes to have answers back in about 2 weeks or so.

The next item on the agenda was the Approval of the 2020 County Council Legal Services Contract with Attorney Chris Monroe. **Mark E Gorbett made a motion to**

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approve the request as presented. Laura DeDomenic seconded the motion which passed unanimously at 6-0. (Jorge R Morales had left the room)

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 – they have some funding requests they have turned into the Visitor Center.

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Youth Services Center Advisory Committee – nothing to report

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:

Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

President Miller had received 2 phone calls from County employees with concerns of the Corona Virus and their dealing with the public. Auditor O'Connor stated that the Commissioners are going to discuss this issue Thursday in their work session. She also stated that an e-mail will be distributed telling offices that the purchase of sanitizing items will be accepted as office supplies for claim purposes.

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 – There may be more property near Woodside and near the Northern Gateway EDA coming available for sale. The planned visit to our sister city in Japan has been postponed indefinitely due to growing health concerns.

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ASAP – nothing to report

Mark E Gorbett:

Emergency Management Bd – nothing to report

Jt Council Emergency Dispatch Services – nothing to report

Community Corrections Bd – nothing to report

Data Board – nothing to report

Drug Epidemic Committee – nothing to report

Auditor O'Connor stated that State Board of Accounts will be starting the 2019 Audit in a just a couple of weeks.

Mr. & Mrs. Dickey were present. They would like to speak to R Scott Bonnell and Bill Lentz briefly after the meeting regarding the Sloan Branch Drain. Mr. Bonnell & Mr. Lentz stated they would stay around after the meeting.

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

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

By: _____
Matt Miller, President

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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: _____
Mark E. Gorbett, Member

ATTEST: _____
Pia O'Connor, Auditor
Bartholomew County