

## **WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, July 23, 2018 in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Wabash County Courthouse. Chairman Randy Curless called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. Six Council members were present: Curless, Barbara Pearson, Matt Dillon, Lorissa Sweet, Philip Dale and Kyle Bowman. Council member Matt Mize was absent. Councilman Bowman led in a word of prayer and Curless led the Pledge of Allegiance. The proceedings of the meeting were recorded by the County Auditor's office.

Chairman Curless 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 25, 2018 Council meeting. Dillon made a motion to approve the minutes. Pearson seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote.

Present for the submission of the 2019 budget and an investment report from the "Visit Wabash County", aka "Wabash County Convention and Visitors Bureau" were Executive Director Christine Flohr and Brand and Marketing Manager Whitney Millsbaugh. Flohr stated that Wabash County's and Wabash City's investment of \$75,000 each in CEDIT funds for the purpose of elevating the organization's marketing reach has been justified in the form of tourism spending that generated \$43.1 million in revenue for Wabash County. The most current report shows that tourism spending revenue has increased to \$51 million; an increase of \$8 million. With the County's and the City's investment, "Visit Wabash County" added a marketing manager and invested the funds in four other areas: Promotional Campaigns, Digital Marketing, Continuing Education and Wayfinding/Markers and Gateway signage. She mentioned that the successful "Dam to Dam Bike Ride" event has been the subject of inquiry from many other counties and organizations and stated that "Visit Wabash County" has partnered with the Honeywell Center, and other sponsors and also have received letters of support from many local organizations. Flohr submitted a 2019 estimated budget of \$393,379.00 and of that amount, \$75,000.00 would be funded from the County's CEDIT Fund, if approved by County Council at the County's budget hearings in September.

Present for the next order of business was Wabash Historical Museum Executive Director, Mitch Figert. He explained what the Museum has been able to accomplish, in part, because of the support received from the County's budgeted investment for the past several years which included expanded educational programming, the Parkview Wabash Education Center, Downtown 1<sup>st</sup> Fridays Family Fun Nights, additional support to local school systems, and collection storage, facility and exhibit improvements. He stated that the museum had 16,242 visitors in 2017, a 300% increase since 2005. He stated

that over 5,000 students from six northeastern counties attend the museum each year, that the museum cares for 175,000 artifacts and archival materials and that they are currently digitizing the entire museum collection for online access. He also submitted the Museum's profit and loss statement that listed the income and expense for the fiscal year July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 which resulted in a loss of \$37,624 because of computer technology and building repair expenses. For the fiscal year, July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, there was a profit of \$2,889. Figert requested continued support from the County. Chairman Curless stated that this request will be considered at the County's 2019 budget hearings in September of this year.

In attendance for the next order of business were Superintendent of Metro School District (MSD) Mike Keaffaber, MSD Assistant Superintendent Chris Kuhn, and Wabash County Sheriff Bob Land. Keaffaber submitted the "School Resource Officers Proposal" to Council that included the employment of two safety officers (one for the north school and one for the south school). He stated that MSD has received \$25,000 matching grant funds for the 2018-2019 school year to be used to purchase additional school safety equipment. He stated that MSD will be applying for \$50,000 in matching grant funds for the 2019-2020 school year to be designated for the expenses provided by MSD which will include the officers' salaries, medical, life and long-term disability benefits, as well as liability insurance expense. In collaboration with MSD, the County will need to pay for police cars, uniforms, weapons, radio equipment, training and non-school day salaries resulting in an estimated total of \$55,000. Council member Dale questioned if police vehicles would be used by officers when not on duty and if non-school salaries would be part of the total salaries paid to each officer. Council member Sweet asked if officers would be required to be present at extracurricular events as part of their official duties. Keaffaber responded that these questions will be addressed by school officials and Sheriff Land in the future when costs and responsibilities are finalized. Chairman Curless stated that this proposal will be discussed at the County's upcoming budget hearings in September of this year.

The next order of business was a follow-up report concerning the compliance with the statement of benefits by County businesses currently receiving tax abatements presented by "Grow Wabash County" formerly Economic Development Group of Wabash County, President & CEO Keith Gillenwater. Also present for this report was "Grow Wabash County" office manager, Tenille Zartman. Gillenwater reported in detail about his follow-up visits with current tax abatement recipients, Hipsher Tool & Die, Midwest Eye/Vision Properties, and Advanced Ag Resources, Inc. He recommended that County Council find each company to be in compliance with the tax abatement statement of benefits. Dale made a motion to approve compliance with existing tax abatement for all three businesses. Dillon seconded the motion and it passed with a 6-0 vote.

Gillenwater also submitted copies of the 2017 Annual Report for Grow Wabash County, formerly Economic Development Group of Wabash County. The two organizations merged in 2017 and Gillenwater summarized the activities and the progress for the year. He reported that a new medical device manufacturer, Precision Medical Technologies will be locating in North Manchester and will provide 60 new county jobs. Zartman reported that free manufacturing certificate training has been launched for CNC Machinist, Welding and Industrial Maintenance training for those county residents who want to enhance their careers in the manufacturing industry. Gillenwater stressed that job retention and expansion remains the number one priority of the organization and sited the fostering of entrepreneurship and investor services as examples. The report also listed the lead log summary and highlighted the progress of the “Stellar Communities Project”.

The next order of business was a request by County Recorder, Lori Draper to purchase new software at a cost of \$2,000 from the Recorder’s Perpetuation Fund. Draper was present for the request and stated that the Recorder’s Perpetuation Fund expenses do not require Council’s approved appropriation but she wanted the Council to be aware of the purchase and the reason for spending the funds. She explained that the software will watermark documents that are sold online and will protect them from being resold and that the software will also burn a computer disc for recorded document users. She stated that the office currently has four bulk users and that providing bulk images is required by Indiana law. Dillon made a motion to approve the purchase as requested. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote.

Present for the next order of business was Central Dispatch Director Sandy Beaks who reported on an official letter from North Manchester Town Manager, Adam Penrod received by the Commissioners and herself regarding the intention to disband the Town of North Manchester dispatching services effective January 1, 2019. Commissioner Brian Haupt and Barry Eppley explained that in 2010 when central dispatching was initiated in the county, North Manchester wanted to maintain their own identity and so did not participate in the county-wide dispatching services. Now, because of increased costs and staffing difficulties, they have decided to eliminate the town’s dispatching service. Commissioner Givens stated that by law, the county must provide county-wide dispatching, and so must now include the North Manchester dispatching. Beaks stated that the 911 calls are not a problem but the police radio traffic is the issue that needs to be addressed. She stated that she will need to activate an already-existing station and purchase some new equipment at a cost of at least \$60,000 and that an additional radio frequency will need to be added. She estimated that four new dispatchers will be needed in addition to the current 12 full-time and 3 part-time dispatchers. Council requested that she work with communication vendors and the Commissioners to finalize the costs so they could be included in the 2019 budget proposal coming up in September.

Council reviewed:

June 2018 Auditor & Treasurer Financial Reports

June 2018 Wabash County Solid Waste Mgmt. District Income & Expense Statement

With no other business to come before the Council, Chairman Curless adjourned the meeting. The next scheduled meeting of the Wabash County Council is Monday, August 27, 2018.

**The following individuals also attended the July 23rd Council meeting:**

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

County Commissioners Barry Eppley, Brian Hauptert, and Scott Givens, Sheriff Bob Land, County Coroner Suzie Lewis, Attorney Mark Frantz, Jan Roland, Bonnie Corn, Louella Krom, and Wabash Plain Dealer reporter, Andrew Christman.