

**COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
JUNE 18, 2024
6:30 PM**

ATTENDANCE:

COUNCIL:

Stephanie Campbell, President
Jay Alcorn, Vice President
Wayne Huffman
Danny Wallace
Keith Berry
Phillip Gick
Larry Parker
Trudy Selvia
Kristina Berish
10 Individuals

ATTORNEY:

AUDITOR'S OFFICE

AUDIENCE:

The Putnam County Board of Council met on June 18, 2024, at 6:30 pm. The meeting was held at the Putnam County Courthouse. Stephanie Campbell opened the meeting and the pledge to the flag was given.

Huffman made the motion to add Plan Commission to the agenda. Gick seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING WHEEL TAX & EXCISE SURTAX

Campbell opened the public hearing, hearing no comments, called for a vote to close hearing. Alcorn made the motion to close the public hearing. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

WHEEL TAX & EXCISE SURTAX ORDINANCES

Trudy Selvia advertised it at the maximum amount to allow the Council to review and approve it at the maximum amount or at a lower amount. Selvia went over the current tax. Gick stated this would bring in additional money for the city and towns as well. According to the paperwork from Baker Tilly:

Unit	Est. Current Revenue	Est. Revenue at Maximum Rate
Putnam County	\$973,955.80	\$2,234,524.52
Greencastle	\$115,637.75	\$ 265,305.04
Bainbridge	\$ 10,944.37	\$ 25,109.42
Cloverdale	\$ 34,393.27	\$ 78,907.65
Roachdale	\$ 12,318.24	\$ 28,261.45
Russellville	\$ 7,335.06	\$ 16,828.65
Fillmore	\$ 9,710.22	\$ 22,277.93
Grand Total	\$1,164,294.70	\$2,671,214.70

Gick said the county is looking at over 90 bridges in the county needing replaced or repaired. The county must look at sources of revenue because we do not have the funds now to remotely get ourselves out of the situation of the bridges and roads needing to be done. Increasing these taxes is an avenue the county can take to bring in additional funds that can be counted on. We need to work out a plan, he doesn't like taxes either, but this is something that can only be used for roads and bridges.

Campbell said the board members do not want to pay additional taxes either. But they must be realistic, and they are looking at a daunting number needed for the roads and bridges. We constantly get complaints about the condition of our infrastructure; this is something the Council can do to get a constant stream of funds for the bridges and roads.

Gick would like to see the Commissioners commit to most of the funds going towards the bridges if we are adding to the pot of money the highway receives.

Peck said when they go for the federal aid projects, we must pay the invoices for engineers and then submit for reimbursement. This makes a cashflow issue waiting to receive the reimbursement. We have another call for federal projects in November.

Selvia clarified the tax was discussed at the May meeting. And advertised in the newspaper for tonight's meeting. The Council can approve it tonight.

Alcorn said this tax was started in 2012. A minor change was made in 2015. The county is not getting the same for our money now that we did in 2012. The dollar does not go nearly as far. He does not like increasing taxes but with the cost of everything increasing and the state of the bridges and roads we must look at revenue sources.

Mark Miller asked with the daunting task of the bridges and roads what would increasing the tax solve. He understood the need is way more than the additional money that would be received by the county. He also questioned something Commissioner Woodall had said about funding not being utilized in the past.

Campbell said she believes Woodall is referring to applying for federal aid projects. There was a time in administration at the highway department that they did not seek out federal aid due to the restrictions and funding.

Miller said his concern is what the board said earlier about the cost of everything increasing. This is true. And people are having to prioritize and change what they have done or bought in the past due to the increase in the cost of living. He would hope the board would make sure if the tax is increased the money does go towards the bridges.

