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BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

February 9, 2021

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

Additional people in physical attendance of the meeting were:

IT Director Scott Mayes	Commissioner Tony London
Commissioner Kleinhenz	

Additional people in "Zoom" attendance of the meeting were:

Chief Deputy Auditor Dalene Pattingill	Auditor's Tax Administrator Chris West
Chad Phillips, BCSC - Financial	JDAI Coordinator Bobbie Shake
Surveyor E.R. Gray III	Recorder Tami Hines
Barney Quick, QMix	John Clark, White River Broadcasting
Mark Webber, The Republic	

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The Bartholomew County Council met on February 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana.

President Bonnell 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 for January 12, 2021. **Bill Lentz made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Greg Duke seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item on the agenda was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Family Recovery Court (9211) in the amount of \$26,922.63 as presented by JDIA Coordinator Bobbie Shake. Ms. Shake stated this is carryover money that they are allowed to use according to the rules of the grant. Ms. Shake also explained the Request of Additional Appropriations for an Interpreter Grant (8296) in the amount of \$1,419.65. This is also carryover that they are allowed to utilize. They were not approved for a new Grant for Interpreters for this year. This is a drop in the bucket as compared to what they generally have with the grant. **Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriation of \$26,922.63 as presented for the Family Recovery Court (9211) and the Additional Appropriation of \$1,419.65 for the Interpreter Grant (8296) as presented. Matt Miller seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item on the agenda was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the County General (1000) CARES Act Reimbursement in the amount of \$268,482.00 as

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presented by Auditor Pia O'Connor. This is appropriation of the supplemental amount that was given to us by the State this year. Auditor O'Connor expects this to be used primarily for the COVID Vaccine Clinics. **Mark E Gorbett made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriation of \$268,482.00 as presented.** Jorge R. Morales asked who was allocating the amounts and why was it going to the Clinics when the vaccine is covered by the insurance. Auditor O'Connor stated that they have to pay the nurses and the Health Department employees that work the clinics. They have brought in additional nurses as well having to pay overtime for the on staff nurses. This is money that was allocated to Bartholomew County and was deposited into the account. Greg Duke asked if the Health Department would be the only ones requesting expenditures of these funds. Auditor O'Connor stated that all COVID Funding goes through her, including this. She stated that everything that comes through this fund will be for COVID related items only. Chief Deputy Pattingill stated that the Auditor has to approve every expenditure and it is set up to be used only for the COVID items. **Matt Miller seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was Discussion and Salary Ordinance Amendment for the Surveyor's Office Staffing. Auditor O'Connor stated that this is a slight change for the Surveyor's Office by E.R. Gray III who is on the meeting. He would like to leave the position as full-time but be allowed to hire a part-time person. President Bonnell asked how many people work in this department. Surveyor Gray stated that this position was vacated in November of 2019. They filled the position March 16, 2020. That individual left for another company

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in Indianapolis at the end of last year. He stated that the profession has become very high tech with all the advances in electronics. Because of all of this, it is very hard to fill a position like this. He knows an individual that is retiring and would be interested in working 2 days a week. He would like to fill the position with this gentleman if the opportunity presents itself. He does not want the position reduced from the full-time position. They have used many means of advertising in the past. He will continue to look for a full-time person if this individual works the 2 days a week. The Survey Department Head works with the Survey Crew and is responsible for many items. If someone were to walk in tomorrow with the proper qualifications and wanted the full-time position, then he would hire them. Mark E. Gorbett asked if it would be easier to give him part-time money. Auditor O'Connor stated it would be easier to do it this way. The money is there and can be used. Chief Deputy Pattingill stated that Surveyor Gray will give the Auditor an hourly amount that will be noted in the Salary Ordinance. They will transfer money from the 11 (salary) fund to the 19 (part-time) fund to accommodate. If this change is made, they will sign the signature page of the Salary Ordinance and she will update said ordinance. **Bill Lentz motioned to allow the change as requested. Mark E. Gorbett seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was Discussion and a Salary Ordinance Amendment for the IT Department Staffing as presented by IT Director Scott Mayes. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that they are very conservative with their employees. Last year, IT Director Mayes came to the Commissioners with the need of an additional employee for the 2021 budget.

