

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL
September 12, 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	Present
Barb Hackman	Auditor	Secretary	Present

The Bartholomew County Council met on September 12, 2017 at 6:00 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.

Chris Ogle gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The first item on the agenda was the First Reading of the Flatrock Township Trustee Budget as presented by Lisa Moore. This is done by the County Council because she has two (2) Advisory Board Members that are volunteer fire fighters, requiring the Council to approve the Township budget. Trustee Moore stated that her budget is basically the same as it was last year. No loans or other added expenditures. The Council had no questions. President DeDomenic opened the meeting for public discussion. One person spoke in favor of the good job that has been done. Hearing no other comments, the public portion of the meeting was closed. Jorge Morales made a

December 27, 2017

motion to approve the 2018 Flatrock Township Budget as presented. Mark Gorbett seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the Consideration of an Ordinance Modifying the Local Income Tax Rate. This is the public hearing. The Council will make comments and then members of the public can sign in and speak for two (2) minutes. Mark Gorbett stated that this Council over the past years has cut the budgets to the bone. Now we have new issues facing the County, especially where it comes to drugs. There is no new revenue coming in. There is no money available. The Council looked at the 2018 Budget for what the needs were; not what they want, but what we need. We can no longer dip into our savings account. We need to look two (2) and three (3) years out. The State has now forced a percentage of felons back to our jail. Jorge Morales stated that he is concerned for the drug issue we have in this community and across the country. We are preparing ourselves to deal with the issues that we are facing over the upcoming years. He has received forty-four (44) phone calls this week. Only two (2) of the calls were against what the Council was contemplating. He is in favor of the LIT increase. He would like to limit it to three (3) years but that is not an option. President DeDomenic explained that she ran for Council because she was tired of paying more taxes. After working on the budget for three years and trying all options. The Jail is facing overcrowding partly due to the drug issue. She found needles outside the door of her personal business at 7th and Washington. The departments have cut their budgets to the bare bones. We are out of options to maintain the services we provide. She is in favor of

December 27, 2017

this so that we can continue the services we offer while also tackling the issues such as the drug problem. Jorge Morales stated that if we have to increase the revenue stream, he believes it is better to go the income route as opposed to the property tax rates. Those making less money will pay less. At this time, President DeDomenic opened the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Will Kinman, a Sheriff's Detective, was the first to speak. He received a call Friday night that his 27 year old cousin had died from an overdose. It has hit home with his family. We need to start addressing the drug problem and he is in favor of the increase.

David Barker spoke next. He stated that the Council has done what they needed to do over the years but now they have to act to help the drug problem. There are over one-thousand (1,000) people in this community that are using drugs. We do not have enough employees to treat, watch over and care for these people. The only option the County Council has is to raise taxes to work on this. He would rather pay the additional money to protect the members of this community.

Russ Poling was the next member of the public to speak. He spoke against the increase in the LIT tax. He asked how the increase will address the drug problem. Mark Gorbett explained that the Jail Commander was punched in the face the other day. They are under staffed. The Public Defenders are under staffed. President DeDomenic stated that pretty much every department that had an increase that was directly or indirectly related to the drug issue. Matt Miller stated he disagreed as this budget does nothing to

fix the drug problems. President DeDomenic stated that this will give us the funds next year to start the programs we need to for this issue. It was stated that they want to work with the City to help fund this drug issue with a portion of the additional money that they will receive. He stated that the two-million dollars (\$2,000,000) that went to the overpass could have funded the one-million two-hundred-thousand dollars (\$1,200,000). Matt Miller stated that all he has heard about is the County Garage, the Court House and the Veteran's Memorial but we have not talked about the drug problem and funding. President DeDomenic stated that she strongly disagreed with that statement as they have been discussing the drug court and the other opening of the old portion of the jail. Mark Gorbett stated that it is very simple; we have a drug problem. If this increase does not go through then we will still have a drug problem but the Sheriff and the Courts will have no funding to deal with it. There have been discussions with the City but they cannot commit when there is no money yet.

Kristen Brown was the next member of the public to speak. She has not seen any revenue data that confirms that the County is losing money. She compared the City budget process to the County budget process. She also stated that the County is the only municipality that allows benefits to part-time elected officials. President DeDomenic asked her to wrap up her comments as she was at three and a half (3.5 *minutes*). Mark Gorbett took offense to Ms. Brown stating that the Council had failed to do their job. He has seen her at five (5) meetings in the three (3) years that he has been on Council. The Council has done their jobs and done it well. Kristen Brown wanted to see a plan for the

six-million dollars (\$6,000,000). President DeDomenic asked if when Ms. Brown was Mayor, would she have wanted the County Council telling her how to spend the City's money. That is up to the City and is not something the County can do anything about.

