

## **WABASH COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

The Wabash County Council met in session on Monday, August 19, 2019 in the Commissioner's 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. Mize led in a word of prayer and Bowman in the 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 July 15, 2019 Council meeting. Dillon made a motion to approve the minutes. Curless seconded the motion and it passed by a 7-0 vote.

Next on the agenda, Chairman Bowman opened the scheduled and advertised Public Hearing for the purpose of confirming the designation of an economic revitalization area (ERA) for all unincorporated areas of Wabash County and for the qualification of personal property for tax abatement. Present for the Public Hearing were County Attorney Steve Downs and Keith Gillenwater, CEO of "Grow Wabash County". Bowman asked for questions or comments from Council members. There were none in addition to those from the previous meeting. Bowman asked for questions from the public. County resident Ken Bucher asked about the designation, scope and meaning of the term, "all unincorporated areas" within the ordinance. Attorney Downs stated that the method was rather unusual but it is an option for abatement. He explained that the ordinance in no way automatically designates other personal property tax abatement within this or any other unincorporated area of the county and that each abatement application would need to be reviewed and evaluated by the current "Proposed Abatement" system so that benefits to the County could be determined. There was no remonstrance or objections heard from the public. Dale made a motion to approve the personal property abatement. Dillon expanded and revised the motion that included additional wording: A Motion to approve Resolution #2019-85-06 confirming the designation of an economic revitalization area for all unincorporated areas in Wabash County and qualifying personal property for tax abatement. Curless seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote with one abstention by Council member Barbara Pearson due to a conflict of interest. Chairman Bowman closed the public hearing. See Resolution #2019-85-06 as follows:

### **A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE DESIGNATION AN ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AREA AND QUALIFYING PERSONAL PROPERTY FOR TAX ABATEMENT**

The County Council of Wabash County, Indiana ("Council") has found, by Resolution 2019-85-06, that all unincorporated areas of Wabash County, Indiana are an Economic Revitalization Area ("Area"). The area is located within the jurisdiction of the Council.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the County Council of Wabash County, Indiana, as follows:

Section 1. The Council hereby finds that (i) the Area is within the County, and (ii) the Area has become undesirable for, or impossible of, normal development and occupancy because of a lack of development, cessation of growth, deterioration of improvements or character of occupancy, age, obsolescence, substandard buildings or equipment, or factors which have impaired values and prevented a normal development of property and use of property.

Section 2. The Area is hereby declared to be an "economic revitalization area" pursuant to IC 6-1.1-12.1 et seq.

Section 3. The Council hereby confirms the Declaratory Resolution.

Section 4. The Auditor of the County is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed on behalf of the County to take any other action as such individual deems necessary or desirable to effectuate the foregoing resolution, and any actions heretofore made or taken be, and hereby are, ratified and approved.

Section 5. The Resolution shall be in force and full effect from and after its adoption

Adopted this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2019.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF WABASH COUNTY, INDIANA

By: Kyle Bowman, Chairman (signed)

Attest: Marcie Shepherd, Wabash County Auditor (signed)

Chairman Bowman opened the scheduled and advertised Public Hearing for the purpose of reviewing a tax abatement application by Heartland REMC. At last month's meeting, Rob Pearson, CEO of Heartland REMC explained that the company would like to install fiber optic cabling and telecommunication equipment in order to provide high speed internet to rural county residents within Wabash County and was present to submit a request for a ten-year personal property tax abatement for the installation of new information technology equipment. Gillenwater had previously distributed copies of the "Statement of Benefits for Personal Property" form to council members and had reported that according to the evaluation of the "Proposed Tax Abatement" system, 63 points was assigned from the system guidelines which qualifies the business for a ten-year abatement. Bowman asked for questions from the Council members. There were no further questions in addition to those from the previous meeting. Bowman asked for questions from the public. There was no remonstrance or objections heard from the public. Dillon made a motion to approve Resolution #2019-85-07 confirming the qualification of personal property of Heartland REMC for tax abatement. Dale seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-0 vote with one abstention by Council member Barbara Pearson due to a conflict of interest. Chairman Bowman closed the public hearing. See Resolution #2019-85-07 as follows:

**A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE QUALIFICATION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY OF HEARTLAND REMC FOR TAX ABATEMENT**

The County Council (the "Council") of the County of Wabash, Indiana has found, pursuant to Resolution 2019-85-04 and 2019-85-06 all unincorporated areas of Wabash County are an Economic Revitalization Area ("Area").

