

Vermillion County Council Meeting Agenda/Minutes

Wednesday November 13, 2013

6:30 pm

Commissioners Courtroom, Courthouse, Newport, Indiana

- I. Call to order Council. President Mike Carty called the meeting to order.
- II. Roll call. Present were Mike Carty, Jim McLain, Milisa Carty, Randy Dreher, Mike Costello, Jill Wesch, Attorney Don Darnell, Auditor Phyllis Orman and First Deputy Amy Tolbert. Brent Bush was absent.
- III. Approval of minutes from last meeting. Mike Carty noted some changes that needed made to the minutes. The health dept. transfer listed \$100 but should be \$1,000 and it was seconded by McLain not Wesch. There were also 3 other instances where the person who seconded motions were incorrect. Costello made a motion to allow the minutes with the changes mentioned, seconded by Milisa Carty. All were in favor.
- IV. Transfer of funds
 - a.) 1000 County General/Extension. \$3,000 from Postage to Office Supplies. Mike Carty said Rebecca Holbert had called him and explained that they are doing most of their mailings via email and do not need as much postage. Costello made a motion to allow, seconded by Wesch.
 - b.) 1000 County General/Parks & Recreation. \$6,294.81 from machines and equipment to grounds. Costello asked Ira Jones what the transfer was for. Jones said they are going to purchase some equipment. Mike Carty said the transfer is taking it from equipment to grounds. Jones said no they were transferring it into equipment to purchase equipment. Costello explained that the transfer before them was from equipment to grounds. Jones said he has a feeling that it got mixed up. Mike Carty asked what kind of equipment they planned on buying. Jones said they planned on buying some stump removal equipment. He said they have rented stump grinders in the past for \$250 per day. Mike Carty suggested they find out exactly what the transfer was supposed to be before approving anything. Costello asked if they were going to purchase anything else and Jones said they were going to purchase some sealing equipment for the basketball and tennis courts. Dreher moved to table it until next month. Mike Carty advised Jones to include a list of the planned purchases with the request.
- V. Additional Appropriations
 - a.) 0052 Area Plan Commission. \$1,500.00 for advertising the legal notice of public hearing on the proposed N-1 multi-use district amendment to the Vermillion County Zoning Ordinance. Mike Carty stated this was tabled last month. Penney Barton was not present to discuss the request. Wesch moved to table it until next month.

- b.) 1000 County General/Sheriff. \$14,472.00 for the county share of court costs collected by the clerk to be paid into the Sheriff's pension trust. Orman said Sheriff Spence called and said Mike Phelps would be attending the meeting in his place. Mike Phelps was not present. Dreher made a motion to allow, seconded by Costello. All were in favor.

VI. Open issues

- a) Comp Hours. Mike Carty stated the dollar amount on comp hours went down \$2,000.00 from last month. He said everyone seems to be working them down for the most part.

VII. New business

- a) 2014 Salary Ordinance. Clerk Florinda Pruitt said she spoke with the commissioners at their meeting and said she wanted to run it by the council as well. She said they have a top salary that they can pay out and that is set by the council in the form of the salary ordinance and budgets. She said there has been talk for several years about starting new people at a lower salary depending on qualifications and then building them up over time. She said she has an opening in her office and will be hiring soon. She said she may choose to start the new employee at a lower salary. She said she would like the councils input. She said it is not something she wants to drag out for years and stated the lower pay may only be for the probationary period, that it will depend on the person and how quickly they learn. Pruitt said there is nothing in the handbook about it but they have talked about it for years. Mike Carty said it is not unusual to see a new person coming in paid less than someone who has been here for years. He said it makes sense to do that but the problem is we haven't done it in the past and we have no policy for it. He added that what if in 6 months the person knows as much as the others and then the council does not allow that person the raise. Pruitt said she would like to see it totally at her discretion. Dreher said he thinks it's a good idea but would like them to all sit down and work out a policy. He also stated if they are going to do it, it should be done throughout the county not just the clerk's office. Costello said they tried to do it with the Sheriff's Dept but can never seem to remember every year, who gets what. Dreher suggested they sit down with the commissioners and office holders and discuss it. Pruitt said that is the thing, they have talked about it but never started it. Mike Carty said he thought there was nothing, from a legal standpoint, if they approve the salary ordinance, that says they can't pay below what was budgeted. Darnell agreed. Mike Carty said he agreed with Dreher, they need to set policy and have it in the handbook. Dreher said this should have been discussed by the handbook committee and Mike Carty agreed. Mike Carty said it can't be answered tonight so he suggested they table it. Pruitt said she is going to hire someone by Nov. 21st. Mike Carty said she could go ahead and start someone and pay them what she wanted as long as it didn't exceed the advertised amount. Darnell said if she is going to do that she needs to document what the deal is. Costello asked Bob Harris with Governmental Consulting what other counties do. Harris said most counties have documentation in the form of a county policy. Mike Carty suggested they assign it to the handbook committee. Dreher asked what the commissioners thought about it and Crossley said they decided it was her office and to let her make her own choice. Mike Carty said he thinks the office holder should have the discretion and they need to figure out how to put it in the handbook. Mike Carty said they can't answer it tonight but told Pruitt that what she talked about made sense and if she wants to do then she should do it and they will figure out how to make it right at some point. Pruitt said it just came up because she was getting