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Due to the situations present at the time, the Commissioners decided to hold up on asking for another employee, hoping to get through the COVID Pandemic and possibly not need the position after the end of COVID. IT Director Mayes stated that at that time, the unknown with the COVID factor was worth waiting to see where things would end up. He stated that the department needs have changed with the addition of more technologies and the increase in the use of those technologies due to COVID. They have been continually visiting the topic of staffing since he came on in 2016. His budget he presented last year was originally \$50,000 less than the year before. The Council moved that \$50,000 into the consulting line item for any unforeseen needs. Just in February they had 3,015 hours of requested project time. They spend 85% of their time on helpdesk tickets that are not included in the 3,015 hours. If you related it to roads, they are not patching or sealing them, they are just letting them go. He is requesting that they move the \$50,000 from the consulting line item to the salaries line item so that they can add a full-time person this year. Jorge R. Morales stated that the body cameras that the Sheriff has purchased are sitting on a shelf because IT does not have the staffing to complete this project. Director Mayes stated that they are getting them out, it is just a slow process. Mark E. Gorbett clarified that Director Mayes wants to hire a full-time employee. Director Mayes stated yes, that was the request. They may be able to supplement with some CARES Act Funding. He does not want to ask for additional money so that is why he is requesting to move the \$50,000 existing funding. They would be looking for a Level 2 Systems Administrator position. That would require a pay range somewhere between the \$80,000 to \$90,000. It

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just depends on the personnel that are available and interested. Jorge R. Morales asked about the telephone system issues. Can he discuss the amount of time that has taken away from his department? Director Mayes stated that the telephones have become an unexpected issue. Issues with the phones have pushed other scheduled items out more when a phone crisis occurs. This is especially true in today's world where a lot of business is being conducted via the phone. Jorge R. Morales felt that the IT budget request last year was understated. He feels this is necessary. Director Mayes stated that he would like to hire a full-time person for the remainder of this year. Auditor O'Connor stated they are asking to transfer money from the Consultant line item to the Salary line item as well as an adjustment to the Salary Ordinance. **Jorge R. Morales made a motion to approve the request as presented.** Mark E. Gorbett stated that the numbers do not add up at this time when looking at the salary plus benefits. Can we do an additional now instead of coming back in 3 months. Auditor O'Connor stated an Additional would require advertising. **Mark E. Gorbett seconded the motion which passed 6-1 with a dissenting vote by Greg Duke.**

The next item was the Presentation of the Tax Rate Comparison of 2020 to 2021 as presented by Auditor' O'Connor. Auditor O'Connor showed the comparison of the 2021 tax rates versus the 2020 tax rates. She stated that anything within Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation District went up about 16.5 cents. She explained that the rates that are controlled by the County Council had a slight increase of 1.6 cent. The German Township rate shows a large increase due to the additional referendum by BCSC.

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The same holds true for the City of Columbus. Conversely, in Hope, they did not have the increase as they are in the Flatrock-Hawcreek School District. She displayed a breakdown of taxes in German Township and City of Columbus for a home with a 150,000 assessed value. She went through the spreadsheet with the various other examples. Greg Duke asked if that meant that the areas that hit the CAPs caused a shift to other areas that did not hit the CAPs. Auditor O'Connor stated yes, essentially. She wanted to make the Council aware before the rates are advertised and the bills are sent out. This information is exactly what BCSC had provided before the referendum. Commissioner London stated that a Referendum is above the CAPs. Chad Phillips, BCSC CFO agreed that the Referendum is above the CAPs. He also stated that the City Rate was already higher to begin with because of the Corporation rate that doesn't exist in some areas.

