

WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, March 18, 2024 in the Commissioner's meeting room of the Wabash County Courthouse. Chairman Kyle Bowman called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Council members present: Bowman, Matthew Mize, Sam Hann, Philip Dale, Gary Ridenour, Matt Dillon, and Nick Kopkey. Hann opened with a word of prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The proceedings of the meeting were recorded by County Auditor Marcie Shepherd.

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.

First order of business was a review and approval of the minutes of February 19, 2024. Dillon made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dale seconded the motion; it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Bowman stated Cynthia Johnson with the Learn More Center discussion has been tabled until next month due to the ARPA committee having not met yet. If Council has any questions prior to the next meeting to reach out to Cynthia.

Sheriff Ryan Baker and Ben Langhammer One America, presented information concerning removing the cap on the sheriff pension plan, the current cap is 60,000 (indexed for inflation). Sheriff Baker stated removing the cap is a tool to retain and hopefully encourage more employment within the department. Council asked questions on how this change will affect the county finances in the future. Ben stated a salary max is in the Indiana code which is equal to the Prosecutor's salary, this amount changes when the prosecutors wage changes. Currently there are five counties that are less than the Prosecutors wage, Wabash County is one of those counties. There are approximately 3 employees that may be affected, but as salaries grow more employees would be affected. The county currently pays the employee required contribution for the plan. The pension is based on the average wages with the cap being 60,000 (for Wabash County currently). Removing the cap would allow for more pension during retirement. With the current plan the pension would be estimated at 74% of the average salary. Bowman stated we do have options; make a change, make no change, or could leave the cap but do a one-time adjustment increase of 5 or 10 percent. Dillon made the motion to approve a one-time 5% increase to the cap. Hann seconded the motion it passed by a 5-2 vote. Mize and Ridenour voted against.

Additional Appropriation request;

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE #2024-85-02

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, 2024 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:

	LOCAL ROAD & STREET # 1169			
	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
Local Road & Street				
1169.11122.000.0000	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	7	0
1169.11115.000.0000	\$ 93,000.00	\$ 93,000.00	7	0
1169.11211.000.0000	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	7	0
1169.11312.000.0000	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	7	0
1169.11319.000.0000	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	7	0
1169.11516.000.0000	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	7	0
1169.11419.000.0000	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 32,000.00	7	0
1169.12000.000.0000	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 42,000.00	7	0
1169.17100.000.0000	\$ 19,800.00	\$ 19,800.00	7	0
1169.17200.000.0000	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 39,000.00	7	0

1169.22100.000.0000	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	7	0
1169.23300.000.0000	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	7	0
1169.23400.000.0000	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	7	0
1169.23900.000.0000	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	7	0
1169.24200.000.0000	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 65,000.00	7	0
1169.24500.000.0000	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	7	0
1169.30642.000.0000	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	7	0
1169.30644.000.0000	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 95,000.00	7	0
1169.30719.000.0000	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	7	0
1169.30732.000.0000	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,250.00	7	0
1169.40500.000.0000	\$ 14,500.00	\$ 14,500.00	7	0

Cole Wyatt stated the amounts in the additional appropriation is what the Council approved during the 2024 budget hearings. The state zero's out the Local Road & Street each year. Auditor Shepherd stated she has learned that during the budget process the Local Road & Street needs to have the form 4-B calculated even though it is not a tax rated fund. Dale made a motion to approve the appropriation. Dillon seconded the motion; it passed by a 7-0 vote.

GENERAL FUND #1000

Jail	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
Inmate Transfers				
1000.30331.000.0033	\$105,000.00	\$105,000.00	7	0

Sheriff Baker reported since we are not in the jail this amount will get through March for transfers. Council asked when the projected date to move in was. Baker stated to ask the Commissioners because currently there is no heat in the building due to the air handlers being removed temporarily. Once occupied training will need to happen before the inmates can be moved. Hann made a motion to approve the appropriation. Dale seconded the motion; it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Sheriff	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
Pension Actuarial Fees				
1000.30401.000.0005	\$ 2,564.00	\$2,564.00	7	0

Sheriff Baker stated this is to pay for the 3rd amendment study that was completed for the sheriff pension and not quite enough was budgeted. Dillon made a motion to approve the appropriation. Hann seconded the motion; it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Courthouse Complex	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
City Ambulance Contract				
1000.30940.000.0032	\$83,785.00	\$ 0.00	7	0

Auditor Shepherd stated the budget had an increase budgeted for 5%, but at the end of the year the city came in a requested 48% increase. Mize stated with this huge increase it would be smart to look at Parkview instead of going through the city. Dillon made the motion to deny the appropriation. Hann seconded the motion; it passed by a 7-0 vote. Mize stated to go back to the city and tell them the increase is excessive. Hauptert stated he would contact the city.

FIREARM #1156

	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
Flares & Ammo				
1156.24600.000.0000	\$ 5,590.00	\$5,590.00	7	0

Sheriff Baker stated the funds are already in the fund and just need to purchase more ammo than expected. Dillon made a motion to approve the appropriation. Dale seconded the motion; it pass by a 7-0 vote.

