

Vermillion County Council

Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2019

6:30 p.m.

Commissioner's Courtroom, 2nd Floor, Courthouse

- I. **Call to Order.** The Council convened in a regular meeting on December 9, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the Commissioner's Courtroom.
- II. **Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.**
- III. **Roll Call.** Members present were President John Michael Major, Vice President Ashley James, Neil Costello, Ronald L. Dunavan Jr., Robert Spence, William Brent Bush, Randy Dreher, Auditor Amy Tolbert, First Deputy Auditor Stephanie Simpson, and Council Attorney Scott Craig.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes.** A motion was made by Dreher and seconded by Bush to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2019 meeting. All in favor, motion carried.
- V. **Treasurer's Report.** Major acknowledged receipt of the Treasurer's Report.
- VI. **Comp Time Report.** No comments.
- VII. **Transfer of Funds.**
Reporting only. Prosecuting Attorney – Child Support requesting to transfer \$3,001.82 from Secretary 2 to Clerical Assistant IV-D.
Reporting only. Area Plan Commission requesting to transfer \$1,823.07 from Secretary to Executive Director.
Transfer. Park & Recreation requesting to transfer \$46.50 from Office Supplies, \$2,230.02 from Gas and Oil, \$1,414.69 from Tires and Tubes, \$1,811.95 from Other Garage, and \$100.00 from Official Records to Improvements. A motion was made by Spence and seconded by Dunavan to approve the transfer. All in favor, motion carried.
Transfer. Park & Recreation requesting to transfer \$40.00 from Printing Other Than O.S., \$100.00 from Publication of Legal Fees, \$500.00 from Legal Services/Fees, \$54.00 from Postage, \$3,810.39 from Electricity, and \$3,714.50 from Water & Sewage to Improvements. A motion was made by James and seconded by Dreher to approve the transfer. All in favor, motion carried.
Transfer. Certified Shares requesting to transfer \$1,342.00 from DVR to CH Deputy. A motion was made by Bush and seconded by Dunavan to approve the transfer. All in favor, motion carried.
- VIII. **Additional Appropriations.**
The Council considered additional appropriation requests as published. President John Michael Major reviewed the appropriations from the written requests submitted by Auditor Amy Tolbert. Thus, the following ordinance was adopted:
WHEREAS: it has been determined it is now necessary to appropriate more money than was appropriated in the annual budget for 2019, BE IT ORDAINED, by the County Council of Vermillion County Indiana, for the expenses of said county government, the following additional sums of money are hereby appropriated and ordered set out of the funds herein specified, subject to the law governing the same:

FUND/DEPT	AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT APPROVED
Economic Development	\$3,700.00	\$3,700.00

Lynn Brewer picked up health insurance mid-year when her husband Michael Brewer left the county to take another job. A motion was made by Dunavan and

seconded by Bush to approve the additional for Economic Development. All in favor, motion carried.

FUND/DEPT	AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT APPROVED
County Clean-Up	\$3,217.13	\$3,217.13

For fall clean up event. A motion was made by Dreher and seconded by Spence to approve the additional for County Clean-Up. All in favor, motion carried.

FUND/DEPT	AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT APPROVED
Cum Reassessment	\$46,000.00	\$46,000.00

The Assessor did not budget enough money for the contract for 2019. A motion was made by Spence and seconded by Dunavan to approve the additional for Cum Reassessment. All in favor, motion carried.

FUND/DEPT	AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT APPROVED
PHPER	\$200.00	\$200.00

This is to put the money back into the line item. Conference was not attended due to illness. A motion was made by James and seconded by Bush to approve the additional for PHPER. All in favor, motion carried.

IX. Open Issues

- a. **Jail Renovation/Expansion.** Phelps reported to the Council that Commissioner Tim Yocum said they would have a jail committee meeting in a couple of weeks. He said there should be something related to the jail back in front of the council by their next meeting.
- b. **Parke-Vermillion Humane Society Update/Parke County.** Major said he met with Mark Southwick from Parke-Vermillion Humane Society and that a letter had been sent to Parke County officials asking them to increase funding for the Parke-Vermillion Humane Society.

