

May 11, 2022

**BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**April 12, 2022**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Present:</b>
Matt Miller	At Large		Not Present
Bill Lentz	At Large		Present
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence	At Large		Present
R. Scott Bonnell	District 1		Present
Greg Duke	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 April 12, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana.

President Greg Duke 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 February 8, 2022 and March 8, 2022. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to Approve the Minutes as presented. Jorge R. Morales seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Interpreter Grant (8926) in the amount of \$2,969.44 as presented by Grant Administrator Bobbie Shake (via

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Zoom). Grant Administrator Shake explained that this is for interpreter services for the Courts and will be divided by the 3 Courts. It is a reimbursable Grant. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriation of \$2,969.44 as presented. R. Scott Bonnell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Court Reform Grant (8932) in the amount of \$12,000.00 as presented by Grant Administrator Bobbie Shake. Grant Administrator Shake explained that this is for an update in security at the Courthouse and will include a new scanner at the door. This is also a reimbursable Grant. Greg Duke asked what this will replace. Ms. Shake stated it will replace the magnetometer. The new scanner will work with the bag scanner that is currently in place. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence asked what would be done with the current scanner. Ms. Shake stated that is up to the Sheriff and Commissioners. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriation of \$12,000.00 as presented. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Discretionary Grant (7404) in the amount of \$19,457.00 as presented by Grant Administrator Bobbie Shake. Ms. Shake stated that this is to cover the Multi-Hazard Plan Update being done by Christopher Burke. The plan is required to be updated every 5 years. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriation of \$19,457.00 as presented. Bill Lentz seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

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The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the RSAT Grant (9103) in the amount of \$172,904.00 as presented by Director of Work Release Rob Gaskill. Director Gaskill stated that these Grants are ones they have received before. This particular Grant is a 2-year award cycle ending in April of 2024. It is a Federal Grant through the Indiana Criminal Justice Grant. Mark E. Gorbett asked if we could do this for 2 years. Mr. Gaskill stated that they submitted it for 2 years. Greg Duke asked for the amount for each year? Mr. Gaskil stated that it would be \$86,452 per year. **Jorge R. Morales made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriation of \$172,904.00 total based on \$86,452 each year for 2 years as presented. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the WRAP Grant (9206) in the amount of \$217,548.00 as presented by Director of Work Release Rob Gaskill. Director Gaskill stated that this is also a 2 year Grant in the amount of \$108,774 per year. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriation of \$217,548.00 total based on \$108,774 per year for 2 years as presented. Jorge R. Morales seconded the motion which passed unanimously.** Mark E. Gorbett asked how many years we have been getting this money. Director Gaskill stated they have received the WRAP Grant for 13 years. He is comfortable that this will continue as it is a Federal Grant and Bartholomew County gets the majority of the money that the State receives. It pays the Probation salary that had increased due to the State set salary. These Grants cover half the funding required.

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The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Juvenile Informal Adjustment Fund (2504) in the amount of \$5,000.00 as presented by Community Corrections Director Brad Barnes. This is money that they have collected in this fund. This request will be used for training. There will still be money in the fund. As of July of this year, this fee will no longer be collected based on changes to the State law. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriation of \$5,000.00 as presented. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence seconded the motion which passed unanimously.** Mark E. Gorbett asked where the money for firearms training for the Probation Officers came from. Director Barnes stated that they use “user fee funds” for that training.

The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Cumulative Bridge Fund (1135) in the amount of \$1,000,000.00 as presented by County Engineer Danny Hollander. Engineer Hollander stated that these are funds or refunds that were not spent last year. The funds will be split as follows: \$700,000 will go to Bridge #24, \$140,000 for Lowell Bridge; \$100,000 for culvert pipes; and \$60,000 for contracts. Greg Duke asked when the Lowell Bridge construction would begin. Engineer Hollander stated that it would start construction for Fiscal Year of 2027, which will effectively start in July of 2026. Jorge R. Morales asked if they plan to straighten the road out. Engineer Hollander stated that the plan is to flatten the curve out somewhat. They are looking at a possible round-about where it intersects at 325 W. Bill Lentz asked if Cumulative Bridge has it's own tax rate. Auditor Pia O'Connor stated it has it's own rate and the Commissioners have

