

WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, January 26, 2015 in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Wabash County Courthouse. Chairman Mike Ridenour called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. Seven Council members were present: Ridenour, Kyle Bowman, Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Matt Dillon, Claude Markstahler, and Bill Ruppel. Markstahler opened with a word of prayer and Ridenour led in the pledge of allegiance. County Auditor and Secretary to the Council, Linda Conrad was absent, so Chief Deputy Auditor B.J. Grube assisted the Council. The proceedings of the meeting were recorded by the County Auditor's office.

The first order of business was to review the minutes of the January 5, 2015 organizational meeting. Curless made a motion to approve the minutes. Ruppel seconded the motion; it passed by a vote of 6/0. Markstahler had been absent from the Jan 5th meeting.

Ridenour asked for public comments regarding the meeting agenda. There were no comments.

The next order of business was the consideration of a resolution confirming the designation of an economic revitalization area and qualifying that area and personal property for tax abatement for Vision Properties, LLP and Midwest Eye Consultants. Ridenour introduced the new Wabash County Economic Director, Keith Gillenwater to the Council. Gillenwater and Attorney Steve Downs were present to explain the confirmatory resolution. Gillenwater stated that the abatement request and the Statement of Benefits have been reviewed by the County Tax Abatement Committee as well as the Economic Development Group and both groups recommended approval of the abatement. Downs stated that Declaratory Resolution #2014-85-12 was approved on October 27, 2014 which designated the Area as an economic revitalization area and approved real estate & personal property tax deductions for new manufacturing equipment installed in the Area for up to ten (10) years. Ruppel made the motion to approve the Confirmatory Resolution as submitted. Curless seconded the motion and it passed by a 6/1 vote with Dillon voting against. Ridenour asked Dillon to elaborate on his vote against the resolution. Ridenour further explained that the business would still be paying taxes and would receive the ten year abatement only on new manufacturing equipment installed in the area.

Ridenour asked Gillenwater about the Wabash business that recently announced a large number of employee lay-offs and what effect this will have on their current tax abatement. Gillenwater responded that he will research this particular abatement in light of the lay-offs and report back to Council.

Sheriff Bob Land submitted the Sheriff's department 2014 year-end report including all Jail statistics. He stated that the department had a total of 1,138

book-ins in 2014, and that Miami County had been paid a total of \$188,895 to house Wabash County prisoners with an average stay of 28 days. He stated that Wabash County had the highest “meth” related arrests in the State of Indiana.

Jeff Dawes made a motion to re-appoint Gary D. Wood of LaFontaine to the Local Alcoholic Beverage Board for the year 2015. Dillon seconded the motion; it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Ridenour asked for public comment regarding non-agenda items. Bonnie Corn asked if there are any plans to improve the courthouse phone system. County Commissioner Scott Givens stated that there is nothing wrong with the system, but that it is important to listen to the recorded options when the phone is answered in order to get the county department that the caller wants. He explained that if “zero” is chosen, the options will be repeated again.

Council reviewed:

Solid Waste Management District 2014 year-end statement.

With no other business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned.

The following individuals also attended the January 26th Council meeting:

**If any names are spelled incorrectly, we apologize.*

Deputy Auditor Marcie Shepherd, Commissioners Barry Eppley, Brian Hauptert, and Scott Givens, County Attorney Steve Downs and Associate Attorney Mark Frantz, Co. Extension Director Teresa Witkoske, Bonnie Corn, Louella Krom, Wabash Plain Dealer reporter Lauren Winterfeld, and The Paper reporter, Emma Rausch.