X. New Business

- a. **Ambulance.** Illiana EMS Director Eric Shaughnessy provided information on response times to the Council. Costello asked about the proposed contract amendments that Shaughnessy had discussed with the Commissioners, Costello asked if the new contract would be a 5-year extension, and Shaughnessy said it would. He said the Commissioners had requested information early in 2019 about adding a third ambulance that would be manned 24-7, and that he had originally provided information March. Shaughnessy said the Commissioners asked for information regarding the 5-year extension, with a third ambulance located in the central area of the county. Shaughnessy said that the commissioners are undecided where it will be located.
- b. **Salary Ordinance – Amended Salary Ordinance.** Tolbert requested the council to approve an amendment to the salary ordinance, regarding the salary paid to the person who records the Commissioners and Council meetings. It was stated that Stephanie Simpson has been doing both, but recently it was decided that Simpson would continue recording the Commissioners and Annie Wickens would be recording the Council. The proposed salary amendment would have paid Simpson \$1,200 of the \$1,700 allowed for those duties, while Wickens would receive \$500 for the Council meetings. Dreher said that Simpson would receive more money for meetings that took place while she was already at work, while Wickens would have to come back in the evening and be paid less. Dreher suggested the pay be split evenly. Tolbert stated that the Commissioners have more meetings and more business, so the person recording their meetings has always been paid more, but said the Council could split it evenly if they wanted

to. A motion was made by Dunavan and seconded by Dreher to split the recording salary evenly with each being paid \$850. All in favor, motion carried.

Craig stated that the hourly rate for the Sheriff's department needs amended. He said the salary is the same, the hourly rate needs corrected. A motion was made by Dunavan and seconded by Costello to amend the salary ordinance for the sheriff's department. All in favor, motion carried.

Assessor Paige Kilgore asked about the pay increases given for 2020. She questioned why the child support employee for the prosecutor is being paid more than some elected officials in the courthouse, and received a \$5,612 raise, when the Council's decision had been to give everyone a \$1,000. Dunavan suggest that the Council made a mistake during the budget hearings.

It was explained that Aukerman had asked either for a second secretary, or for that employee to be listed as a paralegal and paid \$40,000. Dreher said the Council definitely made a mistake, and noted that they rush through the budgets. He also said he thinks the Assessor's deputy should go back to being paid from the general fund, instead of reassessment funds. Major said the problem could be solved by allowing each office a lump sum for salaries, and letting the officeholders decide how much each person is paid. Spence said no to that suggestion, and Dunavan said that he felt that we should look at all options and that he wasn't sure the Council would want to decide who should be paid what. Costello asked if an independent salary study had ever been conducted, and said some counties use them to solve such issues. It was stated that one has never been done. Becky Holbert said that if the raise for the paralegal position was based on education, there were several other employees who have bachelor's degrees or higher. James asked if the raise came with any extra hours or duties, and was told that it did not.

Wendy Farley from the Health Department who previously worked in the courthouse said that she has worked for the county for 25 years, and has never made as much as the employee in question is making. She said this situation is very unsettling. She asked what about experience? She said there is testing I have to do for my job. She said you can't necessarily walk into an office and do the job because you've got a degree, it's experience. She said she wishes they would look at the time we've served as employees, and she said she speaks for several of them. Treasurer Florinda Pruitt said that office holders should be informed of the salary decision once they are made. There was considerable discussion on the salary ordinance. Kilgore asked if the situation would remain as it was for the year, and Craig told the Council that they can change the salary ordinance at any time, but if salaries are increased, they may have to take action, such as additional appropriations, to fund them. The Council decided to not take any action until their next meeting, and they requested that Prosecutor Bruce Aukerman attend the next meeting to discuss the matter further.

- c. **Alcohol/Drug Offender Recovery Program – Sheriff, Prosecutor, Judge.** Sheriff Mike Phelps, Prosecutor Bruce Aukerman and Judge Jill Wesch all spoke to the council along with Marty Norman and several men who had successfully completed the Truman House's program. Phelps told the council that we've got to do something differently that we've been doing. Norman told the council that when he started the Truman House three years ago, he had no idea what it would turn into. He said he decided to buy a house to help a couple of guys. Norman said now the program has three houses, 30 residents, and alumni that

could fill up the courthouse. He said these are guys that have been in and out of recovery houses, jail, prison, until they found the Truman House. Norman said he will take the worse of the worse, because that's what I was, the guys that the county has given up on, that their families have given up on. He said the plan would be to evaluate inmates to see who would be a good fit for the Truman House, and using \$60,000 of funds received from the state for housing Level 6 Felony inmates at the jail, to establish a fourth Truman House in Terre Haute, that would be set aside exclusively for Vermillion County offenders, to move those offenders into the house, and help them rebuild their lives. Norman said the goal is to help people realize that there is life outside addiction. He said people leave the program with jobs, driver's license, relationships mended, and less likely to reoffend or relapse.

It was stated that a committee made up of staff from the sheriff's department, court, probation office and prosecutor's office, along with jail mentors, would recommend inmates for the program, and they would have to be approved to leave jail and go to the Truman House by the judge. Aukerman said he indicated the men who attended, and told the council that if he showed them the men's book-in sheets, and asked them to determine who was who, it would not be possible because the change is so dramatic. Aukerman stated that there would be people convicted of certain types of crimes like child molesters who happen to also be addicts, as an example, who would not be able to get out of jail as part of the program. He said he does not believe something like this exists anywhere else. He said Marion County, Hendricks County and a few others are leasing beds but that he is not aware of another county that has set aside a house like this for its own people. Aukerman said the court, sheriff's office, probation office and prosecutor are all speaking with one voice on this issue. He said that one reason Norman's program works is the requirements of those who are placed there. He said they are required to get and hold jobs, to be productive members of society, and to follow rules. Aukerman said Norman's place is the most successful place we deal with. They have zero tolerance for drug use in the house.