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the ability to change the rate. The rate has not changed, but the funds have changed based on assessed value changes. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to Approve the Additional Appropriation of \$1,000,000.00 as presented. R. Scott Bonnell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Local Roads & Streets Fund (1169) in the amount of \$680,000.00 as presented by County Engineer Danny Hollander. This is again a re-appropriation. It will all go to the pavement maintenance program. Greg Duke stated that he had asked how much they could pave and was informed that it is all based on the price of materials. Engineer Hollander stated they had just opened material bids on Monday, and some materials had gone up 35% while other materials were up 15%. They have a Grant request in and should know the result in the next couple weeks. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to Approve the Additional Appropriation of \$680,000.00 as presented. Jorge R. Morales seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Highway Restricted Fund (1173) in the amount of \$75,000.00 as presented by County Engineer Danny Hollander. This is all going to the pavement program. This can be used for the matching Grant request that has been made. **Bill Lentz made a motion to Approve the Additional Appropriation of \$75,000.00 as presented. R. Scott Bonnell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

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The next item was a Request of Additional Appropriations for the Highway Fund (1176) in the amount of \$210,000.00 as presented by County Engineer Danny Hollander. This will mostly go for the Lowell Bridge design as it has to be paid up front and then we will be reimbursed at 80%. The reimbursement is done on a monthly basis. Greg Duke asked with the project being as far out as it is, how specific can the work be. Engineer Hollander stated they need the time for all kinds of inspections, noting that one house to the East is historical as it use to be an Inn. It is a quite cumbersome process. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to Approve the Additional Appropriation of \$210,000.00 as presented. Bill Lentz seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request for Transfer in the Cumulative Bridge Fund (1135) to move \$16,155 to Contractual and Supplies. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to Approve the Transfer in the amount of \$16,155. Jorge R. Morales seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request to make a Part-time Nurse Position into a Full-time Nurse Position at the Youth Services Center as presented by YSC Director Maria Lucas. Director Lucas stated that this is a recommendation from the Personnel Committee. They would need a change in the Salary Ordinance to accomplish this. They do have open Youth Care Worker positions and can give up one of those position. There would be no additional benefits to be paid for by the County. Mark E. Gorbett asked why this was brought up out of cycle (mid-year). Director Lucas stated that they are in need of a full-time nurse to comply with DCS standards. The current part-time nurse will become the full-time nurse

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position. Mark E. Gorbett asked what would happen if this is not done at this time. Director Lucas stated that the person in that position would probably leave. In the last exit conference with a nurse, it was stated that they needed benefits and the County wasn't offering benefits to part-time employees. There is no change in the funding amounts. Mark E. Gorbett stated he does not want to micro-manage a department when the department head has worked out a solution that does not cost the County any funding. Community Corrections Director Barnes stated this should have been brought before the Council when the Personnel Committee made the recommendation. They do not anticipate coming back in a couple months to replace the position they are removing. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence thinks we should wait until budget time to be consistent. Jorge R. Morales thinks we would benefit from doing this now. Mark E. Gorbett stated the difference is that this is not additional personnel, they are asking to make a position full-time without any additional cost to the County. He is personally for this. Auditor Pia O'Connor stated they will not have the part-time position so they are actually reducing the budget. Bill Lentz stated the Personnel Committee had said yes but the Youth Service Center had not acted on it. Director Lucas stated that they had not acted on it at the time because, at that time, the nurse was on maternity leave. Then, while on leave, she received a better offer and left. Director Lucas stated that the changes would result in expenses going from \$64,000 to \$46,000. Greg Duke asked if the number of clients is the driving factor or is it an organizational issue. Director Lucas stated it is clientel based. They are doing more services for the youth since each youth is required to see the nurse. Greg Duke shares

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Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence concerns but he can't object to the solution. **Jorge R. Morales made a motion to Approve the Request as presented and make the necessary changes to the Salary Ordinance. Mark E. Gorbett seconded the motion and the vote was called for.** Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence asked how many youth were at the facility at this time. Director Lucas stated approximately 15 at this time. **The vote was 5-1 with Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence as the dissenting vote.**

The next item was the Presentation of Salary Study Information from the Department Heads as presented by Auditor Pia O'Connor. Auditor Pia O'Connor stated that they had received the concerns of the department heads and had given that to Waggoner, Irwin, & Scheeley (WIS). They have received the response back from WIS in a memo explaining the concerns. At the time, they could approve the \$404,580 in increases to move to the external mid-point.. There is \$1,000,000.00 in the budget for the salary increases. Council could then address the other salary concerns at a later date. Auditor O'Connor stated that the County has lost 29 people this year whereas it was 14.5 last year, so almost double. Greg Duke stated that the Jail is on a different setup. Mark E. Gorbett stated that WIS is stating that based on external markets, they could bring up 218 employees with the approval of the \$404,580. That means almost half of the County employees have been underpaid. WIS has given us a road map to implement this. Auditor Pia O'Connor agreed. Mark E. Gorbett hates that we have waited this long as we are already behind mid-point again due to the timing. Bill Lentz stated that the concern was that the salary study was correct. He is concerned with those employees that are above the



