

COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
MAY 16, 2023
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Stephanie Campbell, President
Jay Alcorn, Vice President
Phillip Gick
Danny Wallace
Larry Parker
Keith Berry
Wayne Huffman

COMMISSIONERS:

Thomas Helmer

ATTORNEY:

Trudy Selvia

AUDITOR'S OFFICE:

Kristina Berish

AUDIENCE:

8 Individuals

The Putnam County Council met on May 16, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Putnam County Courthouse. Stephanie Campbell opened the meeting with a pledge to the flag.

Campbell said Rick Deer had asked to speak with the Council, it was too late to be put on the agenda. Called for a motion to add him to agenda. Berry made the motion to add. Parker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

AIRPORT ADDITIONAL

Cathy Tipton with the airport stated an additional appropriation had been advertised in the amount of \$423,563.82. It was a formality for the State and the County Council needed to approve it and sign the additional appropriation ordinance. Parker made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

SHERIFF

Sheriff Baugh came to the meeting to request a referral and sign-on bonus in the amount of \$500. Not asking for any new monies. \$500 would be given to the new employee and \$500 to the employee who referred them after the new employee passed their 6-month anniversary date of employment.

Gick brought up the issue of the bonus being paid in 2024 since they were getting close to the mark of 6 months from date of hire carrying them into next year. It was discussed that a contract would need to be drawn up which would enable the department to submit an encumbrance to carry forward money appropriated in 2023 into 2024 to pay for the bonus. The Sheriff would get with his attorney and the Council's attorney to get a contract.

Gick made the motion to approve and any amount to spend out would be encumbered. Wallace seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

E911 ADDITIONALS

Director Dave Costin presented:

\$16,000 repairs & maintenance for the command vehicle

Paid from the LIT PSAP fund

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

\$40,000 overtime for state mandated training and additional overtime
needed due to being short staffed

Paid from the Statewide 911 fund

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

Radio consoles – briefly explained what the console does for the 911 center. Life span is approximately 15 years, and this is the 15th year. He has had to keep it running from parts he was able to find because they do not carry this any longer. Advertised an RFP and received 3. They were opened yesterday at the Commissioners meeting and taken under advisement.

RECORDER PERPETUATION FUND

Recorder Heather Gilbert said in 2017 an Indiana code was changed on how to spend the perpetuation fund. She was here to make sure the county was following protocol. She found out during her State Recorder conference. An ordinance would need to be drawn up by the Council in accordance with the law. Council asked Trudy Selvia to get with the Recorder and draw one up.

TAXES

Rick Deere came to the meeting as a concerned taxpayer. Questioned the necessity of giving out tax abatements. And he felt the schools needed to be questioned, they are the largest percentage receiving property tax money by far. The Council commiserated with his position; however, he would need to go to school board meetings or appeal to the State for a change. The Council could not dictate a change in how schools run or their budgets. Trudy Selvia directed him to the Economic Development Director Kristen Clary to discuss the abatements.

EMS LIT RATE

Director Kelly Russ came to the meeting to further discuss the LIT rate for EMS. The deadline is quickly approaching to get things done. She presented paperwork for a proposed rate of .19 instead of the original proposed rate of .1 from the County Council earlier this year, this would bring in a potential \$1,645,526 in revenue. At .19 a taxpayer would pay an average amount of \$78.00. Combined with their EMS billing revenue of an estimated \$1,303,980 they would have \$2,949,506 in revenue to fund their budget. They would continue to not balance bill Putnam County residents.

Russ said the figures she estimated included a 22% raise for all the PCEMS employees, as well as providing a surplus of funds to create the Community Paramedicine Program which would produce additional revenue. She submitted an example from Clinton County on what they paid EMS personnel.

Gick stated he was not in favor of factoring in a 22% raise increase to the equation of what to set the rate when the board has not even discussed the county's 2024 salaries. We are not going to base an increase from what one other county pays.

Russ said she had submitted a comparison of other counties previously this year. Gick asked her to re-submit her comparison to other counties and include in her report for the proposed EMS LIT rate. Russ said she would furnish the requested information; she was not proposing a salary increase tonight but showing a salary increase to include in her proposal for the suggested rate amount.

Alcorn felt a .19 rate was making a lot of assumptions about future budgets without figures to back it up. All figures are up in the air since we have not even started the budget process for 2024.

The Council asked the Auditor to reach out to Jacque Clements and ask her if she could attend the June 20th Council meeting to start discussing the county rates.

CUSTODIAL ADDITIONAL

Head Custodian Andy Mitchell presented:

\$2,661 7% raise request for custodian

Paid from the county general fund

Mitchell requested an additional 7% raise for his full-time custodian due to the job description change over the 11 years he has worked for the county. It is not just custodial duties but also maintenance. Last year was the first budget process he had gone through and did not realize it was then that he should have requested a larger raise.

Wallace said he was not in favor of the request. There has not been any job description change since the first of the year, nor restructuring of the department. We cannot justify giving one employee a 7% raise on top of the 5% we gave everyone for 2023. Parker agreed, this was something the wage study should reflect if the salary needed to be increased. Parker made the motion to deny. Wallace seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONER ADDITIONALS

Commissioner Tom Helmer presented:

\$16,842 replacement of 3 spill containers for the fuel station

Paid from the EDIT

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

\$170,000 road maintenance

Campbell questioned the additional since the 2023 road plan had already been funded through the community crossing grant and an additional. Did something on this road change that it was now being moved up to do? The Council asked what road was being proposed to do. Helmer replied 800 N which has Bakers Camp bridge on it.

Wallace said he was not comfortable with taking money from the EDIT Warchest. The county had too many things in the hopper and needed to watch what they spent. Council asked if this should not have been requested from the Highway fund. Engineer Jim Peck said he had other projects in mind for possible additional requests later.

Huffman and Alcorn both voiced how they had recently traveled on this road, and it was not bad. Campbell asked what the passer rating was. Peck said he did not have that information with him, but he thought it was a 4. Council questioned why this was being looked at to do if the road was not in bad shape. Helmer said the request had come from Commissioner Berry who was not able to make tonight's meeting. After some discussion, Alcorn stated he had not heard a valid reason that this road needed to be done now. The additional request died from lack of a motion.

MINUTES

April 18, 2023 – Gick made the motion to approve. Alcorn seconded. The motion passed.

AUDITOR SALARY REQUEST

Auditor Kristina Berish submitted a letter of explanation requesting a pay increase for her two tax deputies. Not asking for any new monies, utilizing what was approved by the Council for her 2023 budget. The request was due to restructuring of job responsibilities between her deputies. She would be adding more responsibilities to the two deputies. Requested a .71/an hour increase to make them \$21/an hour. She would still be returning almost \$2,000 to the general fund at the end of the year. Wallace made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

HIGHWAY REPORT

Engineer Jim Peck gave an update on the roads and bridges in the county. They will be having a special session on Monday at 1:30 pm.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board members gave their committee reports.

ADJOURN

Wallace made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Stephanie Campbell, President

Jay Alcorn, Vice President

Phillip Gick

Keith Berry

Danny Wallace

Larry Parker

Wayne Huffman

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