

## **WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, January 28, 2019 in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Wabash County Courthouse. Chairman Kyle Bowman called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Six Council members were present: Bowman, Randy Curless, Matt Mize, Barbara Pearson, Matt Dillon, and Lorissa Sweet. Council member Philip Dale was tardy. Bowman led in a word of prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. The proceedings of the meeting were recorded by the County Auditor's office.

Chairman Bowman 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 review the minutes of the January 7, 2019 re-organizational meeting. Dillon made a motion to approve the minutes. Curless seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote.

Wabash County Central Dispatch Director Sandy Beeks was present to request approval to hire two new dispatchers within the department. Beeks stated that very often she is unable to spend enough time performing department administrator responsibilities because she must assist the dispatchers with emergency calls. She reported that her staff is dealing with more emergency calls because of the addition of service to North Manchester since January 2, 2019 and at certain times, the current dispatchers can be overwhelmed with multiple calls and emergency situations. She stated that she also has a dispatcher retiring in April, 2019 and that screening, hiring and training can take a great deal of time because emergency dispatching requires a certain type of person who can handle the requirements and demands of the job. She stated that she gets people trained and they leave because of the stressful job demands some of which could be alleviated with more dispatchers. Department dispatchers Kendra Brainard and Michelle Martin were also present and explained that two dispatchers monitor three police departments, all fire channels, all traffic channels as well as the emergency 911 calls. They stated that when a dispatcher is on an emergency call, they are locked into that call until it is concluded and cannot assist with other calls. They stated that often at the end of the shift, they remain and work until the demands of the emergencies are met. Council members had several questions of Beeks: how long it takes to train a dispatcher, is there a need for additional technology to assist with the demands, and if law enforcement agencies have been contacted to determine if they would be willing to consider combining channels into a single channel. Chairman Bowman stated that if Council approves additional full-time personnel to fulfill the immediate need, there must also be a long-term need for those employees. Councilman Mize stated that he needs to see the statistical comparisons with other counties. It was Council's consensus that Beeks should present the request for hiring additional dispatchers to the

County Salary & Wage Committee and that the committee should give its' recommendation to Council before the next County Council meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Wabash County Sheriff Ryan Baker was present to request the hiring of a new Jail/Confinement Officer. He stated that more jail officers are needed to transport inmates for court appearances. Baker stated that he has six jail officer vacancies with very few good applications to fill the positions. Councilman Mize stated that he would need to see the statistical comparisons of jail officers with other counties and that the priority should be getting to approved jail officer staffing levels not necessarily hiring an additional jail officer, at this time. Baker also requested approval for a job description change and corresponding wages for the positions of Jail Matron and Cook. He stated that the current department employees are not compensated according to the actual duties and responsibilities performed and are unlike other counties that employ staff in these two departmental positions. Chairman Bowman asked if the Commissioners present had any comments regarding this request. Commissioner Eppley stated that they intend to contact Mr. Irwin of Wagonner, Irwin and Scheele in the near future regarding the need to update the county job descriptions and wage scale recommendations. It was the consensus of the Council that Sheriff Baker should meet with the County Salary and Wage Committee regarding both issues and that the Committee should give its' recommendation to Council at the next Council meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

The next order of business was an update on the proposal for the hiring of two school resource officers presented by Mike Keaffaber, MSDWC School Superintendent. Also present for the presentation was Wabash County Sheriff Ryan Baker. Keaffaber outlined the proposal for hiring two school resource officers, to be employed by the Wabash County Sheriff's department but with the sharing of expenses between Wabash County and Metro School District of Wabash County. The proposal includes County expense of a police car, training, uniforms, weapons, radio, and officers' salaries for non-school days for a total expense of \$62,686 for the first year and thereafter, \$36,686 annually. The School expense includes salaries for 180 school days, pro-rated 180-day health insurance, life and liability insurance for a total school expense of \$83,700 annually. Keaffaber also reported that MSDWC will apply for a \$50,000 matching grant to assist in paying for the expenses of the school resource officers for the 2019-2020 school year. Keaffaber added that a positive relationship with school resource officers could benefit school students in many ways and that he will need to apply for grant funding just as soon as the proposal is approved by Council. Chairman Bowman commented about the potential for student-resource officer's positive relationships and noted that response time to an emergency situation would be greatly enhanced with the presence of a resource officer. Councilman Mize commented about an "active shooter response scenario/demonstration" that he witnessed and how crucial and beneficial the resource officer is in these situations. It was the consensus

of Council that this proposal needs to be presented to the Salary & Wage Committee for recommendation to Council since Wabash County government would be hiring and paying the salaries of the school resource officers and because MSD Superintendent Keaffaber would need to apply for grant matching funds as soon as possible if the proposal is approved by Council.

The next order of business was to address the additional appropriation request. Present for the request was Highway Superintendent John Martin.

**ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS**  
**ORDINANCE #2019-85-01**

**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, 2019 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:**

**LOIT SPECIAL DISTRIBUTION FUND #1129**

	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Appropriated</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>
Capital Outlay- Highway Project #1229-40020-000-0000	\$600,000.00	\$600,000.00	7	0

Explanation from Highway Superintendent John Martin: This is a request to fund the county's share of CR 1100N construction for the 2019 Community Crossings \$1 million matching State Grant fund project. The budget for this project was overlooked by the Highway Superintendent during the 2019 budget hearings in September 2018.

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

**Presented to the Wabash County Council, read in full and adopted on the 28th day of January 2019 by the above aye and nay votes. The Auditor was directed to present the above additional appropriations to the Department of Local Government Finance for approval as by law provided.**

The next order of business was the approval of budget encumbrances from 2018 into 2019. Auditor Shepherd submitted the encumbrance requests from the General Fund; Courthouse Complex expense of \$10,100.00 for jail steps replacement and the Coroner's expense of \$4,000.00 for an autopsy table, and from the LOIT Special Distribution Fund, \$79,951.00 for the design of CR 1100N, and from the Cum. Bridge Fund, \$1,132,035.00 for the constructions of bridges 151, 155, and 701. Dillon made a motion to approve the encumbrance requests as submitted. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

In other business, Chairman Bowman asked the Commissioners about the ongoing need to relocate the Health department and the Probation department in order to get additional Probation department office space.

Commissioner Eppley stated that the County Coroner's office was recently established and is fully operational, but now, the Health & Probation department relocation needs to be addressed. He stated that the Commissioners would like to recommend that the Council's "relocation" committee meet once again in order to examine the needs and possible solutions, and then, ultimately along with the Commissioners, make some decisions regarding the two departments. Also present was Chief Probation Officer, Sarah Lochner who stated that there had been grant fund assistance for the relocation available in 2018, but she is not sure that those funds are available in 2019. Commissioner Dawes encouraged all council members to tour the current facility space in order to understand the Probation department's need for more space. Chairman Bowman asked the three Council representatives; Council members Pearson, Mize and Sweet if they would be willing to serve again on the Council's "relocation" committee and all members agreed to serve.

Council reviewed:

December 2018 Auditor & Treasurer Financial Reports

December 2018 Wabash County Solid Waste Mgmt. District Income & Expense Statement

With no other business to come before the Council, Chairman Bowman adjourned the meeting. The next scheduled meeting of the Wabash County Council is Monday, February 18, 2019 at 6:00 P.M.

**The following individuals also attended the January 28th County Council meeting:**

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

Deputy Auditor B.J. Grube, County Commissioners Barry Eppley, Jeff Dawes and Brian Hauptert, Attorney Mark Frantz, EMA Director Keith Walters, County Coroner Suzie Lewis, and Wabash Plain Dealer reporter, Josh Sigler.