Heartland REMC ("Applicant") is planning to install in the Area new manufacturing equipment ("Project") as described in Applicant's Statement of Benefits ("Statement") previously submitted to the Council.

The Council has reviewed the Statement and hereby finds that the Project as described in the Statement will be of public utility, will be to the benefit and welfare of all citizens and taxpayers of the County, and qualifies as investments for which deductions are permitted under IC 6-1.1-12.1-4.5.

Pursuant to IC 6-1.1-12.1-2 and IC 6-1.1-12.1-2.5, the Council passed Resolution Nos. 2019-85-04 and 2019-85-05 ("Declaratory Resolutions") on July 15, 2019 which designated the Area as an economic revitalization area pursuant to the Act and approved personal property tax deductions for new information technology equipment installed in the Area for up to ten (10) years.

In compliance with IC 6-1.1-12.1-2-5, the Council published notice ("Notice") on August 7, 2019, describing the adoption and substance of the Declaratory Resolution and stating that, on the date hereof, the Council would hold a public hearing ("Public Hearing") at which it will receive and hear remonstrance and objections from interested persons, with respect to the Declaratory Resolution and the Statements.

In compliance with IC 6-1.1-12.1-2.5, the County Auditor filed, with each taxing unit that has authority to levy property taxes in the Area, a copy of the Notice, the Declaratory Resolution, and the Statement.

In compliance with IC 6-1.1-12.1-2.5, on the date hereof, the Council held a Public Hearing at which it received, heard and considered evidence concerning the Declaratory Resolution and Statements, and any remonstrance or objections with respect to the Declaratory Resolution.

Pursuant to IC 6-1.1-12.1-2.5 and IC 6-1.1-12.1-4.5, the Council desires to take final action confirming the Declaratory Resolution, approving the Statement, and granting tax abatement.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the County Council of Wabash County, Indiana as follows:

Section 1. Based on the information in the Statement describing the Project, the Council makes the following findings:

- (a) The estimate of the value and cost of the Project is reasonable for projects of that nature.
- (b) The estimate of the number of individuals who will be employed or whose employment will be retained can be reasonably expected to result from the Project.
- (c) The estimate of the annual salaries of those individuals who will be employed or whose employment will be retained can be reasonably expected to result from the Project.
- (d) The other benefits about which information was requested are benefits that can be reasonably expected to result from the Project.
- € The totality of benefits is sufficient to justify the granting of personal property tax deductions to the Applicant pursuant to IC 6-1.1-12.1-4.5, subject to the limitations set forth in the Resolution.

Section 2. Based on the information in the Statement of Benefits describing the Project, and the forgoing findings the Council, pursuant to IC 6-1.1-12.1-4-5, hereby approves and allows the Applicant personal property tax deductions for the Project under IC 6-1.1-12.1-4.5 for new manufacturing equipment and new information technology equipment installed in the Area for a period of ten (10) years.

Section 3. All personal property comprising the Project shall be eligible for a ten (10) year property tax abatement regardless of when it is first assessed.

Section 4. Pursuant to IC 6-1.1-12.1-9.5, the Council hereby waives any noncompliance related to the failure to designate the Area an economic revitalization area prior to the initiation of the redevelopment or installation of new information technology equipment. Such waiver will not result in a delay in the issuance of tax bills, require the recalculation of tax rates or tax levies for a particular year, or otherwise cause an undue burden on a taxing unit.

