

**RE: Additional Appropriations-Treasurer
Coroner Training
Cumulative jail fund
Jail annual inspection
Jail central control system
Inmate medical contract
Soil & water grant/payroll
Assisting with Assessments
Health Insurance Renewal**

Minutes-Vermillion County Council April 14, 2008

The Vermillion County Council met in the Commissioners Courtroom, Courthouse, Newport, Indiana.

Council President John Yoho called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge to the Flag.

Roll call was taken: Present were John Yoho, Mike Carty, Lavonna Mattick, Randy Dreher, John Cheesewright, Mike Costello, Mike Reed, Attorney Don Darnell, Auditor Sherrie Koma and Deputy Auditor Amy Tolbert.

Cheesewright made a motion to approve the minutes of the March meeting, seconded by Dreher. All were in favor.

Additional Appropriations.

Treasurer Phyllis Orman was present and asked the Council for an additional appropriation to purchase a new printer. She said that her entire term as Treasurer, she has never asked for an additional and that she needs the printer to print tax statements. Orman is requesting \$5,491.00 to purchase the printer. She stated that the current printer has been in use since 2001 and is in need of replacement. Dreher made a motion to allow, seconded by Costello. All were in favor.

Coroner Darren Tucker addressed reports that he had not fulfilled required qualifications for his office by completing a required training program. He explained that he had completed the required course and test, but had to wait for the opportunity to attend an autopsy before he could fulfill all the requirements. He has also done this and all of the necessary paperwork has been sent to the state. The Council had been advised that they should not pay Tucker until he fulfilled the training requirements, but because he has completed the requirements, and it is only a matter of waiting for final approval from the state, the council agreed to continue paying him.

Sheriff Bob Spence was present to discuss several issues. He first asked the council to consider reactivating the cumulative jail fund, which has a balance of \$158,000.00, and was recently identified by financial consultant, Melissa Ambre, as one of several inactive funds that could be declared dormant, and their balance moved to the county general fund.

Spence said the money in the fund could still be used for larger expenses at the jail which exceed the annual budget, and asked the council to consider reinstating a small tax rate to put money into the fund, and investing it in a manner that would draw a maximum amount of interest, so the funds would be available if needed.

Council Attorney Don Darnell said that by doing that, it would be similar to a Rainy Day fund and that the county already has such a fund and it is only allowed to have one. He said the only way it would be possible would be to reinstate a tax rate to do so and then a need would have to be demonstrated before the state would approve it.

It was mentioned that the financial consultant, Melissa Ambre, is supposed to be at the May Council meeting and questions about this matter will be addressed then.

Spence also reported that the jail had recently completed its annual inspection and the inspector said it was probably the best jail he had ever seen. Spence said the jail was described as clean, neat and well kept.

Spence then told the council that a central control system at the jail is failing and on its last legs. He said the system, which controls lights, cameras, communications, doors and gates at the jail, was a 13-year-old model when it was installed, and has lasted since the jail was built. There are things wrong with the system that cannot be repaired, and because it is outdated, finding parts is expensive. Recently, it was necessary to obtain parts from England at a cost of about \$10,000.00.

Spence said a few weeks ago the system failed late in the evening and unlocked several doors, including cell doors. Spence said the problem did not turn into a major issue because the main cell bay doors were not unlocked, meaning inmates could not actually escape, but if they had gotten out there would have been a serious problem, with only 1 female and 1 male jailer and 91 inmates. Spence said if they problem had not been fixed, it would have been necessary to move the entire jail population, which would mean the county would lost \$35.00 per day for each of the 36 DOC inmates and would have to pay another facility the same amount to house approximately 45 county inmates.

Spence said the county does not have to replace the system now, but it will have to be done eventually, and will continue to be costly to repair in the meantime. Spence said he received a quote from Southwest Communications, the company that installed the present system, which would cost \$158,000.00, but would include all new cameras. Spence said the new cameras are not needed. He said without the cameras, the cost would be \$98,000.00 plus \$15,000.00 for some camera repair work that is needed.

