

WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, July 20, 2020 in the Courthouse Meeting Room of the Wabash County Courthouse. Chairman Kyle Bowman called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Seven Council members were present: Bowman, Matthew Mize, Randy Curless, Matt Dillon, Lorissa Sweet, Philip Dale, and Barbara Pearson. Sweet led in a word of prayer and 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 June 15, 2020 Council meeting. Dale made a motion to approve the minutes. Curless seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote; Pearson abstained from the vote.

Highway Superintendent Cole Wyatt presented an Internal Local Agreement with the City of Wabash. This is an agreement to purchase a bucket truck. Wyatt explained it would help cut the cost of after-hours calls. Dillon inquired about the service record of the truck and training required. The truck was inspected and is in good working order. The operators of the truck will have annual training. Dillon made a motion to approve the Internal Local Agreement. Curless seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Wyatt then presented the council with the updated Road Cut Ordinance 2020-85-06 for approval. The updated ordinance outlined a deposit and the required expectations of the work performed to get the deposit returned. The Ordinance was approved by the Wabash County Commissioners. Curless made a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-85-06. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote. Dillon made a motion to suspend the rules and move to a second reading of Ordinance 2020-85-06. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote. Dillon made a motion adopt Ordinance 2020-85-06. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

The next order of business was to address the additional appropriation requests.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS **ORDINANCE #2020-85- 06**

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, 2020 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:

HIGHWAY FUND #1176

	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
Professional Services #1135-30587-000-0000	\$ 14,600.00	\$14,600.00	7	0

Explanation from Highway Superintendent Cole Wyatt: Need additional money to cover the remainder of the Pavement Paver Rating Contract.

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

GENERAL FUND #1000

	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN
Circuit Court Court Administrator #1000-21600-000-0033	\$16,747.00	\$16,747.00	5	1	1

Explanation submitted by Auditor Shepherd that the Council approved a third person for the remainder of the 2020 year and this is the funding.

Dale made a motion to approve the request. Curless seconded the motion and it passed by a 5-1 vote; Pearson voted against. Dillon abstained.

Sheriff Baker requested that he be able to hire a part-time Commissary Clerk to start now; the additional appropriation request for this position needs to be advertised yet. Mize stated the PAC did recommend the position and it was approved by Council (February 17, 2020 meeting by a 4-2 vote). Mize stated they could not approve the hire until an additional appropriation was submitted, but Baker could go ahead and hire the person and pay them from the commissary account. Mize made a motion to pay the part-time commissary clerk from the commissary funds for the first month. Dillon seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Mize stated Personnel Administrative Committee met and recommended 1% salary increases to be included in the 2021 budgets. It was also noted that some positions were awarded over and above that amount due to the job study of last year.

Dillon crafted and read the following statement:

Dear County Council & Commissioners

The state-mandated economic lockdown must end. In 2019, Wabash County outpaced the State of Indiana for the percentage of median annual tourism growth and nearly \$56 million was generated by non-residents to our county's economy. Of that, \$1.4 million was captured by property taxes to fund our local government. This is roughly 8.5% of our General Fund budget. In perspective, the full removal of this funding by the economic lockdown is equal to \$6,558 of the average Hoosier income of \$56,000 annually. This is a devastating amount, especially considering the probable burden that will be placed on our budgets for the construction of a new jail.

As of today, I know of people that are leaving their homes in Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and even California and setting up for an extended stay in Wabash

County. We have done a tremendous job at creating a community that attracts people. Unfortunately, the work that we have done is threatened by the continued moving of the goalposts for the re-opening of our economy. The State of Indiana, by its perpetuation of the economic lockdown, threatens our tourism industry and our small businesses. It has already claimed some of our large local events such as the Founder's Day Festival and Dam-to-Dam, of which the latter generated \$35,000 for further use in marketing our county to tourists.

Today I ask the assembled body to interpose on behalf of the people in our County by considering the adoption of a resolution of non-compliance with any current and further economic sanctions on our way of life by the State of Indiana. I ask that we commission the drafting of this resolution by our county attorney for passage at next month's meeting. If we should be taken to Stage 5 before the adoption of the proposed resolution, then I will be satisfied with the result and will not press for this action to be taken. However, I fear that the politicized nature of COVID-19 will continue to be used to further centralize power into the hands of the Governor and his regulatory agencies in progressive stages for the foreseeable future. It is our duty to oppose this by protecting our economic freedom.

Councilman Matt Dillon,
Wabash County District 3

Dillon requested the council make a resolution or statement in favor of opening up our county. Dawes stated he agreed with the statement but was under the impression that we could be stricter but not less restrictive. Eppley stated the county could put out a statement so the Governor would know where Wabash County stands. Pearson and Bowman both supported a letter showing Wabash County is ready to move forward.

Commissioner Hauptert stated communications with USDA on jail funding is still progressing. Hauptert would like to set a date to meet each month for updates.

Council reviewed:

Auditor & Treasurer Financial Reports - June 2020

Wabash County Solid Waste Management District's Income Statement - June 2020

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, August 17 at 6:00 P.M.

The following individuals also attended the July 20, 2020 County Council meeting:

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

Deputy Auditor Shelly Baucoco, County Commissioners Barry Eppley, Brian Hauptert, and Jeff Dawes, Attorney representative Mark Frantz, Alex Downard, and Wabash Plain Dealer Editor Rob Burgess.

WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL