

Vermillion County Council & Commissioners
Special Joint Meeting Minutes

July 17, 2017

6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Courtroom, 2nd Floor, Courthouse, Newport, IN

- I. Call to order. The Council and Commissioners convened in a joint special meeting on July 17, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.
- II. Roll call. Council members present were Brent Bush, Ashley James, Randy Dreher, Jim McLain, President Jill Wesch, Mike Carty, Bob Spence and Council attorney Don Darnell. Commissioners present were Harry Crossley and President Tim Wilson. Tim Yocum was absent. Also present was Auditor Amy Tolbert and first deputy Auditor Stephanie Simpson.
- III. LIT Tax. Sheriff Mike Phelps presented information to the council and commissioners regarding the cost of adding three additional deputies and a secretary to his department. The information submitted included salaries, benefits, new police vehicles, clothing allowance and supervisor's raise for jail commander, assistant jail commander and chief deputy. The total proposed is \$343,546 from Sheriff Mike Phelps for his department. Phelps said two of the new deputies would be assigned as detectives. He said calls are going up every year and they are paying guys overtime to complete drug busts that a detective could take over. Phelps also said that the sheriff's department currently has one secretary for 50 people, including deputies and jail staff, and she is completely overwhelmed.
Mark O'Heir said he has proposed having one fire station in each township that is manned 24 hours a day in order to allow for quicker response to medical calls and fires. He said the cost would be around \$200,000 to have someone stationed at each township, which would cover three full-time firefighters, plus part-time people to cover days off, based on a \$35,000 salary.
Clinton Fire Chief Chris Strohm stated that the fire departments cannot operate at a higher level of care than the ambulance service, because a patient can't be turned over to a lower level of care from a higher one. Strohm also said that even manning the fire stations during the weekdays, when many firefighters and first responders are working, would be helpful.
Matt Eckerle of Umbaugh and Associates was present to answer questions. He said that in order for the tax to go into effect October 1, and begin being paid to the county in 2018, it would need to be put in place by August 31. Eckerle explained that once it is in place, the county council can make changes to the allocation each year if they determine it is necessary.
Carty stated that the county's money from certified shares taxes could be used to pay the cost of the ambulance service contract each year, which would, in turn, free up the general fund money of approximately \$290,000 that is budgeted for the ambulance service. It was also stated that the council can direct some local income tax money to property tax relief.
Councilman Randy Dreher said he would like to see the bulk of any tax increase go to public safety and certified shares
Carty asked if the county could use the taxes to begin setting aside money for expansion or replacement of the Vermillion County Jail, and Eckerle said that they could. He also told the Council that the county could pursue special legislation to create a tax specifically to pay for the jail, which was the most popular way of funding jails in recent years.

After some discussion about possible ways of allocating the tax money, the council agreed on proposing an increase to 1.5%, with .75% going to public safety, .5% to certified shares, and .25% to economic development.

A motion was made by Randy Dreher to set a public hearing on August 24, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. to raise the Local Income Tax to 1.5%, seconded by Brent Bush. All in favor, motion carried.

IV. Adjournment. A motion was made by Randy Dreher and seconded by Jim McLain to adjourn. All in favor, motion carried.

AYE

NAY

Jill Wesch, President

Mike Carty, Vice President

Brent Bush

Ashley James

Jim McLain

Randy Dreher

Bob Spence

ATTEST:

Amy Tolbert, Auditor

Tim Wilson

Harry Crossley

Tim Yocum

Attest:_____
Amy Tolbert, Auditor