Lisa Deaton was the next public member of the public to speak. She is not totally against the increase. Her concern is that she wants to see transparency as to the proposed spending of the additional funds. She does appreciate an income tax rather than a property tax. She wants to see proof of a plan that would do what they intend it to do.

Jeff Jones was the next to speak. He is in favor of the tax increase. He is a forty (40) year resident of Bartholomew County. He is also the volunteer leader of the Alliance for Substance Abuse Progress (ASAP) he does see money in this budget. There is money in the budget to aid in the overcrowding at the jail which is due to the drug issue. He also sees money in the Courts to aid with the increase in taxes. The ASAP will present a proposal to the community as to the programs that are needed to help with this program.

Patrick Badgley was the next member of the audience to speak. He will not state that he told them the Jail would have an issue with the overcrowding. His wife can no longer preach to the inmates due to the safety issues. They also need to have programs during and after incarceration. The people that come out of the jails and prisons need someplace to go or they will be right back in it.

Mike Lovelace was the next to speak. He is not opposed to the tax increase. He is opposed to the fact that the railroad crossing is a State issue. If they are really

concerned about revenue then they should be at the City Council meetings when they give away money for abatements and TIF.

Joe Swain was the next audience member to speak. He does not believe that throwing money at the problem is the solution. If people do not want to change, they are not going to. He doesn't understand why we are doing an overpass. Trains have been going through Columbus forever. He agreed with Mike Lovelace. He also stated that government is not the cure. He is against the increase.

Ben Slaton wanted to know what other avenues have been explored as opposed to raising taxes. There have been grants that have been pursued and received. He asked if there were any inefficiency in the Jail that had been found and addressed. Yes, there were and those have been addressed. He would like to see how the money will be spent.

Carl Miller asked that they not raise the income tax. He expects the elected officials to stay within a budget. He feels the majority of the voters want them to spend the existing money wisely.

C.W. McKittrick was the next member of the public to speak. He does not like more taxes, but the County is at a point where there are no other options. If we don't maintain the Court House then we will have to build a new one. We must maintain and our buildings and equipment. He is in favor of the increase.

Michele Richards was the next audience member to speak. She works in the Court House. They are losing employees with years of experience to other companies for more money. The Court House needs renovated; if the wind blows hard the blinds move

December 27, 2017

even with the windows closed. We need help and this is needed. She was asked if the County has the Cadillac of benefits, why would employees leave for better benefits. Her response was that our Cadillac has a few rust spots on it.

Glenn Petri stated that people on fixed incomes have had their pockets picked by the State, the City and now the County. There needs to be other things looked at.

James W. wanted to know why they always go after the working class. He asked why they don't go after the big business. Put a tax on the payroll of the businesses. We have a drug problem but it is because people are depressed because they have no money. He is against the increase.

Bill Lentz asked when we would get our actual numbers. Auditor Hackman stated the first of October but even that is not for certain.

Don Strietelmeier stated he is neither for nor against the tax. They need to take care of the facilities that we have and the County employees. He knows that we have a drug problem, but what do we do for the good people. We have a breakdown in society. The Courts have been so lax in so many areas. We need to get back to the old basics and more strict methods. He doesn't know anyone that has a drug problem but if he did he is certain he would be more sympathetic.

Hearing no more comments, the public portion of the meeting was closed. Mark Gorbett appreciated what everyone had to say tonight. He doesn't want a tax but he can't put his head in the sand. We have issues and we still have bills to pay. He sees no other viable solution. The LIT tax will take care of these issues if they do it wisely.

December 27, 2017

Mark Gorbett made a motion to increase the current LIT tax from 1.25 to 1.75. Chris Ogle seconded the motion. The vote was 4-3 with Mark Gorbett, Jorge Morales, Laura DeDomenic and Chris Ogle in favor of and Matt Miller, Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence and Bill Lentz against. Matt Miller stated that if this tax is passed, he hopes it is spent diligently. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence voted against because they have talked continually about a five (5) year plan but she has seen no updates on this. Mark Gorbett made a motion to modify the LIT allocation as Public Safety at .25, Economic Development at .25 and Certified Shares at 1.25. Jorge Morales seconded the motion. President DeDomenic asked for any questions and explained what the allocation was about. The vote was 4-3 with Mark Gorbett, Jorge Morales, Laura DeDomenic and Chris Ogle in favor of and Matt Miller, Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence and Bill Lentz against.

