

**BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET HEARINGS
August 21, 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		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 reconvened their 2018 Budget Hearings on August 21, 2017 at 2:16 p.m. in the County Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana.

President Laura DeDomenic called the meeting to order.

Mark Gorbett began by discussing where the Council was at as of this time. They are still one-million seven-hundred-thousand dollars short. That amount is after the cuts they feel they can make as well as adding some positions. Four (4) of the Council have come to a conclusion that they need to increase the LIT by .5. They came to this decision while looking two and three years down the road including the building issues and the opioid problem. They also want to provide their employees raises during those years. The increase would fix the shortfall and provide about three-million one-hundred-thousand dollars (\$3,100,000) additional per year. This money would be used for items such as Court House repairs or a new Highway Garage. With an increase in the LIT tax

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rate, the City will receive about six-million dollars (\$6,000,000). Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that he is not against TIF, but TIF has killed us. Council stated that they had cut one position from the Assessor's Office. That had been an open position for over a year. They explained that they had given some raises above the three-percent (3%) raises but not what had been asked for. The Council would like to see the Commissioners pay for the Capital Improvements paid out of LIT. The Commissioners expressed concern with their Capital Improvements not showing in the budget. (*Multiple conversations were occurring at this time*) Mark Gorbett continued explaining some of the decisions they have made to date. Mark Gorbett made a motion to proceed with increasing the LIT to a total of 1.75. Chris Ogle asked the Commissioners to help in discussions with the Mayor in explaining that we can use some help with our funding as an increase in LIT will provide the City with six-million dollars (\$6,000,000) more than they currently receive. We have the drug problem that is creating more cost to the County. The Council and Commissioners need to put on a united front that we are doing this for the good of the community. Mark Gorbett wanted to make the motion to continue on. The County budget is not dependent on whether the City will give them a portion of the proceeds or not. Bill Lentz does not care when the motion is made, he is voting against it. He was asked where he would cut the budget by one-million seven-hundred-thousand dollars (\$1,700,000). Jorge Morales made a motion to proceed with the steps to increase the LIT to 1.75. Mark Gorbett seconded the motion which passed with four (4) in favor, two (2) against (*Matt Miller/Bill Lentz*) and one (1) undecided

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(*Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence*). Chris Ogle questioned what would change the minds of the others to agree to the tax increase. Bill Lentz stated that there is a motion on the floor with a second and wondered why those against this idea had to explain themselves. Commissioner Kleinhenz asked for an explanation of the breakdown again. Chris Ogle explained that with the increase, the County will get approximately four-million eight-hundred-thousand dollars (\$4,800,000) of which one-million seven-hundred-thousand dollars (\$1,700,000) of that will cover the budget as it is at this point. The City will get six-million dollars (\$6,000,000) from this increase. Rick Flohr asked why their attorney was not given a raise in this budget. President DeDomenic stated that he is as a Public Defender but not as County Attorney because he is the only contract employee receiving County insurance. Mark Gorbett stated that we have over four-hundred (400) County employees and this will be the only employee that will not get a raise.

- BREAK -

Matt Miller asked if we could approach the Mayor and see if he would be willing to give the County three-quarters (3/4) of the six-million dollars (\$6,000,000) the first year, one-half (1/2) of the six-million dollars (\$6,000,000) the second year and a smaller percentage from there on. Mark Gorbett does not believe the old portion of the jail should be opened as a treatment center. The Sheriff may need it based on the current and predicted overcrowding. By turning it into an unsecure area for a treatment center, you remove the option for the Sheriff to open that portion for prisoners. Bill Lentz stated that the City may decide to keep all of the money they receive. Mark Gorbett stated that if

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they do they do, but at least the County can take care of the County's bills. He wants to see the County Attorney receive a three-percent (3%) raise. Auditor Hackman stated that the County Attorney is different as the other contractual attorneys are for only one (1) department/office. He is paid for by the Commissioners but helps all the County offices. Jorge Morales made a motion to grant the Commissioners Attorney five-hundred dollars (\$500) raise. Matt Miller stated that this Council gives everybody everything they ask for. Auditor Hackman stated that the County employees are good employees and they do the work that is needed for the public. Mark Gorbett seconded the motion to raise the Commissioner Attorney by five-hundred dollars (\$500). The motion passed. The next department to be discussed was the Health Department. Jorge Morales wanted to discuss the programs and if there are any programs that could be cut. Chris Ogle stated that the Health Department does programs for the less fortunate that cannot afford the care. He believes the programs they provide are because they are things our residents need. Jorge Morales does not see any salaries that are out of line. To fund this department, they will need about two-hundred-thousand dollars (\$200,000) in tax revenue which will mean it will reduce County General by two-hundred-thousand dollars (\$200,000). The one-million seven-hundred-thousand dollars (\$1,700,000) deficit includes this amount. They will also have to raise the rate for the Election Fund and it too will be to raise about two-hundred-thousand dollars (\$200,000). Brad Barnes is looking for help with health insurance amounts. Debt Service levy rate will be cut back to one-million four-hundred-eighty-thousand dollars (\$1,480,000). E911 shortfall will come out of the CREDIT money.

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Mark Gorbett asked what they needed to do as the Sheriff did not change his longevity policy as the Council had asked. The insurance on E911 was discussed. They believe lowering it to three-hundred-thousand dollars (\$300,000) should cover the insurance cost based on historical figures. The changes to the Election and Health Department rates will affect the levy of County General. Debt Service rate will be going down.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

By: _____
Laura DeDomenic, President

By: _____
Bill Lentz, Pro-Tem

By: _____
Chris Ogle, Member

By: _____
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence, Member

By: _____
Jorge Morales, Member

By: _____
Mark Gorbett, Member

By: _____
Matt Miller, Member

ATTEST: _____
Barbara J. Hackman, Auditor
Bartholomew County

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