Section 5. The Council hereby confirms the Declaratory Resolution.

Section 6. The Auditor of the County is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed on behalf of the County to take any other action as such individual deems necessary or desirable to effectuate the foregoing resolution, and any actions heretofore made or taken be, and hereby are, ratified and approved.

Section 7. The Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption.

Adopted this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2019.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF WABASH COUNTY, INDIANA

By: Kyle Bowman, Chairman (signed)

Attest: Marcie Shepherd, Wabash County Auditor

The next order of business were the recommendations and review for compliance with the statement of benefits by Wabash County companies currently receiving tax abatements presented by Keith Gillenwater, President and CEO of “Grow Wabash County” (formerly EDG of Wabash County) and Tenille Zartman, Project Manager. Gillenwater submitted detailed reports regarding his visits with company representatives of the current tax abatement recipients: Advanced Ag Resources, Inc., Hipsher Tool & Die, Inc., Midwest Eye/Vision Properties, and Midwest Poultry Services, LP. Gillenwater recommended that Council find each company to be in compliance with the tax abatement statement of benefits based on total retained jobs, total new jobs added, total retained payroll, total new payroll, and stated new investment. Dale made a motion to approve compliance with the statement of benefits for existing tax abatement for all four companies. Pearson seconded the motion and it passed with a 7-0 vote.

Next on the agenda were “Visit Wabash County” representatives, Christine Flohr, Executive Director of Tourism, accompanied by Whitney Millspaugh Marketing/Brand Manager. Flohr also referenced other staff members, Tourism Manager, Jennifer Long-Dillon and Visitor Services Manager, Margie Justice. Flohr submitted copies of the Visit Wabash County’s 2018 Annual Tourism Report and highlighted several statistics and activities from the report. Council

member Mize asked how the figure of \$53.6 million “spent in Wabash County by visitors” is calculated. Flohr stated that she would provide him a copy of the formula used for calculation. Marketing Manager Millspaugh presented highlights of the Marketing Comprehensive Report which included: Website Overview & Content Management, Social Media Content and Brand Management, Digital & Print Campaigns, Radio Advertising, Sponsorships and Partnerships, and County Guide Publication. Mize asked about the service gaps that need filled or addressed. Flohr stated that the Wabash County has no taxi services such as “Uber or Lyft” and diverse food services are currently limited. Flohr submitted the organization’s 2020 budget and requested that County Council approve the continued funding of \$75,000 from the CEDIT Fund’s budget.

The next order of business was to address the additional appropriation requests. There was no one in attendance to represent the Probation Department and the Central Dispatch Department, so Auditor Shepherd explained the requests.

**ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS**  
**ORDINANCE #2019-85-05**

**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, 2019 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:**

**GENERAL FUND #1000**

<b>Probation Dept/Personal Services</b>	<b>Requested</b>	<b><u>Appropriated</u></b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>
Intake Officer (C. Puglisi)	\$13,920.00	<b><i>\$11,471.00</i></b>	6	1
#1000-11418-000-0000	(\$20.00/hr.)	<b><i>(\$16.48/hr.)</i></b>		

Explanation submitted by Chief Probation Officer, Sarah Lochner: Requesting an appropriation to cover the cost of the Intake Officer’s salary that was tentatively approved by Council at the June 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 meeting. The intended employee will begin employment on July 23, 2019.

Dale made a motion to approve the request. Mize seconded the motion and it passed by a 6-1 vote with Dillon voting against.

**PSAP/ PUBLIC SAFETY ACCESS POINT FUND #1235**

<b>Personal Services</b>	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Appropriated</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>
Dispatcher #1235-11418-000-0000	\$36,774.00	\$36,774.00		
Overtime #1235-12000-000-0000	<u>\$15,000.00</u>	<u>\$15,000.00</u>		
Total:	\$51,774.00	\$51,774.00	7	0

Explanation submitted by E911 Director, Sandy Beeks: Requesting an appropriation to cover the cost of additional dispatchers and overtime/holiday pay. The additional dispatchers were tentatively approved by Council at a previous meeting.