Carty asked if Spence had received any other quotes, and Spence said no. Carty said it's always a good idea to check on options. Spence said he did receive one other quote for over \$200,000.00. The councilmen asked Spence to bring more details of the proposal to the next meeting, and prepare an additional appropriation to spend the money, which will probably come from the balance of the cumulative jail fund.

Spence also asked for the council to approve the funding for the renewal of the inmate medical health insurance contract with Health Professionals. This contract had been approved for three years by the Commissioners last week, pending Council approval. It was explained that the three year contract will be for \$78,492.33, which will add an additional five hours of nursing services each week at the jail. This amount will be prorated for the remainder of 2008, with a maximum of 3 percent increase in 2009 and 4 percent in 2010.

Carty asked if the county had a means of getting out of the contract if they are not satisfied, and it was explained that the contract includes provisions for canceling without cause or with cause.

Spence said that inmates receiving care pay a \$7 co-payment, which goes into the commissary fund. Costello suggested that the \$7 go back into the Health Professionals fund to help cover the cost of the contract, and Spence said that could be done.

Spence said the amount needed for 2008 is within the approved budget, no vote was needed from them. They did give their approval though.

Les Zimmerman spoke on behalf of the Vermillion County Soil & Water Conservation District, asking that the Auditor be allowed to serve as paymaster for the purpose of paying an employee whose salary will be covered by a watershed grant that they received. Zimmerman explained that the SWCD would pay the county for wages, and receive payment back from the grant. He said all he is asking is for Koma to assume the clerical responsibility of issuing the checks. Zimmerman said the same process was followed in the past with a summer intern, and as he did at the time, he will prepare a memorandum of understanding explaining the agreement between SWCD and the county for the council's approval. Costello made a motion to allow, seconded by Cheesewright. All were in favor. Zimmerman said the start date would be May 1, 2008.

Ed Bish was present to discuss assisting with Assessment, along with Pat Richey. He said his business is from Rochester Indiana. He said he could assist with the 200 residential parcels at \$22.50 per parcel and the 4 Industrial/Commercial parcels at \$90.00 per parcel. Richey said the Township Assessors would relinquish their duties on July 1, 2007, leaving the assessing of the entire county to the 3 employees in the Assessor's office. Bish said the total cost of \$4860.00 does include mileage, overhead, etc. There are no hidden costs. Richey said they had money in the Cumulative Reassessment to pay for this cost. She also said when the Township offices close, their money would be transferred to her budget.

Pierre Fox of Miles & Finch Insurance spoke about the upcoming employee health insurance renewal. Fox said the county had over \$1 million in claims on its top 18 people as far as claim history, and the company spent more in claims than it collected in premiums this year.

He said the county was rejected by seven other carriers, who chose not to even submit proposals for insurance, due to ongoing conditions.

Fox said in order to make sure the county's portion of insurance premiums remains under the \$850,000 that has been budgeted, they would have to increase the employees contribution from 6% of the total premium to 12%, doubling the employee's portion. This has been discussed in prior years, but no action had been taken. Employees will have the option of paying more and keeping the current \$250 deductible, or changing to the \$500 deductible. Cheesewright said he didn't think there would be too much complaint from the employees if we double what they pay.

The council agreed that the costs could not exceed the amount budgeted due to the county's financial situation. Fox said he has spoke with payroll Clerk, Becky Julian, and they discussed taking the insurance out twice a month instead of once a month. Fox said he would be back tomorrow night to discuss these issues with the Commissioners and that he thought they county offered their employees a very good plan.

Costello made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mattick, all were in favor.

Read in full and approved by the Vermillion County Council on the 14th day of May 2008.

John Yoho

Mike Carty

Lavonna Mattick

Randy Dreher

John Cheesewright

Mike Costello

Mike Reed

Attest: _____
Sherrie A. Koma, Auditor