Deputy Prosecutor Nina Alexander said the proposal is a recognition that what we've done in the past has not worked very well. It's a circle, in and out jail, in and out of jail. She said if inmates are successful in the program, when they come back to the county for resolution of their cases, the resolution would not include any further incarceration. She said it's a simple concept, and thinks it's worth the money at least to attempt.

Judge Jill Wesch said she is very much in support of the program.

It was stated that the appropriation of the \$60,000 will be brought up for approval in January, but the council wanted to express their support for the program, so that Norman can begin the process of locating and establishing the house. A motion was made by Spence and seconded by James to approve supporting Marty Norman's Truman House program. All in favor, motion carried.

- d. **West Central Indiana Economic Development District – Introduction of New Executive Director Ryan Keller.** Ryan Keller introduced himself as the new Executive Director for West Central Indiana Economic Development District. He spoke about the various services offered by West Central Indiana Economic Development District.
- e. **2020 Meeting Dates.** The Council discussed the 2020 meeting dates and decided to keep the meeting dates on the 2nd Monday of each month but decided to

change the budget hearings to two days. A motion was made by James and seconded by Dreher to approve the meeting dates for the Council for 2020. All in favor, motion carried.

f. 2020 Appointments.

Area Plan Commission. The council received applications from Mike Reed and Scott Nogle. A motion was made by Dreher and seconded by Dunavan to appoint Scott Nogle to the Area Plan Commission.

E911 Board. A motion was made by James and seconded by Bush to reappoint Robert Spence to the E911 Board. All in favor, except Spence who abstained.

Economic Development Commission. A motion was made by Bush and seconded by Dunavan to reappoint Randy Dreher to the Economic Development Commission/Council. All in favor, except Dreher who abstained.

Economic Development Council. A motion was made by Dunavan and seconded by Dreher to reappoint Tom Milligan to the Economic Development Council. All in favor, motion carried.

It was stated that Basil Ave did not turn in an application or letter and no other applications were received. The Council decided to table the appointment until the next meeting.

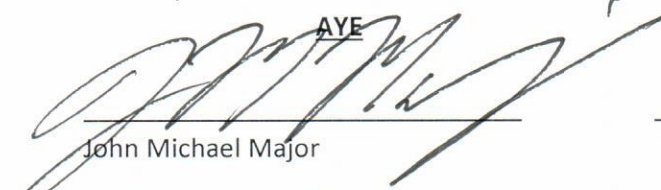

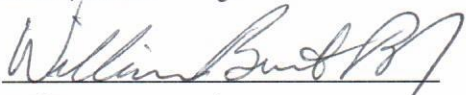
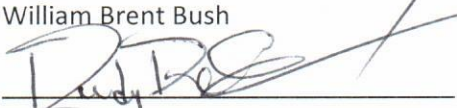

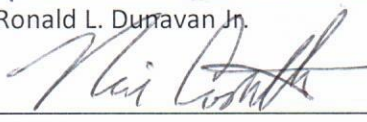
PTABOA. A motion was made by Spence and seconded by Bush to appoint Pat Richey to the PTABOA. All in favor, motion carried.

Redevelopment Commission. A motion was made by Spence and seconded by Bush to reappoint both Ashley James and Ginger Corado to the Redevelopment Commission. All in favor, except James who abstained.

- g. Public Comment.** Paul Lee questioned the proposed extension to the ambulance contract. He said he didn't understand how a \$3,000,000 contract was being considered with no bids. Costello asked if he had talked to the Commissioners, Lee said he wasn't able to attend their meeting. Costello said they brought it to us, we just fund it. Lee said he personally felt that it wasn't right to extend the contract that long. For that kind of money, others might want to bid. Dreher said he agreed, and that he didn't feel anything should be done until the contract is up for renewal, and can be put out for bids.

XI. Adjourn

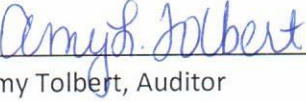
Having no further business to come before the Council, the motion was made to adjourn by Bush, seconded by Dunavan. All in favor, motion carried.

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>
 _____ John Michael Major	_____
 _____ Ashley James	_____
 _____ William Brent Bush	_____
 _____ Randy Dreher	_____
 _____ Ronald L. Dunavan Jr.	_____
 _____ Neil Costello	_____



Robert Spence

ATTEST:



Amy Tolbert, Auditor