ready to hire someone but said there are more issues and one issue is that in other counties not all office holders make the same amount of money and we do. Harris said in most cases, the counties they deal with, most office holders make the same amount of money. Pruitt asked how many counties they work with and Harris said 9. Pruitt said she personally knows 91 other clerks and most counties do not pay the way we do. She also stated she put in an extra 350 hours last year and that she is sure other offices did to but knows some did not. Mike Carty said it's called management and the federal and state government doesn't know how to do that. He said she is scratching the surface of a significant issue to be discussed but we can't answer it tonight. He said they will start the process by holding a handbook committee meeting and hope that it will move forward from there. Mike Carty told Pruitt it was well within her authority to start a new person lower than what is on the salary ordinance. Costello advised that she have it in writing so that person will understand that they are being paid less. Pruitt said documentation is not a problem. Mike Carty said we still need to adopt the 2014 salary ordinance. Dreher made a motion to approve the 2014 salary ordinance, seconded by McLain. All were in favor.

- b) Vermillion Library Board Appointments. The Council received two letters from the Vermillion Public Library. The first one was to re-appoint Sue Meyers to the Vermillion Public Library board. The letter stated they were unable to find her paperwork and asked that the council appoint her so the paperwork can be filed properly. The second letter is to appoint Janine Ostrum. The letter stated that Ostrum is from Perrysville and appointing her would help diversify the board by representing all townships of the county. Costello made a motion to appoint Sue Meyers and Janine Ostrum, seconded by Jill Wesch.
- c) Funding for the jail sewer. Crossley said they were present to discuss the jail sewer funding with the council. They will present a formal request for the funds at the council's December meeting. There was some discussion on the cash and investment balances in various funds. Crossley said he thought the sewer project would cost around \$363,000.00. Costello said part of him says to use Rainy Day money but then part of him says that can be used for a myriad of other things. He said Cumulative Capital Development is for projects such as this. Mike Carty said he agrees. He said also there is money sitting in other funds and they will get to that when they talk about the financial report. He said we will come in under budget this year and added that he thinks the proper place to put it is Cumulative Capital Development. He said that is the purpose of that fund and they can fund it with tax money. Crossley said they will present the additional appropriation request at next month's meeting. Dreher asked when the project would be started and completed. Crossley said he did not know, they were just waiting on the money and hopes they get started soon because they are having issues at the jail. Milisa Carty asked if the sewer would take the Humane Shelter and Highway Garage and Crossley said just the Highway Garage. The Humane Shelter has their own.
- d) Courthouse Sewer. Crossley advised the council that the sewer hookup at the courthouse will probably be an expensive job because everything is under concrete.
- e) Governmental Consulting Services Financial Report. Executive Director Bob Harris was present to discuss the October 6, 2013 report with the council. Harris said they have been told, but he will tell them again, the county funds look very good. He said financially every fund looks very good with their cash balances. He said he thinks that is a credit to all of you on the council as well as the Auditor. You do a wonderful job and the

