

COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
DECEMBER 18, 2018 6:30 PM

ATTENDANCE

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Darrel Thomas, President
Keith Berry, Vice President
Jill Bridgewater
Dave Fuhrman
Gene Beck
Phillip Gick
Larry Parker

ATTORNEY:

Trudy Selvia

AUDITOR'S OFFICE:

Jessie Hoskins, Tax Deputy, Auditor's Office

AUDIENCE:

3 individuals

The Putnam County Council met in Regular Session on December 18, 2018 at the Putnam County Courthouse at 6:30 PM. Darrel Thomas opened the meeting with the pledge to the flag.

CLERK FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE

First and foremost, Clerk Heather Gilbert wanted to discuss a letter that was recently written by Judge Headley regarding the switch to the Odyssey program and staffing. She believed that his letter was in response to an article written in the Banner Graphic recently. She said in his letter, he stated that a new server for CSI would cost approximately \$100,000. She felt this was inaccurate, so she reached out to CSI and they said it would be under \$15,000 and they are still putting new counties on. She contacted Sullivan County, and for their conversion fees and new server, it cost \$14,250. Phil Gick said that the Judge's letter infers that there are no ongoing fees for Odyssey. Dave Fuhrman said that was the main reason they were sold on switching to Odyssey. Ms. Gilbert stated that for the last 15 years, Odyssey has been paid by the court's user fees because state statute says Odyssey gets a portion of the fees whether the county uses them or not. Mr. Gick said that Odyssey is the state-preferred vendor, so fees have been apportioned that way, and it's a done deal now so we cannot revert to CSI. Ms. Gilbert reiterated that she did not feel that the letter was a fair representation and she is not sure where the Judge came up with his numbers. Attorney Trudy Selvia stated that maybe the Judge was adding in all costs, like getting Wi-Fi capabilities and other expenses to get software truly live.

Ms. Gilbert said that the expense of machines and those things were absorbed by Odyssey in some ways- they covered clerk & courts, but not cover the probation offices. One of her brand-new computers already died and she has already had to buy one. Odyssey did not offer a warranty, so she has had to replace one already out of her own funds and she cannot say that the computers are of good quality. Her office is still missing 2 computers for voter registration.

She moved on to state that the portion of the letter that bugs her the most is that the Judge claims the switch to Odyssey would save her office time and that she will not need as many people and he compared our county to Green City and Marion County Clerks. Darrell Thomas said that in his 16 years in county government, you never compare anything to Marion County. She contacted comparable, nearby counties Clay, Montgomery & Hendricks. Clay County Clerk said that when they switched to e-file, it did not lessen their work. They still have the same amount of work, just a different way to go about it. The Judge also said that the Clerk can teach people how to efile. Her staff does not have time to sit and teach people. They are not allowed to give legal advice, but they must instruct people when documents are not legally correct, like missing a notary for example. Her staff is constantly having to help the public in those regards, even when it is not their responsibility. Thus, being said, she cannot imagine trying to teach the public how to use a computer to efile. None of the other 3 counties she contacted help the public that way.

Regarding staff help, Clay County has 6 court reporters and 6 clerks. Hendricks County has 20 clerks and 8 court reporters that have their own clerks. Montgomery County has 9 court reporters and 7 clerks. That ratio is no where near what we are operating. She was able to pay out her clerks' overtime, but they still have 13,500 cases left to audit. Efile is still a heavy process- files must be checked and reviewed, there is correspondence with lawyers, etc. She will also have to take on CHIN cases once they go to efile that she does not get right now.

She has 2 proposals to help fix this situation. The first is hire another fulltime person. The second is hire a part-time person to work 4 days a week for now but revisit this issue in July. Efile goes live in March. Mr. Gick said he prefers the second proposal, as this is a hypothesis scenario and we don't really know what will happen. Ms. Gilbert thinks she will need the person anyway. She requested they give her full-time money for the year, and if only part time is needed, the excess money can be encumbered to be given for overtime pay for the following year. Currently, she has around \$17,113 in her fund for the option to pay out overtime to her clerks, or they keep their comp time.

Mr. Fuhrman asked if this new person would work solely on the Odyssey transition. Ms. Gilbert answered that she would move one of her existing staff to the new position, as they are more experienced with the Odyssey tasks, and she would hire a new employee to process tickets and easier jobs.

Mr. Thomas asked if she had a figure for a full-time hire. Ms. Gilbert said she would start them at \$27,000, plus benefits, or \$15,876 for part-time.

Ms. Bridgewater asked if she would hire now or in March, when everything goes live. Ms. Gilbert said that she would hire in January to alleviate stress now. The Superior Court has been working overtime too because of the switch. The Circuit Court does not have as many cases, so they are not working as much.

Mr. Thomas asked if the Council approves \$27,000, would she hire a part-time or full-time now? Ms. Gilbert said that she wishes to do as the Council instructs her- she is willing to be fair but her office needs help.

Commissioner Dave Berry, in audience, asked if the magistrate in July will add to her caseload. Trudy Selvia answered that it may upfront, but it's still the same amount of cases. If there's 10 criminal cases filed that day, it's still 10 cases that came in that day. Ms. Gilbert said it would then be 3 judges who want things now, instead of 2. Ms. Selvia noted that the change to Odyssey has added a lot of extra work in her practice with the way notices come in, etc. It is better in some respects, like more access to info, but there are still cons.