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

**Presented to the Wabash County Council, read in full and adopted on the 19th day of August 2019.**

Next on the agenda was a review of the estimated property tax levy limits and estimated reductions due to circuit breakers for each taxing district. Auditor Shepherd distributed copies of the 2020 Estimated Property Tax Caps Impact report and the 2020 Estimated Maximum Levy Reports to the Council for review and/or recommendation. She also submitted a comparison of 2020 levies and tax caps to last year. Council member Mize commented that the County unit's tax caps have increased by over \$71,000 from last year and the assessed value for 2020 has increased by over \$820 thousand.

County Auditor Shepherd distributed the 2020 proposed budget binders including all budgeted county funds for Council's review and reminded Council members that the upcoming 2020 budget hearings are scheduled for August 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 P.M. and Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:00 P.M. It was decided that the PAC/Personnel Administrative (Salary & Wage) Committee should meet on Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019 at 5:30 P.M. in order to review the job study update report by human resource consultants, Waggoner, Irwin & Scheele so that the committee could give salary recommendations at the Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> budget hearing. The final budget adoption hearing is scheduled for September 16, 2019.

Sheriff Baker was present, but not scheduled on the agenda to discuss a vehicle proposal. He reiterated the amount of vehicle damage that the department has had this year and the need for getting more vehicles in use as soon as possible. The department could repair the damaged high-mileage vehicles which could cost more than the vehicles are worth or collect the insurance money for the loss of the vehicles. He stated that he is considering "buying back" one vehicle with less damage from the insurance company at a cost of \$2,000-\$3,000. He also said that he would like to buy a new vehicle at an estimated cost of \$26,000. Auditor Shepherd asked about using Commissary or "Accident Report" funds for the purchase of the buy-back vehicle. Council member Sweet asked about the cost of vehicle equipment and Council member Pearson asked about the status of previously ordered vehicles that had not been received. Baker stated that some equipment might be available from the "buy-back" vehicle. He said that one new vehicle is now on the road and the other is being fitted with equipment. Council member Mize asked how many vehicles are being requested in the proposed 2020 budget and Baker stated that he has budgeted for five vehicles in the 2020 budget. Chairman Bowman advised Baker to get exact figures for the "buy-back" purchase and for the possible additional appropriation of funds for a new vehicle, so that the request could be advertised and addressed in time for next month's meeting.

Chairman Bowman stated that the Commissioners have requested that a new committee be appointed for continued Jail planning. He stated that all three Commissioners want to serve and that some council members need to be appointed also. Dillon asked if the committee meetings would be open to the public since all three commissioners are members of the committee. Commissioner Eppley stated that the meetings would be open to the public. Council members Mize, Pearson, Dillon and Dale volunteered to serve on the committee. Commissioner Dawes stated that the committee would need to tour other county jails and that they will be working closely with financial consultants, Baker Tilly.

Bowman asked Commissioners about progress on the re-location of the Health department and Eppley responded that consideration is being given to re-locating the County Extension office to the 4-H fair grounds thus freeing-up space for the Health department in the Courthouse.

Council reviewed:

July 2019 Auditor & Treasurer Financial Reports

July 2019 Wabash County Solid Waste Mgmt. District Income Statement

With no other business to come before the Council, Chairman Bowman adjourned the meeting. The next regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Wabash County Council is Monday, Sept. 16, 2019 at 6:00 P.M.

**The following individuals also attended the August 19th County Council meeting:**

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

Deputy Auditors B.J. Grube and Shelly Baucio, County Commissioners Jeff Dawes, Barry Eppley and Brian Haupert, Attorney Steve Downs, Sheriff Ryan Baker, Ken Bucher, Josh Goodman, and Jim Christie.