The next item was an Update on the Broadband Initiative by the Commissioners. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that late last year they formed a committee to aggressively work toward broadband for the County. Commissioner London stated that the first thing they did was form an initiative to bring the various groups working on this together, to coordinate all efforts. They partnered with Purdue and had them conduct a survey. The biggest need was found to be in the Southwest area of the County. However, it is needed everywhere. The survey found twenty-five-percent (25%) of the homes in the County have no home internet service. Sixty-percent (66%) of the homes that have internet are dissatisfied with their service. COVID has led to people working from home, schooling from home and even doing tele-health from home. They have met with many providers.

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They are trying to get rid of any hurdles a provider would have to install internet systems in Bartholomew County. Regulations and taxes are the major concerns of the providers. Out in the County, the less density of homes makes the costs go up. Because of all of these items, all of the providers are concerned about funding. It would cost about \$30,000,000 to provide internet to all of Bartholomew County. This would include poles and such as well as fiber which costs about \$50,000 per mile. They are looking at every avenue for funding and won't get there without the Council's help. There are a lot of grants but they are matching grants. To get the funding, we have to partner with a provider. They have talked to the schools, utilities and others for funding. The Commissioners are looking at all of their options. It all comes down to commitment as to whether Bartholomew County is committed to getting this done. President Bonnell stated that he knows this came to light due to the COVID situation. When the schools go back, will the need ease up. Commissioner London stated he does not believe so. In the Bethany area, there is no internet service and cellular phone service is lousy. Mark E. Gorbett stated that if the providers are not willing to put the money into it because they are not going to make a profit, should that tell us something. He is concerned if we will get any investments back. Commissioner London stated that the Rural Electrification act of 1931 was the same. It stated at the time that the less dense farm communities did not need electricity. Then the Federal Government stepped into loan money for the companies to provide 1 line and 1 outlet in each house. We are in the same situation with the internet today. Today's farmers are even using the internet to control irrigation and other farm items. Creating the

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availability for internet services does not pay out. We have to step up and realize that this is an important infrastructure project for this County. Bill Lentz appreciates the work they are doing, but the numbers being discussed are astronomical. They had just discussed property tax increases for this year. While he agrees people need this, those same people also need lower taxes. Commissioner London stated it would not be an ongoing expense, as they would pick an area and let it grow from there with new customers. He spoke with Representative Lauer regarding \$250,000,000 coming to Indiana for these projects. There is an FCC project called ARDOF, which has invested millions of dollars in Bartholomew County. This still will not cover everyone. They would be looking to fill the gaps in the systems. The \$30,000,000 would be for everyone to be covered in the County but he would never ask for anything like that. Jackson and Brown County REMC's became internet providers that went after the Federal Funding and they received that money. Our REMC has not gone after the funding, but they are instrumental in getting this goal accomplished. Jorge R. Morales stated that we need to start thinking outside the box or we will fall behind. When he was hired at Cummins, he met Mr. Miller. Mr. Miller stated that you don't stay afloat unless you create change. Mr. Morales stated we need to move ahead with the changing technology. We need to come up with novel ways to fund these items. Commissioner London stated that we are not going to fall behind as we are already behind. Jackson County is adding hundreds of fiber customers per month and they are very excited. He stated that Jackson County is one of the ARDOF winners and will be building in the Sandcreek Area. There are other companies that won Federal money as well. Their plans

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are to build in corners of the Bartholomew County. Matt Miller asked how they see this moving forward as far as timelines and funding. Commissioner London hopes it is within months. They are looking at creating districts to start with and should have numbers in about 3 or 4 months. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that there is another \$250,000,000 coming to Indiana for rural communities. One company that is coming to the Mount Healthy area received \$3,000,000 or \$4,000,000 million in funding from the Federal Government. He wishes that the Legislatures would have allowed for the entire Township when they did this. Commissioner London stated that realtors have said that it is hard to sell homes that do not have internet access. Bill Lentz stated that with line of site, there are satellite providers. Commissioner London stated that he has talked with some of those providers and they are not interested in spreading out to the West of the County as there are issues with line of sight. The West part would have to be fiber. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence asked if he had heard of Unlimited Net. Commissioner London has and he has talked with them. They are providing a tremendous service and he wants to help them grow in any way that they can. He has steered several people to that company and other already existing companies. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that they would love to see companies like that receive these grants. Matt Miller stated that they need to make it very clear that Bartholomew County Government is not looking to compete with these businesses. We want to work to secure providers any funding that we can help them receive. Commissioner London stated that is why he would like to keep our funding locally with the “make ready”

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costs (poles & such). The Council thanked the Commissioners for the update as well as their continued efforts on this project.