BREAK

The next item on the agenda was the Prosecutor's Office Manager Brenda Mijares asking for Additional Appropriations for Adult Protective Services. She explained that this is for the money that they have received from Jackson, Brown and Decatur Counties. Jorge Morales made a motion to approve the request as presented for twelve-thousand six-hundred-seventy-five dollars and twenty-six cents (\$12,675.26). Matt Miller seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was a request for Additional Appropriations for the Health Department (007) as presented by Auditor Hackman. They are requesting thirty-thousand dollars (\$30,000) as this is money that they will need to purchase vaccines of

December 27, 2017

which insurance companies end up reimbursing these funds. Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the request as presented. Matt Miller seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item was a request for the Transfer of Funds for the Health Department in the amount of three-thousand nine-hundred dollars (\$3,900) as presented by Auditor Hackman. This is for the billing company that submits the claims to the insurance companies. Chris Ogle made a motion to approve the request as presented. Mark Gorbett seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item was the First Reading of the Bartholomew County 2018 Budget as presented by Auditor Hackman.

Jorge Morales made a motion to accept the 2018 Budget as presented. Chris Ogle seconded the motion. Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence asked about an amount in the Auditor's Office to five-thousand dollars (\$5,000) that she thought had been reduced. It was discussed but the consensus was to leave the amount. The vote was 4-3 with Mark Gorbett, Jorge Morales, Laura DeDomenic and Chris Ogle in favor of and Matt Miller, Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence and Bill Lentz against.

The next item on the agenda was the First Reading of the Solid Waste 2018 Budget as presented by SWMA Director Heather Siesel. The overall budget is lower by about two-hundred-thousand dollars (\$200,000). Personal Services is at one-million thirty-one thousand three-hundred-twenty-nine dollars (\$1,031,329), Supplies at eighty-

thousand nine-hundred-thirty-seven dollars (\$80,937), Services and Other Charges at one-million nine-hundred-eighty-four-thousand dollars (\$1,984,000) and Capital Outlays at three-hundred-eighty-seven eight-hundred dollars (\$387,800) for a total budget of three-million four-hundred-eighty-four-thousand sixty-six dollars (\$3,484,066). They will need new cell construction in 2022. The public hearing of the meeting was opened. Michael Lovelace is opposed to the budget due to the purchase of a new vehicle. It is only for to and from work and he believes that it is way overpriced and not needed. The bids are out at this time. This vehicle was in the 2017 Budget and was approved by the SWMA Board as well as the County Council. Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Jorge Morales seconded the motion which passed 6-1 with Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence as the dissenting vote.

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

Matt Miller:

Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Mark Gorbett:

Emergency Management Bd – nothing to report

Emergency Dispatch Services – nothing to report

Community Corrections Bd – nothing to report

December 27, 2017

Data Board – staff in place – needs infrastructure updates next year

Drug Epidemic Committee – discussed the heroin epidemic – more information to come

Jorge Morales:

County Plan Commission – cancelled

Liaison to Sheriff's Merit Bd – had met at the jail and talked with several regarding the recent issues.

Cols Economic Development Bd – nothing to report

Bartholomew County Redevelopment Commission – nothing to report

Laura DeDomenic:

Liaison to Health Bd – reviewed 2018 budget

Bartholomew County Redevelopment Commission – nothing to report

Columbus Economic Development Bd – their annual lunch. The guest speaker spoke about NAFTA and its effects on the US economy.

Bill Lentz:

Job Review/Classification Committee – nothing to report

Personnel Administrative Committee – nothing to report

Cols Area Metropolitan Planning Organization 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

JDAI – nothing to report

Affordable Housing Meeting – nothing to report

Chris Ogle:

County Extension Bd – nothing to report

Solid Waste Management District Bd – nothing to report

Auditor Hackman clarified the PERF amount that she stated earlier at 12.4 is actually 14.2 and is set by the State.

Jorge Morales clarified about increases in the Council budget as the Council did not receive a raise last year.

Matt Miller made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Chris Ogle and passed unanimously.

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

By: _____

December 27, 2017

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