Campbell read the ordinances. Gick made the motion to approve ordinance 2024-06-18-1 for the wheel tax at the maximum rate due to the situation the county sees itself in regarding our infrastructure. This will help a lot, but it will not solve the complete problem of lack of funding. Alcorn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2024-06-18-2 excise surtax ordinance, Gick made the motion to approve at the \$50 rate. Berry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

HIGHWAY ADDITIONAL

Engineer Jim Peck represented:

\$35,000 Cumulative Bridge Fund

Hire an engineering company for construction plans for the covered bridges: Edna Collins, Rolling Stone, and Houck.

Wallace asked why we are hiring an engineering firm when we have an engineer on staff at the highway department. Peck said he is doing as much as he can, but he needs help. A lot is involved in seeking federal aid.

Alcorn questioned why we need an engineer for Houck bridge. It is a walking bridge. Could we not figure this out ourselves? This would save money to be put into materials. Peck gave an explanation as to why he felt it was needed.

Peck said he was here to do what the boards wanted him to do. The Commissioners and Council need to figure out and he will do what they say. Campbell felt the board needed more input from the Commissioners before voting on this additional. The board is concerned with spending 35K on engineering services instead of putting this money towards materials.

Gick felt during the budget workshop a minimum of one Commissioners needs to be in attendance when they discuss the highway budgets. And to have additional time on the agenda to further discuss the budgets. Peck said he is having a meeting with the Commissioners soon to discuss the budget. Welcome the Council to be present.

Wallace asked if all three Commissioners agreed on this additional request. Gick stated he knew for a fact at least one did not agree. Wallace felt the county needed to watch the money. Make sure we do our due diligence.

Peck said they had 35K left in the account at the end of 2023 for contractual engineering contract with United Consulting. If he had done his job right, he would have encumbered it. Then he would not be before them asking for the additional.

He also went on to say, if the Council did not approve the additional this year's budget would be short for contractual engineering because he has already had the company start the work on these three bridges. The 35K would come out of the 50K he had for this year's projects.

Campbell called for a vote. Gick made the motion to table. Wallace seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

\$50,000 Cumulative Bridge Fund

Cover health insurance, not enough appropriated due to unusually high claims year.

Gick made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ADULT PROBATION

Auditor Kristina Berish represented:

\$1,263.63 Grant 2

\$1,263.63 JPAR Grant

Department paid the invoice in 2023, then again in the beginning of 2024. The company sent the money back, it is in the fund and now it needs to be appropriated back into the account.

Alcorn made the motion to approve. Berry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ABATEMENTS

Kristin Clary presented:

- 1) Scorpion – 2024-06-18-A. CF1 real estate and personal property 2015. Parker made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 2) #1 & Company – 2024-06-18-B. real property for 2014 & 2016. Berry made the motion to approve. Wallace seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 3) POET – 2024-06-18-C. real estate and personal property 2022. Alcorn made the motion to approve. Berry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

PLAN COMMISSION ADDITIONAL

Plan Commissioner Director Lisa Zeiner presented:

\$2,717 Planning & Building Impact Fund

Adding a new Chevy Blazer to the insurance policy.

Gick made the motion to approve. Parker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT ADDITIONALS

Auditor Kristina Berish presented:

\$7,997.00 LIT Correctional and Rehab

Raise approved for the Matron at the May meeting.

Alcorn made the motion to approve. Gick seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

\$25,509.65 Various funds

Reimbursement checks from the insurance company due to certain employees reaching the stoploss limit on our policy.

Huffman made the motion to approve. Alcorn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES

May 28, 2024 – the Council did not receive their packets in the mail. Auditor had mailed a week prior. Alcorn made the motion to table until June meeting. Wallace seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

BOARD UPDATES

Members gave updates on the boards they sit on as Council representatives.

MAIL

The board acknowledged their mail.

ADJOURN

Wallace made the motion to adjourn. Alcorn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Stephanie Campbell, President

Jay Alcorn, Vice President

Wayne Huffman

Phillip Gick

Keith Berry

Danny Wallace

Larry Parker

**Attest: Auditor's Office
Kristina Berish**