

November 10, 1999

County Council Chairman, Ted Little, called the special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the courthouse with all members present. Also attending were Co. Commissioners, Brian Hauptert, Darle Dawes and Lester Templin plus Jim Craft, field representative with the State Board of Tax Commissioners (STB) and Co Auditor, Carol Stefanatos. Leon Ridenour shared a prayer. Craft, who has been with the STB since 1968, explained the STB reviews all public entity budgets and sets the tax rates. Jim noted the legislature makes the laws and the STB attempts to interpret them. He said the CAGIT tax and the tax replacement credit paid by the state offer property tax relief, but the amount can vary from year to year. Jim also noted a Cumulative Capital Development/Improvement fund option became available in 1984, and it was exempt from the maximum levy. Wabash Co. doesn't have this fund. Craft says we can blame inflation, the 1973 tax package that brought the maximum levy and the loss of federal revenue sharing funds for our current plight. Local option money amounts distributed, are based on the maximum levy, so sometimes the big spenders get a bigger cut of the pie. The STB can lower the maximum levy rates if they feel a county has excessive operating funds on hand, but this is rare, and officials would be notified. Since the county general tax rate dropped from .7841 in 1998 to .6298 in 1999, Jim thinks the maximum levy for "98" pay "99 taxes was advertised too low. He also says projected figures indicate the county has overspent by about 3 million in the last four years. The Council chastised the Auditor's office for not notifying them of an annual decrease in the operating balance, and want more information forthcoming in the future. Commissioner Hauptert asked if a decision to proceed with the building project should be based on the actual balance in the general fund or a two year projected estimate prepared by the STB. Brian and Councilman, Gary Nose, think we should wait until after 1/1/2000 and learn the actual general fund balance. Mr Craft, a Wabash resident, said he would help determine the amount available after unused budgeted monies return to the general fund at years end. The project is hanging in limbo, awaiting a Council decision, and Ted thinks the Commissioners need to know where the Council stands. Gary moved to table a bond ordinance decision until the new year when year-end balances are known, second by Richard Pepple, and passed by all. Mr. Hauptert says Commissioners will proceed with a Common Construction Wage meeting, and construction bidding. Then there will be a better idea of the actual project cost. Council thanked Craft for his time and explanations, and Leon moved to adjourn, second by Rich, and passed.

/s/ Ted. A Little /s/ Leon Ridenour /s/ Richard Pepple /s/ Gary Nose
/s/ Robert Whitesel /s/ Paul Sites /s/ Eugene Schenkel

ATTEST: _____
Carol Stefanatos, Auditor