Mr. Parker said that going to Odyssey has created a mess for the Clerk. He is in favor for part-time at least to help.

Mr. Keith Berry asked if this stems from the problem that the system is not working correctly. Ms. Gilbert said that there is a lot of data input. Some of the work that courts once did has moved to the Clerk and the financial side is a lot harder. It once took 20 minutes to do the books and reports, and now it takes 2 hours, so it has become a very slow process. Mr. Keith Berry asked if cases have increased through time? Mr. Gick said that's why the county has gotten another court. Ms. Selvia said that efile will make actual files go away and at some point there will be no more files.

Mr. Gick reiterated that there is no way to know how the transition will actually be just yet. He would like to give it more time. His gut says she will end up needing full-time, but part-time is needed now. He does not want to approve full-time without knowing exactly the impact yet.

Ms. Bridgewater asked how many overtime hours her clerks have been paid out. Ms. Gilbert stated that in the last 2 months, Olivia had 65 hours, Debbie had 75 but kept some, Katie went on vacation and used hers, Heather had 70 but kept some, and Tamila had 60 but kept some.

Dave Fuhrman made a motion to approve funding for a full year of part-time employment for \$10.50 hour, 4 days a week (\$15,876 a year) but revisit in July for full-time. Phil Gick seconded. Darrel Thomas voted nay, but the motion still carried.

Commissioner Berry asked what fund they were going to use to pay for the new employee. Mr. Thomas said that the Council will figure that out later after they consult with Auditor Lorie Hallett.

Ms. Gilbert would like to encumber her existing funds of \$17,113 to finish the audit of the Odyssey conversion.

Gene Beck made a motion to encumber the \$17,113 currently in deputies salaries. Larry Parker seconded. The motion carried.

Mr. Fuhrman stated that he would like Auditor Hallett to check all of this before it's implemented.

Ms. Gilbert said that she will bring this issue back in July to let the Council know where they are.

ASSESSOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Assessor-elect Janet Brown was present to inform the Council that there have been some employee changes due to one employee quitting for health reasons and the need for an employee to replace her own position. There would be no changes to budget.

Dave Fuhrman made a motion to approve the hire of 2 new employees by the Assessor's Office. Keith Berry seconded. The motion carried.

2019 SALARY ORDINANCE

General discussion was held on the salary ordinance and various positions listed.

Gene Beck made a motion to approve the 2019 Salary Ordinance. Dave Fuhrman seconded. The motion carried.

Commissioner Berry said that the Commissioners are working on ideas for the Microfilm office. They have a contract position in mind.

2019 COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Tuesday, January 15, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, February 19, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, March 19, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, April 16, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, May 21, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, June 18, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, July 16, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, August 13, 2019	9:00 AM Budget Hearings
Wednesday, August 14, 2019	9:00 AM Budget Hearings
Thursday, August 15, 2019	9:00 AM Budget Hearings
Tuesday, August 20, 2019	9:00 AM
Tuesday, September 17, 2019	6:30 PM Budget Adoption
Tuesday, October 15, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, November 19, 2019	6:30 PM
Tuesday, December 17, 2019	6:30 PM

Dave Fuhrman made a motion to approve the 2019 council meeting dates. Gene Beck seconded. The motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Berry stated that the Annex Committee had to pick a direction and go with it. He stated that once the Courthouse position is ironed out, they can figure out which direction to go with the new annex. Ms. Selvia asked Mr. Berry to clarify on which courthouse position. He meant the microfilm office potentially becoming vacated. Ms. Selvia noted that Microfilm is going away because of efile, which will also create more work on the clerk. Mr. Berry said that the state has indicated that they can do microfilm scanning for 'x' amount of dollars- he's not sure how the Clerk's office will be affected by the Microfilm issue, but we will know by July.

Commissioner Berry brought the discussion back to the annex and stated that the appraisal came back for the Keightly Road property and it was well under asking price. They submitted an offer at appraisal value, but he assumed they will not hear anything back.

A Commissioner Transfer tabled from November 20 was presented. Commissioner Rick Woodall

planned to explain the transfer in question, but he was stuck out of town on business. Discussion was held on the transfer and the handbook vendor.

Dave Fuhrman made a motion to table the transfer until the January meeting. Gene Beck seconded. The motion carried.

LIBRARY BOARD APPOINTEE

The Putnam County Public Library Board had a member set to expire soon. The Certificate of Appointment for current member Kayla Birt-Flegal was presented. She wanted to renew her term.

Jill Bridgewater made a motion to appoint Kayla Birt-Flegal to another 4-year term to the Putnam County Public Library Board. Keith Berry seconded. The motion carried.

MINUTES

Minutes from 8/21/18, 9/11/18, and 10/16/18 were approved at the previous meeting but just needed signed.

Jessie Hoskins, Tax Deputy, informed the Council that Auditor Hallett was contacted by the state and told that the minutes need to be uploaded to the state's website, Gateway, much sooner than they have been. The Auditor's Office must change the way the Council had requested the signing of minutes be done, so the minutes from the November 20th meeting must be signed tonight, and not approved and brought back next meeting.

Dave Fuhrman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 20, 2018. Gene Beck seconded. The motion carried.

MAIL

Mail was reviewed.

ADJOURN

Dave Fuhrman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Phil Gick seconded. The motion carried.

Darrel Thomas, President

David Fuhrman

Keith Berry, Vice President

Phillip Gick

Jill Bridgewater

Larry Parker

Gene Beck

Attest: Auditor