

**COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 12, 2004**

The meeting was called to order by President, Brent Waltz.

**I. ROLL CALL**

The following members were present: R. J. McConnell, Ron West, Paul Reed, Richard Mason, Charlie Canary and Keith Wright. John P. Wilson was present as the Council's Attorney.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. INVOCATION**

**IV. APPROVAL OF 1/12/04 AGENDA**

Mr. Waltz added the following to the agenda:

- Maintenance (transfer)
- Public Defenders' Fund (new business)
- Community Corrections – Flooding Report (new business)
- Hospital Task Force Update (new business)
- Bullet Proof Vests (new business)

Mr. Canary moved to approve the agenda including the additions. Mr. Reed seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

**V. APPROVAL OF 12/1/03 MINUTES**

Mr. Wright moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Mason seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**VII. NOMINATION AND ELECTION:**

**Council President**

Mr. Reed nominated Brent Waltz to serve as the 2004 Council President. Mr. Wright seconded the nomination.

Mr. West moved to close the nominations. Mr. Mason seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

The motion to elect Brent Waltz as Council President for 2004 passed unanimously.

**Council Vice-President**

Mr. Wright nominated Ron West to serve as the 2004 Vice-President. Mr. Mason seconded the nomination.

Mr. Reed moved to close the nominations. Mr. McConnell seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

The motion to elect Ron West as Council Vice-President for 2004 passed unanimously.

**VIII. APPOINTMENTS**

**Council Attorney**

Mr. Wright moved to appoint John P. Wilson as Council Attorney. Mr. Reed seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

**Alcoholic Beverage Commission Board (ABC)**

Mr. Reed moved to appoint David Pollard to the ABC for the year 2004. Mr. West seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**County Plan Commission Board**

Mr. Wright moved to appoint Richard Mason to serve on the County Plan Commission Board for 2004. Mr. Canary seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

**IX. SALARY ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS, ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS, REDUCTIONS, & TRANSFERS:**

Mr. Canary moved to approve the following requests:

**COMPUTER SERVICES – (141)**

From: #141-410.0 – Office Equipment (\$ 2,550.00)  
To: #141-380.0 – Lease Payments (new line item) \$ 2,550.00

**AUDITOR – (102)**

From: #102-112.1 – Deputy Auditor (\$ 340.00)  
To: #102-113.5 – Deputy Auditor \$ 340.00

**ELECTRONIC MAP GENERATION – (905)**

#905-210.0 – Claims \$ 14,000.00

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TRAINING GRANT – (368)**

#368-310.0 – Professional Services \$ 2,798.60

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING GRANT – (369)**

#369-310.0 – Professional Services \$ 18,916.89

**COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 12, 2004 – Cont.**  
**STATE HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT- 2003 – (371)**

#371-410.0 - Equipment \$ 380,903.53

Mr. West commented that he would rather not do transfers to keep a better picture of how much money is actually spent in each line item. Mr. Wright concurred; however, he stated that he would rather see transfers made than additional appropriations requested to keep the operating balance afloat. Mr. West agreed and added that he feels that it would be tougher for the departments to ask for the additional appropriations than to request transfer of funds, which the Council usually approves carte blanche.

Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – (127)**

Forrest Sutton, Director of Emergency Management, to request an additional appropriation for part-time help due to his Administrative Assistant being off for six weeks for medical reasons.

#127-115.0 – Part-time Clerical \$ 1,800.00

Mr. McConnell moved to approve the request as presented. Mr. Mason seconded the motion. Mr. Wright stated that he would like to see a transfer made verses an additional appropriation. Discussion was held concerning the request; Mr. Mason moved to table the request until the February Council meeting. The motion to table was seconded by Mr. Wright, and carried unanimously.

**INSPECTION FEES – (276)**

Joseph Rathz, Interim Director for Planning and Zoning, appeared to request an additional appropriation in the amount of \$10,000.00. Mr. Rathz explained that these monies would be used to replace and upgrade some of their equipment and to purchase new equipment.