The next item was a Financial Update as presented by Auditor O'Connor. She will present this at the next meeting as we are running long for this meeting.

The next item was the Approval of the 2021 County Council Member/Liaisons to Boards, Commissions & Committees as follows:

- **Member to County Plan Commission**
 - Expires 12/31/2022 *Jorge R. Morales*
- **Member to County Extension Board**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *R. Scott Bonnell*
- **Member to Parks & Recreation Board**
 - Expires 12/31/2022 *Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence*
- **Member to Office of Emergency Management Board**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *Greg Duke*
- **Member to Job Review/Classification Committee**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *Greg Duke*
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *Matt Miller*
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence*
- **Member to Personnel Administrative Committee**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *Matt Miller*
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *Bill Lentz*
- **Member to Solid Waste Management District Board**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *R. Scott Bonnell*
- **Member to Youth Services Center Advisory Committee**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 *Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence*

- **Member to Greater Columbus Economic Development Board**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Matt Miller
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Jorge R. Morales (proxy)
- **Member to County Redevelopment Commission (BCRC)**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Jorge R. Morales
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Mark E. Gorbett
- **Member to Joint Council of the Emergency Dispatch Services**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Greg Duke
- **Member to Columbus Area Metropolitan Planning Org Bd (CAMPO)**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Bill Lentz
- **Liaison to Health Board**
 - Expires 12/31/2024 Bill Lentz
- **Liaison to Sheriff Merit Board**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 R. Scott Bonnell
- **Liaison to ASAP Board**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Mark E. Gorbett
- **Member to the Broadband Initiative Commission**
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Matt Miller
 - Expires 12/31/2021 Jorge R. Morales

Jorge R. Morales motioned to approve the Council Appointments of Council Members as presented. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item was the Approval of the 2021 Agreement for Services with the Greater Economic Development for 1 seat for Council & 1 seat for Commissioners at \$7,500 per seat. **Jorge R. Morales motioned to Accept the Agreement for Services with**

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the Greater Economic Development as presented. Mark E. Gorbett seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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

Sheriff's Merit Bd – nothing to report

Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence:

County Parks & Recreation Bd – have brought in more money since the hiring of the Park Director.

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Youth Services Center Advisory Committee – returning about \$200,000 to the County due to less work during COVID

Bill Lentz:

Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

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Cols Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Bd – nothing to report

Health Bd – nothing to report

Matt Miller:

Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Greater Columbus Economic Development Bd – nothing to report

Bartholomew County Broadband Initiative – nothing to report

Jorge R. Morales:

County Plan Commission – tomorrow morning

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

Bartholomew County Redevelopment Commission – BCRC will receive an update regarding potential new business in their area on February 15. Auditor O'Connor stated we are closed that day. They will move it to February 22.

Bartholomew County Broadband Initiative – nothing to report

Greg Duke:

Emergency Management Bd – nothing to report

Jt Council Emergency Dispatch Services – nothing to report

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Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Bartholomew County Redevelopment Commission – nothing to report

Mark E Gorbett:

Community Corrections Bd – nothing to report

Data Board – nothing to report

Drug Epidemic Committee – nothing to report

ASAP – nothing to report

The next meeting will be on March 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Council, **Mark E Gorbett** made a motion to adjourn. **Jorge R Morales** seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

By: _____
R. Scott Bonnell, President

By: _____
Bill Lentz, Pro-Tem

By: _____
Matt Miller, Member

By: _____
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence, Member

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By: _____
Jorge R. Morales, Member

By: _____
Greg Duke, Member

By: _____
Mark E. Gorbett, Member

ATTEST: _____
Pia O'Connor, Auditor
Bartholomew County