

January 7, 2002

Wabash County Council members met jointly with Wabash County Commissioners to discuss county finances. Council Chairman, Gary Nose, called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M. with all present except Joann Rauh. Leon Ridenour shared a prayer, and minutes of the 12/3/01 Co. Council meeting were approved as written, moved Leon, second by Ted Little, and passed. Gene Schenkel moved to appoint Ted as the Council representative to the Co. Plan Commission, second by Paul Sites, and passed. Ted replaces Leon, who has scheduling conflicts. Council members who talked with legislators got the same answer. Because of the state's financial woes, the extra CEDIT and CAGIT funds due to the county, won't be refunded until the regular May and November disbursements in 2002. Council members will continue to express their displeasure that the state can arbitrarily withhold money due to the county, and would like to know who made that decision, but advised the Commissioners to pursue a short term loan to complete the judicial building. Richard Pepple suggested a construction loan, usually set up for six to nine months, then paid off or rolled over to a regular loan. Commissioner, Brian Hauptert, will look into the legalities of doing this, before he seeks quotes from local lenders for \$500,000. The loan would be repaid with CEDIT funds. Commissioners provided a list of the most pressing concerns: (1) remodel Memorial Hall second floor for Probation offices, at an estimated \$184,000. (2) extend HVAC to Memorial Hall and replace windows on 2nd and 3rd floors. (3) now would be a good time to provide office space for the Prosecutor, since we'll have a new Prosecutor in 2003. (4) gable the jail roof to eliminate the flat roof at an estimated \$200,000. (5) remodel courthouse offices and the asphalt roof needs work along with the roof drainage system. (6) the jail will need replaced in the foreseeable future because of overcrowding. The group discussed setting up a Cumulative Capital Development Fund to help in the future. Brian noted a most urgent concern is the ambulance service throughout the county. For 2002 Council budgeted a \$77,500. subsidy for Life-Med and \$100,000. for Wabash City. In 2001 the county paid Life-Med \$100,000. and the proposed contract with the City of Wabash is for \$150,000. Neither provider will likely continue services at the lower amounts, however, at present, the county doesn't have a contract with either entity. Since Life-Med is paid on a monthly basis, the Council advised the Auditor to pay them 1/12 of the budgeted amount per month. Wabash City receives one payment annually. Brian says the Town of North Manchester is working to provide volunteers and free dispatch to help cut Life-Med's expenses. He suggests the county contract with the town, and pay them, then let Manchester negotiate with Life-Med. Both Council and Commissioners agree the county shouldn't be paying for non emergency services, and feel nursing homes should provide transport for their non emergency runs. Also, the county subsidizes public vans that could be used for these transports. Rich notes today's problem is finishing the judicial building, and other problems can be dealt with in the upcoming months. Leon moved to adjourn, second by Paul, and passed.

/s/ Gary Nose	/s/ Leon Ridenour	/s/ Richard Pepple
/s/ Ted Little	/s/ Eugene Schenkel	/s/ Paul Sites

Attest: _____
Carol Stefanatos, Auditor