

## **WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, April 24, 2017 in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Wabash County Courthouse. Chairman Jeff Dawes called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. Seven Council members were present: Dawes, Randy Curless, Matt Dillon, Kyle Bowman, Lorissa Sweet, Philip Dale, and Matthew Mize. Bowman opened with a word of prayer and Dawes led in the Pledge of Allegiance. The proceedings of the meeting were recorded by the County Auditor's office.

Chairman Dawes requested that those present silence their cell phones and stated that all public comments regarding agenda and non-agenda items are permitted and encouraged.

The first order of business was to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2017 meeting. Dale made a motion to approve the minutes. Dillon seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Former Councilman and consultant Bill Ruppel was present to explain the outcome of Wabash County's request to the Indiana State Legislature for a special tax rate for jail funding. Ruppel stated that there were 62 county requests for special rates/revenue under House Bill #1142 but the bill did not even get out of the Senate and so, none of the requests were approved. He explained that the State had three recommendations for increasing revenue before requesting any special revenue rates: 1.) Counties should increase or max out their local income taxes, 2.) Counties should implement the wheel tax if not already in place, and 3.) Counties should max out property tax caps so there is no other revenue that can be raised through property taxes before requesting a special revenue tax. Ruppel stated that some legislators are in favor of "regional" solutions to large capital projects; specifically favored is the sharing of jail facilities with neighboring counties. He said that he had discussed the idea with Miami County officials while at the Statehouse and they stated that one wing of the Miami County Jail building is not being used due to lack of staffing. Commissioner Eppley stated that this could be an opportunity for Wabash County and needs to be explored. Ruppel suggested that if other counties are interested in regional solutions, they need to get their legislators involved as soon as possible.

Christa Stroup, Wabash County Circuit Court reporter stated that she was requesting to speak as a member of the public and not as a representative of the Circuit Court. She questioned the necessity of the \$30,000 spent on another jail study when there had been jail studies done previously. She was concerned about some statements made in the newspapers about the difficulties involved in the funding of a new jail anytime in the near future. She encouraged council members to visit the courts and observe the daily challenges that all court and law enforcement personnel deal with especially on

court days. She mentioned the growing “opioid” epidemic in the county and the resulting sentencing to the county jail. She stated that the need must be addressed now. Chairman Dawes responded by stating that county officials agree that there must be a solution found but that the State’s recommendations, as Mr. Ruppel reported to Council are very difficult for Council to consider.

Tax Software Program and Website Developer, Darren Bates of Data Pit Stop, Inc. was present to explain property tax caps and the recent changes by the State in local income tax rates (LIT). Using property tax data from the Wabash County website, Bates explained the classification of property tax caps 1, 2, and 3 and how various credit rates affected Wabash County properties from past years. Using various scenarios, he explained how the rates would affect property taxes and county revenue for all local taxing units for next year. Council members had a few questions but needed more time to consider the information. Chairman Dawes directed the Auditor to reschedule Mr. Bates at a later date closer to budget hearings so that decisions could be made about credit rates for 2018.

The next order of business was to address the Additional Appropriation requests: Present for the requests were Highway Superintendent John Martin, and Health Board Chairman Keith Walters.

**ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS**  
**ORDINANCE #2017-03**

**WHEREAS, it has been determined that it is now necessary to appropriate more money than was appropriated in the annual budget; NOW, THEREFORE:**

**SEC. 1 Be it ordained by the Wabash County Council of Wabash County, Indiana, that for the expense of said county government and its institutions for the year ending December 31, 2017 the following additional sums of money are hereby appropriated and ordered set apart out of the several funds herein named and for the purposes herein specified, subject to the laws governing the same:**

**CUMULATIVE BRIDGE FUND – #1135**

	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Appropriated</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>
Bridge 155/Meridian Road design #1135-30585.000.0000	100,000.00	100,000.00	7	0

Explanation: This appropriation is to fund the design for construction of a new bridge to replace the existing one. The existing bridge has a weight limit of 13 ton and is deteriorating quickly because of the daily traffic on Meridian Road. This bridge is deteriorated to the point that the bridge is required to have a yearly inspection; all factors make the bridge replacement a high priority. Councilman Mize stated that he thought the designing cost was too high. Martin stated that the cost includes environmental and historical studies and that the cost was lower than previous designs in the past.

Curless made a motion to approve the amount requested. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

**SPHI/ STRENGTHENING PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE FUND – #8850**

	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Appropriated</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>
Contracted Services	3,150.00	3,150.00	7	0
#8850-30650.000.0000 Software Maintenance				

Explanation: Because of grant specifications, this line item expense cannot be paid from Local Health Trust Fund as it was originally budgeted for 2017.

Dillon made a motion to approve the amount requested. Curless seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

**CASA PROGRAM FUND – #1212**

	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Appropriated</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>
<b>Supplies \$1,500.00</b>				
Office Supplies #1212-30585.000.0000	1,500.00	1,500.00	7	0
<b>Other Services &amp; Charges \$9,900.00</b>				
Rent #1212-30001-000-0000	5,400.00	5,400.00		
Gas Utility #1212-30520-000-0000	1,500.00	1,500.00		
Water Utility #1212-30530-000-0000	600.00	600.00		
Electrical Utility #1212-30510-000-0000	1,500.00	1,500.00		
Internet expense #1212-30270-000-0000	900.00	900.00		
Total of Other Services & Charges:	\$9,900.00	\$9,900.00	7	0

Explanation: Auditor Shepherd explained the request since CASA Program Director Dee Joy was not present. The CASA program office is moving to a new location. Current office space is not ADA compliant, and currently sharing space with no extra storage. Growth and visibility is limited at current location with no directional signage. The additional expense and new budgeted amounts has been approved by Circuit Court Judge Bob McCallen.

Dillon made a motion to approve the “Supplies” total of \$1,500. Sweet seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote. Dillon made a motion to approve the total of “Other Services and Charges” amount of \$9,900. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

**Presented to the Wabash County Council, read in full and adopted this 24th day of April, 2017 by the above aye and nay vote. The Auditor was directed to present the above additional appropriation to the Department of Local Government Finance for approval as provided by law.**

Council reviewed:

March 2017 Auditor & Treasurer Financial Reports

March 2017 Solid Waste Management District Income & Expense Statement

With no other business to come before the Wabash County Council, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for May 22, 2017.

**The following individuals also attended the April 24th Council meeting:**

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

Deputy Auditor B.J. Grube, County Commissioners Brian Haupt, Barry Eppley and Scott Givens, Attorney Mark Frantz, Wabash Plain Dealer reporter Mackenzie Klemann, and The Paper reporter Emma Rausch..