

The Rush County Council met for their regular Rush County Council meeting on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. with County Council Members Charles Smith, Ralph Adams, Janet Kile, Marvin Hedrick, Scott Barnes and Carl Harcourt present. Warren Norris was present via conference call which is allowed while Rush County is still under the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency. Jodi Harr, Auditor and County Attorney Leigh Morning were in attendance.

The meeting was properly advertised with notice given to the media and public of the conference call phone number and access code.

Chairman Charles Smith called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Minutes of the March 11, 2020 regular meeting were approved with a motion from Janet Kile. Carl Harcourt seconded. Kile, Harcourt, Adams and Norris voted Aye. Hedrick abstained because he was not at the meeting on March 11, 2020. Barnes was not in attendance. Motion carried.

Minutes of the April 8, 2020 special meeting were approved with a motion from Marvin Hedrick. Ralph Adams seconded. Hedrick, Adams, Kile, Harcourt and Norris voted Aye. Barnes was not in attendance. Motion carried.

9:05 Councilman Scott Barnes arrived at the meeting

HIGHWAY

Highway Superintendent Jerry Sitton requested permission to advertise an additional appropriation for Fund 9107 Community Crossing Grant in the amount of \$871,672.78. Marvin Hedrick made the motion to approve the request. Scott Barnes seconded. Warren Norris voted Aye. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

HEALTH

The Health Department requested an additional appropriation in Fund 8111 CFDA 93.074 Ebola in the amount of \$18,193.00. This will be used to help purchase supplies for the COVID-19 pandemic. Scott Barnes made the motion to approve the additional appropriation. Carl Harcourt seconded. Warren Norris voted Aye. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

COURT SERVICES

Court Services will be collecting Juvenile Adjustment Fees when ordered by the courts. Ordinance 2020-2 establishing the Rush County Juvenile Informal Adjustment Fees Fund 2051 was presented for approval. Scott Barnes made the motion to approve. Carl Harcourt seconded. Warren Norris voted Aye. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

SALARY ORDINANCE

The State of Indiana is increasing the pay of County Prosecutor's effective July 1, 2020. In accordance with the current contract with Sheriff Allan Rice, his salary must be ½ of the Prosecutor salary. Marvin Hedrick made the motion to approve amended Salary Ordinance 2019-11 which increases the Sheriff pay to \$78,062.50 for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Ralph Adams seconded. Warren Norris voted Aye. All present were in favor. Motion carried. The additional funds will need to be transferred within the current sheriff budget.

JAIL

Discussion was held on electronic communication issues at the jail. This is an issue that was mentioned when the communication equipment was changed to ECS. County Attorney Leigh Morning suggested to the sheriff to contact CCI to see if the cost could be paid from the jail construction funds. Some believe this is an issue that should have been addressed by DLZ and CCI. Marvin Hedrick made the motion for Morning to send a letter to DLZ, CCI and ECS requesting they pay for the equipment needed to correct the problem. Ralph Adams seconded. Warren Norris voted Aye. All present were in favor. Motion carried. It is believed this should have been included as part of the jail design.

EMPLOYEE PAY SCHEDULE

Auditor Jodi Harr presented a proposal to change the pay date schedule for county employees who are currently paid to date rather than two weeks behind. Our current system can cause the appearance of ghost employment especially if someone leaves employment between the time payroll is processed and pay date. The proposal is to only pay one week on the second pay of a month that there are three pay dates. This will be done on October 16, 2020 and April 16, 2021. Scott Barnes made the motion to approve this change with the request that employees be given notice ASAP. Ralph Adams seconded. Warren Norris voted Aye. All present were in favor. Motion carried. Employees are to direct any questions to the HR Director.

FINANCIAL ADVISOR

Greg Guerrettaz will be at the June 10, 2020 meeting to discuss financial planning for the county.

COVID-19

Discussion was held on the financial impact that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on the county finances. Changes to the Motor Vehicle Highway fund receipts will be seen as early as May, 2020. We could see a reduction of up to thirty percent. The health department already operates on a tight cash budget. Their added expenses could create budget deficit issues for them. They are using as much grant money as possible to help with expenses. Due to the high rate of unemployment, the county local income tax collections will see a decrease starting in 2022. This will affect the Special Purpose LIT fund, County General, Reassessment and Health Department funds. The Auditor reminded the council that the Jail Construction Bond payments will have to be made. If there is not enough money in the Special Purpose LIT Fund to make the bond payments, it will have to be paid from county general.

It was agreed that money could be transferred from the Council Use Only Line of the Commissioners budget to pay for expenses related to the COVID-19 emergency. The hope is that this money will be reimbursed by a state grant.

2021 BUDGETS

In preparation for the department heads to start preparing for the 2021 budgets, the council advised that no additional appropriations will be granted for the remainder of 2020. They asked the departments who can contribute and pay expenses from other non-tax funds, to please do so. For example, if they can help pay for courthouse security from a non-tax fund, they should include that in their budget. The amounts of the budgets for 2021 are frozen at the amount for 2020.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding courthouse security. They would like to see one point of entry into the courthouse. The council issued a directive to the commissioners to use the council use only line to pay for panic bars to be installed on the exit doors of the courthouse. Ron Jarman and Scott Barnes will work on this. Included in the discussion was the number of security guards that would be needed for a one point entry and the purchase of a body scanner.

Ralph Adams made the motion to adjourn. Scott Barnes seconded. Warren Norris voted Aye. All present were in agreeance. Motion carried.

/Charles Smith/
Charles Smith, Chairman

/Warren Norris/
Warren Norris

/Ralph Adams/
Ralph Adams

/Janet Kile/
Janet Kile

/Marvin Hedrick/
Marvin Hedrick

/Scott Barnes/
Scott Barnes

/Carl Harcourt/
Carl Harcourt

ATTEST:

/Jodi Harr/
Jodi Harr, Auditor