

COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
NOVEMBER 15, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David Fuhrman, President
Stephanie Campbell, Vice President
Phillip Gick
Danny Wallace
Larry Parker
Jay Alcorn
Keith Berry

ATTORNEY:

Trudy Selvia

AUDITOR'S OFFICE:

Kristina Berish

AUDIENCE:

31 Individuals

The Putnam County Council met in Regular Session on November 15, 2022, at the Putnam County Courthouse at 6:30 p.m. Dave Fuhrman opened the meeting with the pledge to the flag.

ANIMAL SHELTER TRANSFER

Terry Eastham asked for it to be added to the agenda. Campbell made motion to add to agenda. Parker seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4008-40404-626	4008-30360-626	\$9,000
Building	Misc. Services	

To pay vet bills

Berry made motion to approve. Wallace seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

THRIVE

Ryan Keller came to the meeting to update the board by giving an informational presentation about the county. Passed out booklet.

2023 PART TIME HELP ON SALARY ORDINANCE

Gick made the motion to approve the part time help hourly rates listed on the salary ordinance. Any part time help not specifically addressed is allowed up to \$15 an hour. Parker seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2023 SALARY ORDINANCE

Alcorn made a motion to approve. Gick seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS 2023

Tabled until December meeting.

EMS

Kelly Russ presented:

1170-40402-157	1170-30303-157	\$13,812
Vehicles	Repairs & Maintenance	

Pay for repairs & maintenance

Gick made the motion to approve. Wallace seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

1000-30303-157	\$3,000
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Repairs & Maintenance

Imminent domain check received on property. Asking to appropriate.

Alcorn made the motion to approve additional. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

LIT – Russ had been told the Council could approve an EMS LIT rate and start collecting mid-year 2023. Money would not be able to be spent until 2024. At .2 rate it would bring in 1.7M. After some discussion it was decided further research needed to be done. Tabled until the December meeting. Parker cautioned raising taxes. It had been discussed on moving part of current LIT rate to the EMS rate if approved.

ASSESSOR’S OFFICE – NEW HIRE/MOVING POSITIONS

Assessor Janet Brown submitted a letter with her request to move positions around when hiring a new person since someone quit. She wanted to bring in the new hire at a lower amount of pay and take the difference to give to others in the office. The Council said they could not approve moving the around of money. They had already refused other requests from departments. The county is hiring a company to do a wage study and they will go from it on what positions should be paid. If Ms. Brown wanted to move a current employee to another position and then hire the new employee in at a lower rate. If she does change a position’s salary, then she would need to come before them to get the salary ordinance approved with the change.

CEMETERY BOARD

Marilyn Clearwater came before the Council with her concern of having \$10,000 in the budget for mowing. She does not feel it will be enough to care for over 200 cemeteries in the county. Council advised the 2023 budget had already been adopted and cannot be changed. As to her other questions regarding the requirements of the board, they referred her to Commissioner Dave Berry.

CLERK ADDITIONAL

Auditor Kristina Berish presented since the Clerk was off for medical reasons.
1119-20201 \$20,000
Office Supplies
For preservation of documents
Gick made the motion to approve. Campbell seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS ADDITIONAL

Commissioner Rick Woodall presented:
9143-50631-0068 \$3,649,348.50
ARPA
Wallace made the motion to approve. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES

October 3, 2022, Joint meeting – Parker made a motion to approve. Wallace seconded. The motion carried.
October 7, 2022, Joint meeting – Berry made a motion to approve. Campbell seconded. The motion carried.
October 18, 2022 – Campbell made a motion to approve. Wallace seconded. The motion carried.

ADJOURN

Wallace made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Gick seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

David Fuhrman, President

Stephanie Campbell, V. President

Jay Alcorn

Larry Parker

Keith Berry

Danny Wallace

Phillip Gick

Attest: Auditor's Office
Kristina Berish

PUBLIC HEARING
SOLAR FARM
NOVEMBER 15, 2022

Call to order Public Hearing by President Fuhrman.

Kristin Clary gave brief introduction of Solar Project. Declaratory resolution has already been approved. There would be no vote tonight. Meeting was strictly for public comment.

Chris Matthews with Arevon spoke about the project. Gave a brief history of Arevon and Tenaska. He went over the proposed project. The project would encompass 1,200 – 1,400 acres. Start mid 2024 and end in 2025. Overall looking at 100 – 250M investment. This would help the county residents in property taxes. There would also be direct and indirect jobs brought into the county.

Jarrold Pitts, Director with Tenaska went over the economic development agreement. Over the course of the project looking at 40M in property tax coming into the county. Acreage currently assessed at 1,500 an acre would increase to 13,000 an acre. He went over the decommissioning of the equipment once the project was complete.

Pitts said Putnam County has a solar ordinance and they would work with all the requirements. He also assured residents the solar farm would not be an issue regarding odor, sound, demand of local services and no health impacts.

Pitts referred residents to their website where it would answer a lot of questions they may have. Also has a way to contact them with any questions or concerns.

Nick Gentry who is the local contact for the Solar Farm addressed the audience. He lives in Putnam County.

Jason Semler with Baker Tilly had been hired by the county to be a financial advisor regarding the potential project. Semler passed out information to the board.

He explained with the company coming in and the amount per acre increasing in assessed value it was a benefit to all county residents. It would lower their property taxes. The higher the assessed value, the lower the tax rate is.

Fuhrman stated it was time for public comments.

Kelly Colvin stated she was against the project. One reason is health and safety concerns. It would also impact the fire department. Questioned contaminating the water. She also disagreed with earlier statement and there would be noise. Also, they would sacrifice their starry nights and be looking at fences. Colvin also felt it would decrease the value of her property. Loss of farmland. Loss of jobs on the farms.

Chad Colvin said they had researched, and the companies were not future 500 companies like they had been told in a meeting. Jeff Williams could not attend meeting but told Colvin he had tried to research the company but could not find a website. It looked like some of their business was in Dubai and created only in 2021. When they leave what would the county do after the solar farm is over, a solar farm would not feed the people.

Nick Gentry stated part of the footprint would be on his property. Property his family had owned for some time. He felt it would cause minimum impact. The land abuts to a landfill. Not approving the project would take money away from property owners/taxpayers. Felt it was an intrusion to tell a property owner what they could and could not do with their property.

Jeanette Pope a Professor at Depauw University stressed renewables are important. Need to look at the future regarding source of energy. Solar is our future; it has to be. The current way is damaging the earth.

Colby Strasburger said he had lived in Putnam County his whole life. He did not feel the property value would decrease due to the solar farm. He said the property they were looking at to put it did not have close neighbors. How could a solar farm possibly be worse than the existing landfill? And how was it right for other people to tell someone what to do with their property.

Teresa Finchum said she was not in favor of the project. She stated it would be an eyesore she would have to look at every day. And would have to deal with the noise of construction and the noise of the farm.

Steve Eberly stated he was with Hoosiers for Renewables. Stressed he was not part of the companies proposing the solar farm. He has traveled all over educating people about renewables. People want electricity, they panic when it is not working. There was no perfect solution.

Seeing no further comments, Wallace made the motion to close the public hearing. Parker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

President Fuhrman closed the public hearing.