Mr. Canary moved to approve the request as presented. Mr. Mason seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

#276-210.0 – Claims \$ 10,000.00

**JAIL – (124)**

Terry McLaughlin, Sheriff, appeared to request approval of the name change and salary for the following line items:

#124-127.2 – Correctional Officer to Assist. Shift Leader (\$27,136)

#124-128.3 – Assistant Shift Leader to Correction Officer (\$27,136)

Mr. Mason made a motion to approve the request as presented. Mr. Reed seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

**SUPERIOR COURT NO. 3 – (134)**

Judge, Kim VanValer Shilts, appeared to request an additional appropriation; however she stated that she could transfer the money from her Jury Expenses line item. The money is to pay for a part-time person who is helping during maternity leaves for her full-time employees.

Mr. Wright moved to approve the following transfer:

From: #134-391.0 – Jury Expenses (\$ 1,500.00 )  
To: #134-117.0 – Part-time Clerical \$ 1,500.00

Mr. Canary seconded the motion that unanimously carried.

**VICTIM ASSISTANCE/CRISIS INTERVENTION – (302)**

Wynita Worley, a representative from the Prosecutor's Office, appeared to request the following additional appropriations:

#302-110.0 – Salary Supplement \$ 2,068.09

#302-111.0 – Salary Supplement \$ 2,068.09

A motion was made by Mr. Wright to approve the request as presented. Mr. West seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**PRETRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAM – (286)**

Ms. Worley also asked for an increase in hourly wage for the position of Practicing Intern. Mr. Wright moved to approve the request as presented. Mr. McConnell seconded the motion that unanimously carried.

#286-114.2 – Practicing Intern \$9.50 to \$11.00

**PROSECUTING ATTORNEY – (108)**

Ms. Worley appeared to ask for a small salary increase for a deputy prosecutor position.

#108-113.0 – Deputy Prosecutor \$49,878 to \$50,000 \$ 122.00

Mr. Wright stated that he would like to see a transfer made to support this increase, rather than an additional appropriation made.

Mr. West moved to table the request until the February Council meeting. Mr. Wright seconded the motion, which carried six to one; Mr. Mason voted nay.



## **COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 12, 2004 – Cont.**

need to seriously consider the Wheel Tax and commented that the people he has talked to are not opposed to this tax as long as it is used for structures only (roads).

Mr. Wright felt like that as far as the surplus goes, the Council could define a maximum surplus amount. He also felt a bond issue would be a better idea than implementing a Wheel Tax. He stated that the Wheel Tax would not bring in enough annual revenue to fix the current conditions and maintain the current roads; with a bond issue, they could contract the work out and get the job done quicker. Mr. West asked how they would pay for the bond issue. Mr. McConnell noted that it was proposed by the Commissioners earlier to implement the Wheel Tax along with the bond issue and keep the Wheel Tax just long enough to pay the bond off. Mr. Reed commented that he has never seen a tax go on and was actually taken off when it was suppose to.

Mr. Waltz commented that he feels there is double standard with different levels of government. He stated that what the State predicts verses historically, the State usually under estimates the county's budget (5 to 7 %); which numbers can they count on. He also stated that he opposes the wheel tax because it is unfair; he would rather see a gasoline tax, which is more of a user tax.

Mr. West added that he has proposed to several State legislatures to allow a county, such as Johnson County, where we are experiencing growth to freeze the tax rate for a certain period of time and allow the increase in the assessed value to provide extra funding for the future (this would have to been done under the Home Rule). He also touched on the Rainy Day Fund and stated that they should build it up to help offset the property taxes.

Mr. McConnell felt that the idea of freezing the tax rate was very good. He also concurred with Mr. Waltz and wished that the State did a better job of predicting the revenue for the county. Both of these ideas would help the general fund, however, they still need to look at ways to help fund the roads. Mr. McConnell suggested that the body of the Council should make a commitment with the Board of Commissioners to work with and hire an accountant to give a breakdown of how these different taxes would impact the budget and property tax owners.

Mr. Reed asked if the Auditor's office could do this instead of hiring an outside accountant. Mrs. Jones-Matthews, Auditor, commented that due to past circumstances, it is time to hire a professional to determine what kind of situation that the county is actually in.