taxpayers of this county should be proud of the good work you are doing. He said you all know that we've got a 2.6% increase in the growth factor for 2014. He said that means you will see an additional \$160,000.00 to \$170,000.00 when you work that budget. He asked Orman if she has heard anything from the DLGF yet and Orman said they are working on the budgets because they requested an advertisement be re-uploaded as it was unreadable. Harris said then they are probably close to finalizing everything so she should have it by the end of the year. Harris said with the extra revenue they will get it will probably be directly affiliated with the general fund. Harris said the general fund is in excellent shape. He the operating/cash balance is almost equal to the entire budget. He said the Cumulative Capital Development fund rate remains at 2 cents and Cumulative Bridge is at 3.71 cents as it has been. Harris said he went on-line and looked at the new assessed values and it looks like they are down about 37 million dollars. He asked if that was the one the DLGF certified because he does not trust that number until he actually sees the paperwork. Orman said she has not seen the actual figure yet. Harris said he got the information from gateway and if the number is right the Cumulative Capital Development fund and the Cumulative Bridge fund will probably take a little bit of a hit. He said this year the Cumulative Capital Development fund had about \$162,000.00 in property tax and if that new assessed value is correct it will probably cost that fund around \$7,500.00. This year the Cumulative Bridge fund was right at \$300,000.00 in property tax and if the new assessed value is correct it will probably cost that fund around \$14,000.00. He said the next fund, the Health fund, is a very solid fund. The budget and levy remains constant. He said the spending is similar to the general fund; they never spend 100% so it's building up cash value. It's a very healthy fund. Local Roads and Streets fund and the Highway fund. He said they are what they are. He said none of their counties get enough money and they are at the mercy of that state. He said the funds do look good and the Highway does have some investment money. He said the last fund; the Cumulative Reassessment fund has new legislation. He said in the past the DLGF has been responsible for certifying a levy that you have to apply to your Reassessment fund. That has been changed now and DLGF is no longer doing that. He said the council gets to determine how much of a levy you put on the Reassessment fund. Harris said the last few years it's been about \$99,000.00 in property tax levy on that fund. He said they have the opportunity to raise or lower that levy. He said that fund has quite a bit of money in it. He said they will probably want to take a look at adjusting that levy going forward. He said if they free up money in that fund it will give them more money in the General fund. Mike Carty asked if they could go backwards if needed and Harris said yes. Mike Carty said they need to do that at the next budget process. Costello asked if GCS could help them with it. Harris said he thinks he and Orman could work on it. He said you look at what the last reassessment cost you and with trending, you know what the expenses are year to year. You know what the last reassessment cost you and we don't want to get below that amount. He said you want to make sure that fund is always healthy enough to take those expenses. Costello asked if the Assessor had to sign off on the lowering of the levy and Harris said they used to but now it's solely up to the council. Harris then offered to take any questions they may have. Mike Carty said he didn't have any questions but had a few comments. He said he would like to see the comparison, how they performed...he said what they are given is the 10, 11, 12, and 13 actual budget and that is good information but the key to him is how did they perform, actually, with those budget

numbers. Harris said they could do that. He said the report is excellent and the Office Holders have all done very well. Harris said the mere fact that you rarely spend your total appropriations is to be commended. He said doing so builds up the cash balances. Mike Carty said a good example is when the Commissioners asked for the \$363,000.00 to fund the jail sewer. He said that amount is left in the general fund from appropriations not spent so could effectively fund the project from the general fund if needed. He said but he thinks that is the wrong thing to do because they have the money in the Cumulative Capital Development fund and that is what it is there for.

- f) Highway Equipment. Costello said he thought they discussed looking into highway equipment, the cost to fix the equipment compared to the cost of leasing new equipment. He asked if they got any of that information. Milisa Carty asked Bob Dixon if they got estimates on repairs and Dixon said he thought it was around \$3,000 or \$4,000. He said he thought they have already leased another one and took the money and bought a backhoe.
- g) January 2014 meeting. Mike Carty asked that they hold their first meeting of the year on the first Monday January 6, 2014 instead of the second. He said he will be gone on the second Monday. The Council agreed to meet to on the first Monday in January 2014. Pruitt asked if there was any chance that the council would meet two times a month instead of just once. Mike Carty said they can meet anytime they want to. Pruitt asked if they could go to two set meetings a month like the Commissioners do. Mike Carty said why. Tolbert said the Commissioners have to meet every other week for payroll and claim purposes, that is why they have the extra meetings. Pruitt said if you miss something you have to wait a whole month to discuss it. Mike Carty said if there is something urgent they can hold special meetings but he is not going to sit up here two times a month, they have meetings now that last less than 30 minutes. He said it just doesn't make sense.

VIII. Adjournment. Costello made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Milisa Carty.

Read in full and approved by the Vermillion County Council on the 9th day of December 2013.

Michael Carty

Jim McLain

Randy Dreher

Michael Costello

William Brent Bush

Jill Wesch

Milisa Carty

Attest: _____
Phyllis Orman, Auditor