

WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, February 18, 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, Matt Mize, Barbara Pearson, Matt Dillon, Lorissa Sweet, and Philip Dale. Randy Curless was absent. Sweet led in a word of prayer and Bowman in 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 28, 2019 Council meeting. Dillon made a motion to approve the minutes. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote.

Next, on the agenda was Central Dispatch Department Director Sandy Beeks who was present to follow-up on the request to hire two new dispatchers. At the previous January 28th council meeting, Beeks had been directed to meet with the Personnel Administrative/Salary & Wage Committee (PAC) in order to get the committee's recommendation concerning the request. Councilman and committee member Matthew Mize reported that the PAC supports the addition of two new dispatchers based on the comparison of other county statistics and on the needs of the department as presented by Beeks. Auditor Shepherd explained that the funding for the new dispatchers would be from an additional appropriation to the PSAP Fund after transferring monies from Statewide 911 Fund as a reimbursement of salaries. The FICA and PERF benefits will need to be paid from the General Fund. Beeks stated that there are currently no staff openings in the department, but that she has a staff member retiring in March. Dale made a motion to approve the hiring of two new dispatchers for the Central Dispatch Department. Pearson seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote.

Next, on the agenda was Metro School District Superintendent (MSD) Mike Keaffaber who was present to follow-up on the proposal and request to hire two school resource officers for the 2019-2020 MSD school year. County Sheriff Ryan Baker was also present. During the previous January 28th council meeting, Keaffaber was advised that the County's Personnel Administrative/Salary & Wage Committee (PAC) would need to meet in order to get the committee's recommendation concerning the request. Councilman and committee member Matthew Mize commented that Wabash County government was the proper entity to request the addition of school resource officers for the county schools since the City of Wabash is employing resources officers for the Wabash City Schools and the Town of N. Manchester is employing resources

officers for the Manchester Community Schools. Mize reported that the PAC supports the addition of two school resource officers to be employed by the Wabash County Sheriff's department with an approved contract that outlines all the logistics and expenses between the school district and the County with the approximate starting date in August 2019. Superintendent Keaffaber stated that he would be applying for grant funds to assist with the costs as soon as possible if the request is approved by Council. Dillon made a motion to approve the hiring of two school resource officers for the 2019-2020 school year. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote.

In the next order of business, County Sheriff Ryan Baker was present to follow-up on his request to hire another Jail Confinement Officer. At the January 28th Council meeting, Baker had been directed to meet with the county's Personnel Administrative/Salary and Wage Committee (PAC) and get the committee's recommendation regarding the request. Councilman and committee member Matthew Mize reported that the PAC supports the addition of an additional jail officer based on the comparison of other county statistics, the Annual Jail Report's recommendation of 22 jail officers for Wabash County, and on the needs of the department as presented by Baker. At the previous meeting, Baker had stated that five jail officer positions were currently open. He has since hired two jail officers and possibly an additional two officers. Baker also stated that he is cooperating with Heartland Career Center which currently offers a 40-hour jail school certification to high school students that are pursuing a law enforcement career and that this cooperation could provide a larger pool of jail officer candidates. He stated that if these 18-year olds could be hired, the certification could save the County some training costs and that they would not be able to apply for higher positions until they reach the age of 21. Dillon made a motion to approve the hiring of one additional jail confinement officer to the Sheriff's department. Pearson seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote.

As an addition to the agenda, Commissioner Eppley updated the Council on the jail space issue. He explained that the Commissioners had recently spoken to Umbaugh (public financial advisers firm) regarding the need to prioritize the jail space issue and had requested an update on jail financing options for possible pursuit with the State. Umbaugh had stated that there are current proposals at the State legislature for regional jail facilities and jail financing, and that the Department of Corrections may agree to house "level six" criminal code inmates. Sheriff Baker stated that for Wabash County, that would only involve 25-30 inmates. He said that the inmate housing problem is intensified because of the wait for court hearings and sentencing. Eppley stated that the Commissioners had also contacted DLZ (engineering and construction firm) for updated building construction figures.

Eppley also said that a meeting of the "relocation" building committee would be scheduled soon in order to address the Health department's relocation. He said that the Commissioners had looked at some space in the Courthouse lower

level that may be available, but felt that space would not be enough for the Health Department's needs. Council member Pearson asked about the daily traffic in the Health Department and Eppley replied that the count could be determined and considered by the committee.

Council reviewed:

January 2019 Auditor & Treasurer Financial Reports

January 2019 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, March 18, 2019 at 6:00 P.M.

The following individuals also attended the February 18th 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, County Coordinator & HR director Jim Dils, and Attorney Mark Frantz.