LOCAL HEALTH MAINTENANCE # 1168

	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
1168.11117.000.0000	\$ 5,154.00	\$ 5,154.00	0	7
1168.11707.000.0000	\$ 13,284.00	\$ 13,284.00	0	7
1168.11302.000.0000	\$ 9,044.00	\$ 9,044.00	0	7
1168.11506.000.0000	\$ 8,646.00	\$ 8,646.00	0	7
1168.11126.000.0000	\$ 35,186.00	\$ 35,186.00	0	7
1168.17100.000.0000	\$ 5,456.00	\$ 5,456.00	0	7
1168.17200.000.0000	\$ 9,395.00	\$ 9,395.00	0	7

LOCAL HEALTH TRUST # 1206

	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
1206.11806.000.0000	\$ 8,646.00	\$ 8,646.00	0	7
1206.11611.000.0000	\$ 12,238.00	\$ 12,237.00	0	7
1206.12106.000.0000	\$ 2,326.00	\$ 2,326.00	0	7
1206.11127.000.0000	\$ 32,652.00	\$ 32,652.00	0	7
1206.17100.000.0000	\$ 4,276.00	\$ 4,276.00	0	7

1206.17200.000.0000 \$ 7,933.00 \$ 7,933.00 0 7

COUNTY HEALTH #1159

	Requested	Appropriated	AYE	NAY
1159.11128.000.0000	\$ 35,115.00	\$ 35,115.00	0	7
1159.17100.000.0000	\$ 2,722.00	\$ 2,722.00	0	7
1159.17200.000.0000	\$ 4,987.00	\$ 4,987.00	0	7

Rich Mofield, Chris Straub and Dr. Roe (via zoom) stated since the county opted into the Health First Indiana, this has created a 53% increase in the workload of the County Health Department, they are requesting for salary increases and additional employees. The amount requested is not retroactive but is going forward from April 1, 2024. Currently the funding is \$349,000 for 2024 and are expecting \$679,000. But this figure is subject to change. Mofield has been the go-to person since the onset of this program. Currently, since it is on a two-year budget cycle, they are assured the funding will be there this year and next. Dr. Roe stated the need to restructure the department with additional personnel and space to meet the requirements. Hann stated the PAC gave a favorable recommendation and that increases needed to be made but was leaving the amount up to the Council to define. Mize would like to have a detail explanation as to how it has doubled the work because currently, he has not seen this. Bowman stated part of the funding is to be used to contract some of the work that needs to be done. Council has requested, during the budget hearings, that a director be hired to oversee the Health Department as well as implementation of the programing and/or contracting with sources that are already doing some of the programing. Keri Salb-Mertz with Purdue Extension offered her services to assist the Health Department to reach their goals for the new requirements. Bowman stated he would like to see each position be advertised prior to hiring, this would include the director position that Mofield is currently doing, not saying he is not a good candidate for the position but it should be advertised and interviewed. Council has no issues with an interim person being named until the hiring process can be done. Chris Straub stated they would like to hire people as soon as possible; they are able to make space for more people in the department currently. Commissioner Eppley stated they are still looking at the possibility of revamping 808 Manchester Avenue and/or a possibility of leasing space at the Lutheran building. Bowman stated there are two different issues; 1. Current raises to the existing employees 2. Hiring of new employees. Bowman stated he takes issue with some of the increases because of the raises being between 13 and 52% increases and this seems extreme. Straub stated they are under paid by those amounts, according to the state averages. Bowman said some of the state averages can be skewed. Dillon stated he believes the County should have never opted-in with all the expanded duties. Bowman stated he believed the director number was a little strong and the educator does not have a requirement for an education background or degree. Straub stated that was an error in the job description and yes, a degree would be required. Mofield stated with the new structure the Environmental and Sanitarian would be structured as cross training with a tiered paying. Mize made the motion to create the director of Health pay to be \$60,000, the current staff 10% increases, the other two positions to be looked at comparable jobs either in the Health Department or within the county and set those wages accordingly, not to exceed current pay rate with 10% increase, and the EHI director to make the 10% plus first deputy pay of \$2,000. All new positions need to be advertised and interviewed. Dale seconded the motion; it was discussed that with the director position, if someone is stepping into that role prior to a director being hired, the Health Department can compensate that person accordingly. Although the additional for these wages are not before the Council this evening, they will come before the Council in the April meeting and the wages will be affected for April 1, 2024. Motion passed by a 4-3 vote (Dillon, Ridenour and Hann voted against. *This was for the wage increases discussed.

Concerning the additional appropriation before Council this evening; Mize made the motion to deny the additional. Dale seconded the motion; it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Auditor Shepherd reported:

1. She received a copy of the 2025 salaries for Probation officers having a significant increase.
2. Requested Central Dispatch to bring her part-time employees to a full-time deputy hourly wage, currently this is how part-time employees are paid in the other departments, Central Dispatch has the funds already budgeted to do this. Council agreed.
3. Community Corrections has requested, since the Work Release portion of the grant will soon be going away, they would like to pay some salaries from the fund while the funding is in play for this year and not give the money back. They have requested this from the grant and have been approved to do this by the State. However, this will run the grant in the negative until the payment is received, so Council approval is needed. Council approved with the caveat of if they should need to repay back to the State it will come from their project income.
4. ARPA Committee needs to meet as soon as possible, the ARPA reporting is due at the end of the month. Bowman stated the committee members need to stay after and get a date scheduled.

With no other business to come before the Council, Chairman Bowman called for adjournment Dillon moved to adjourn. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Wabash County Council is April 15, 2024 @ 6:00pm.

Items for Review: Auditor & Treasurer Financial Reports for February 2023
Wabash County Soil & Water Conservation February 2024

The following individuals also attended the County Council meeting:

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

Shelly Bauccho, Brian K. Hauptert, Barry J. Eppley, Jeff D. Dawes, Connie Rich, Nicky Burnsworth, Cheryl Ross, Louella Krom, Jim Dixon, David Terflinger, Tyler Niccum, Jade Hall, Boo Salb and Tenille Zartman.

WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL



Kyle Bowman, Chairman

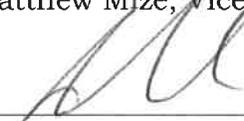


Matthew Mize, Vice Chairman

Sam Hann



Matt Dillon



Nick Kopkey



Philip Dale



Gary Ridenour

Attest: 

Marcie Shepherd, Wabash County Auditor