Discussion was held concerning a Local Gas Tax Option, realizing that the State would have to approve anything like this. It seemed to be the consensus of the Council that a Gas Tax would be a better, fairer tax than the Wheel Tax.

It was also brought up on maybe having some different speakers coming in and making presentations concerning the different options for taxes and how it would affect Johnson County.

Mr. Wright commented that all the issues discussed are good things to think about; however it will take a lot of time to actually implement anything. He stated that the budget hearings will soon be upon them and they need to start thinking ahead now. He also stated that perhaps the Commissioners should review the employee's benefits, such as insurance and personnel policies.

Mr. Waltz stated that "Discussion of Alternative Revenue Sources", be included on the February Council Agenda under "Old Business".

### **XI. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Public Defenders' Fund**

Mr. Wilson stated he was approached from the courts to draw up a Resolution clearly defining that these funds are to be used for extraordinary defense expenses. Currently, the Statute states that the Council will appropriate in addition to normal funding.

Discussion was held concerning the fees, how they were charged and how much was collected . It was the consensus of the Council that a draft of a Resolution should be done and presented at the February Council meeting.

#### **Community Corrections – Flooding Report**

Mr. McConnell gave an information report on behalf of Deana McMurray, Director of Community Corrections. She wanted to thank Jack Matthews and Joe Pitcher for their help when her facility had a sewer back up (a result of blockage from the city's sewer system); she also wanted to thank the Sheriff for his help in housing some of the work release program. Ms. McMurray had asked Mr. McConnell to pass along this information to the rest of the Council and if they had any questions to please call her at work or at home.

Mr. Wright asked if there were any repercussions the County could get back if an error had occurred with the City's sewer system to help offset the costs of clean up and restoration.

Mr. McConnell responded that Mr. Pitcher was looking into that matter.

#### **Hospital Task Force Update**

Mr. West commented that the Task Force had an initial meeting where they were instructed by the Chairman that they were strictly a "fact finding" group. They had a meeting at the hospital with the Board of Directors. Mr. West noted that Tom Jones, Chairman of the Task Force, twice asked the Hospital Board to let the press in and have an open meeting. The meeting itself mainly consisted of the Hospital conveying their contracts to the Chairman of the Task Force, who would then let the rest of the committee know the results.

**COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 12, 2004 – Cont.**

**Bullet Proof Vests**

Sheriff McLaughlin appeared before the Council to discuss the need for bullet proof vests. He stated that the vests used to last ten years, but now only last for five years. He noted that the current vests will expire in 2005. The Sheriff expressed that he has sent out bids to four companies and is asking the Council for their guidance on the purchase of these items; the cost per vest is about \$449.00 and the department will need about 100 vests.

Discussion was held about purchasing the vests all at once or half one year and half the next year. It was also brought up about buying one-fifth of the vests each year for a five year period and allocating money for that purpose. Doug Cox, Chief Sheriff Deputy, noted that he has applied for grant money to help offset the costs of the vests, however he wasn't very optimistic because the county's population was too high.

Discussion was also held pertaining to policies of the wearing of the vests. Sheriff McLaughlin stated that about forty percent of his personnel wear the vests on a regular basis. Several council members were concerned with the liability and stated that each deputy should have their own vest, whether they actually wear them or not.

Mr. Waltz thanked the Sheriff for bringing this information before the Council and stated that within the next few months, he would need to come before the Council to request an additional appropriation.

Mr. Waltz also wanted to thank the Council for their support last year and asked for their support this year. He stated that although there has been disagreement on issues, it has been done constructively and respectfully. Mr. Wright concurred.

Auditor, Brenda Jones-Matthews stated that she received notice today the county received \$1,714,541.22 to be distributed to the different taxing units. The State will be sending the distribution breakdown later in the week. The money must be deposited into a Rainy Day Fund.

There being no further business, Mr. Wright moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Mason seconded the motion that carried unanimously.

**JOHNSON COUNTY COUNCIL, JOHNSON COUNTY, INDIANA**

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**Attest:**

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**Johnson County Auditor**