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salary window. He thinks we need to talk to the department heads. Jorge R. Morales asked what he is trying to say. Greg Duke stated they are looking at it as if it was Holy writ. There are some questions as to some of the comparisons. Greg Duke can do the right thing, but he is not going to be beat over the head with this Salary Study. He thinks we can do better in some areas of the Salary Study and they can do better other areas that we cannot. They give you advice and you have to make the decisions. He stated that a vote on this is dodging work that the Council should be doing. Mark E. Gorbett stated they have been looking at this for years and that is why they did the study. Greg Duke stated he wore out shoes when he was a deputy to increase pay. Mark E. Gorbett asked what it would take to get his vote on this. Jorge R. Morales stated that when they voted to do the study, it was 4-3 and Greg Duke voted against it. And now, he is against the study. Greg Duke stated that is correct. He thinks they need to drill down and look at these numbers and determine who gets what. The experts aren't sitting at the desks doing the job and the Council needs to do that work to get it right. Jorge R. Morales asked how he can reconcile telling the employees that they paid for, had the study and now will not vote for the increase for those that are under paid. Bill Lentz is concerned based on the positions that were wrong as done by the professional. Mark E. Gorbett stated that it was addressed that the Auditor could make the corrections. Greg Duke opened the meeting to the public. Mark E. Gorbett asked for a consensus of the Council before they opened it up to the public for input. R. Scott Bonnell wanted to make certain that all the factors have been put in to this study. He wants to make certain that the hours of work are comparable. That is his only concern. He would

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like to hear from a couple of people before deciding. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence is not in favor of making a change at this time. Some offices do not do merit reviews and are giving raises at the first of the year. She had asked that departments give raises in increments instead of all at once. She voted against the study because she had called WIS and stated that they just call around. Assessor Ginny Whipple stated that she believes her people are underpaid based on market. They won't quit next week, but they can go elsewhere and make more money. She would like to see the changes made before the next budget cycle. She has a range to pay her employees. Some are at the high-end and some are not. She will accept what the Council does. Recorder Tami Hines stated that the point of the study, whether you use the numbers or not, the County employees are underpaid. This is proven in the study even with the errors. This just confirmed what they have known all along, that the County employees deserve more money. Why do they need to continue to want to talk to department heads. She has been in on the meetings, but none of the Council has called or spoken to her about her department. Treasurer Barbara Hackman stated that the largest part of the budget is the employees. They are also the most valuable asset of the County. She stated that it is the employees that serve the public. We are underpaid. The Sheriff's Department came through several years ago to get parity for the deputies. She appreciates that they gave a 3% increase last year, but the insurance premiums also went up. These employees pay taxes. The morale of the County is very low right now. She knows that they think County employees get a lot of benefits, but they get paid far less. The private sector may not get as many holidays, but again, they are better paid. We are under paid.

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A study was done by a professional that is in 70 counties. They looked at surrounding counties as well as like counties. Mark E. Gorbett stated that he appreciated her comments. He believes that everyone on this Council wants what is best for the employees. In the last 2 decade, when he was Sheriff, he and Greg Duke went door to door to get parity for the Sheriff's Department with the City. Since that was done, the IT Department had issues with keeping personnel. They worked on the salaries and are retaining employees. They also tackled the E911 center and put them on a matrix. They now have 218 employees that are underpaid. They set aside \$1,000,000. With the other departments that they have already fixed, this is the last chunk to fix the issue. He is not saying that this particular study is the fix. We have heard from 3 officials that they need the increase. We have been talking about this for a year. He will make a motion tonight. Bill Lentz stated that 218 are going to get a raise while the others will not. Mark E. Gorbett stated this is only bringing the low-end employees to the mid-point. Bill Lentz stated that his only concern is that the study is right on the 218. Auditor Pia O'Connor stated that was all addressed in the memofrom Kent Irwin. Bill Lentz would like to have each department head review this and make certain that they are infavor of the changes. Mark E. Gorbett asked if they state that they are, would he be okay with it then? Bill Lentz stated that yes, he would be. Jorge R. Morales stated that after 3 meetings, they are all saying we are for the employees, then we need to do it. Greg Duke stated that they did set aside money, but this is not the time for self congratulations. Council policies have put us in a good position, but he does not believe that we can shave off another \$500,000 and not suffer later for it. He already has

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problems with the study and believes this puts us on a slippery slope. We can predict what the levy increase will look like. If we rubber stamp this, then we are putting the decisions in someone else's hand. Mark E. Gorbett stated we are doing this for the betterment of the community. He knows that he and Greg both contemplated going elsewhere due to the pay. Greg Duke stated that we need to do this in a thoughtful way that protects the County in the future. Mark E. Gorbett asked what it would take to get him to give the raises. Greg Duke stated that he was told that there are 2 ways to fix a problem; fix it now for good or put it off to fix later. What will our outlook be to stay competitive with salaries in the future. Jorge R. Morales asked when we vote?. How long does it take to get to the vote. Greg Duke stated that for him to vote on \$400,000 without thorough review or consideration of the Council, he would never do it. It would be wrong not to deal with it this year and it would be wrong to kick it to next year. By rubber stamping this, we hand off control to someone else. R. Scott Bonnell stated that he would be okay with the \$400,000. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence stated that we are in the highest rate of inflation in 40 years. She has had people call her and ask if everyone gets a raise? She would feel better doing this at budget time as the picture may change for the worse. Bill Lentz stated that if the majority wants to do it, then fine. Maybe we learn from the study that we need to sharpen our pencil and be a little more aggressive at budget time. Three department heads spoke tonight, so he knows how they feel. You have half of the employees. You have a person sitting at this desk and the person sitting next to them and one will get a raise and one will not. He heard concerns from the department heads. He wants to see that the

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department heads are 100% on board with what this firm is thinking. Jorge R. Morales stated we have talked in circles. **Jorge R. Morales motioned to move the employees external mid-point effective with the May 6, 2022 payroll. Mark E. Gorbett clarified that is based on the exterior mid-point. Mark E. Gorbett seconded the motion. The vote was called for and the vote was 3-3 with Mark E. Gorbett, Jorge R. Morales and R. Scott Bonnell were in favor while Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence, Greg Duke and Bill Lentz voted no.** Chief Deputy Pattingill stated that she would be more than willing to work with the department heads to bring back a report from each department head with their opinion on their department. She stated that they wanted the department heads to hold on expenses until the salary study had been completed. Greg Duke stated that no one stated that they would make the study the definitive guide. Chief Deputy Pattingill stated that is correct, but they did tell them not to request additional appropriations until this was done for. If you wait until the budget session, it will make it a very difficult budget session. She has checked with Auditor Pia O'Connor and she is okay with her taking this on. Greg Duke stated that he did not want to do this at budget time as it will make it very difficult. Mark E. Gorbett stated that he agrees with Greg Duke and lets do this and let them bring it back next month. Greg Duke will get with the Council members regarding meeting with department heads. Assessor Ginny Whipple stated that is a very positive idea and she appreciates the offer to work with Dalene and Pia to make this fair and equitable to everyone. Bill Lentz stated that he just wants the department heads on board. Mark Webber, of the Republic, asked for clarification as to the speakers. That was clarified.

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The next item was Information regarding Budget Preparation for 2023 as presented by Auditor Pia O'Connor. The dates were satisfactory to the members based on a poll that Greg Duke had taken. **Jorge R. Morales motioned to Approve the 2023 Budget Process as scheduled in the presentation. 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

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 – nothing to report

**Bill Lentz:**

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

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Cols Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Bd – nothing to report

**Matt Miller: Absent**

Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

Economic Development – 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

**Greg Duke:**

Bartholomew County Redevelopment Commission – nothing to report

Greater Columbus Economic Development Bd – nothing to report

ASAP – nothing to report

EOC – nothing to report

**Mark E Gorbett:**

Emergency Management Bd – nothing to report

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*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

There being no further business to come before the Council, **Bill Lentz made a motion to adjourn. R. Scott Bonnell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Duke, President

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Matt Miller, Pro-Tem

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
R. Scott Bonnell, Member

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence, Member

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jorge R. Morales, Member

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Lentz, Member

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark E. Gorbett, Member

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pia O'Connor, Auditor  
Bartholomew County