

**WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL AND COMMISSIONER MEETING
MONDAY JULY 24, 2023**

Council present for the meeting: Matt Commons, Ethan Foxworthy, Sharon Hutchison, Neil Ellis, Dwain Akers, Ben Dispennett and Rusty Hart.

Commissioners present for the meeting: Clay Andrews, Craig Greenwood, John Comer.

Public: Jane Craigin, St Vincent; Elaine Beaty, One America; Brian Jordan, Park Board.

Department Head/Elected Official – Robin Weston-Hubner, Auditor; Phil Astell, EMA Director; Matt Herndon, Highway Superintendent; Jenny Hobaugh, Highway Office Manager; Anthony Pruitt, Sheriff; Debbie Hiatt, Clerk; Melissa Drake, Recorder; Randy Haddock, Surveyor; Derek Puterbaugh, VSO; John Kuiper, Animal Control/Zoning Director; Russ Haddock, Custodian; Jill Wilson, HR Director; Phil Astell, EMA Director; Stacy Drake, Extension; Jon Charlesworth, Extension; Dr. Sean Sharma, Health Officer; Laci Frodge, Health Nurse/Administrator; Jessie Kerst, Assessor; Bonie Adams; Hutner Reece, Judge.

1. The Council Meeting was called to order by Ethan Foxworthy, President of the Council.
2. The Commissioner Meeting was called to order by Clay Andrews, President of the Commissioners
3. Ethan Foxworthy, Council President led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. New Business: 2024 Budget
 - a. Highway Department: Matt Herndon, Highway Superintendent; Jenny Hobaugh, Highway Office Manager. Funds Highway, Highway Restricted, Local Road & Street, County General Highway, Cumulative Bridge, Sale of County Owned Property – Weston-Hubner explained MVH \$2,429,835 and LRS \$166,890 State revenue estimated changes. Hobaugh explained no changes to Cumulative Bridge budget as funding will be needed for Bridge #39 project County portion of Federal Grant to begin in 2027 and Local Road & Street no changes with equipment line of \$69,866 is for current leases, no change in stone budget. Hobaugh and Weston-Hubner explained moving Highway Salaries from County General to MVH Fund 1176 and moving MVH Fund 1176 employee benefits to County General Personnel to align with other departments. Hobaugh stated the 2024 Budget is under the State estimate with a 3% on salaries. Hobaugh requested an increase of \$10,000 for gas and oil over the requested. Explained the leased equipment line budget of \$168,686 with \$129,396 leased in 2024 leaving funds for 2024 equipment leases. Requested road signs line increased to \$10,000 over requested. Requested uniform budget line increase up to \$5,000 allowing for \$200/employee rather than \$100/employee. Hart inquired about the custodial budget. Hobaugh stated this is for cleaning of offices, bathrooms, etc. Weston-Hubner explained financial estimates for year end 2023 of \$200,597.91 fund 1173 and \$451,643.32 Fund 1176. Discussed fuel prices. Herndon stated currently locked in and will review again in December for 2024.
 - b. Sheriff/Jail/Public Safety; Sheriff Anthony Pruitt – Sheriff Pruitt introduced Elaine Beaty, OneAmerica, Sheriff Pension Benefit Plan. Beatty explained the plan performance. County benefits are paid through the public safety fund. Discussed increase to \$176,220 from \$164,887 requested. Sheriff fund is at \$1,658,061 currently. Sheriff Pruitt discussed increases in the sheriff and jail budget items. Weston-Hubner stated utilities are being moved to the Commissioners budget to align with all county utilities and health insurance from Public Safety to County General as well. Discussed salary increases at Indiana State Police to start \$70,000 with \$5,000 signing bonus; \$82,000 5years \$112,000 15 years. Attica Police Department increased to start \$54,293 with 6% 2024, Fountain County \$55,000 with 5% increase 2024, Vermilion County start \$53,000, Montgomery County \$60,000 – \$75,000 starting pay; Tippecanoe County \$59,600. Discussed problem with losing deputies to other Counties/State as salaries are not competitive. Meals are approximately \$2.00/meal. Foxworthy inquired of capacity and increases in future. Pruitt stated population is currently 15-20 and the camera project should be finalized in the few months which would allow for housing for other Counties which will increase commissary and county general revenue. Hutchison inquired if considering a premium in salary for the K-9 deputy. Pruitt stated not at this point in time. Commons stated a salary matrix would be helpful. Discussed the process for future.
 - c. Clerk/Election: Debbie Hiatt, Clerk – Hiatt explained changes in the 2024 budget include postage increase due to federal increase in postage and number of passport applications. Added line for help with voting machine distribution, moving and setting up election machines as very heavy. Discussed having high school kids possibly help. Comer inquired of the fund balance if rate decrease is needed to alleviate increase to County tax rate. Weston-Hubner stated the financial estimates for year end 2023 approximately \$300,000. Hiatt stated concern with fund balance being depleted over the years. Discussed postage increase possibly need more funding.
 - d. EMS Ambulance: Jane Craigin, St Vincent; Public Safety, County General – Craigin explained the EMS Statics for runs and financial data through June 2023. Discussed increased salary rate to stay competitive, supplies have increased, medications increased significantly. Requesting increase of 3% to 2024 budget of \$27,000. Comer inquired about ambulance discount possibly through Ascension. Craigin will report back. In 2025 ambulance chassis purchase keeping the current box. Craigin stated Dr. Franz is running the ER and possible EMS division in future. Ambulance repairs are 50/50 with hospital.
 - e. Treasurer: Lori Heidenreich, Treasurer – No questions. Bank fee budget increase discussed. Increase in interest earnings in 2023 due to Heidenreich working to get better rates.
 - f. Recorder: Mellisa Drake, Recorder – Drake explained changes to the 2024 budget include removing newspaper and microfilming fees as this has been discontinued.
 - g. Surveyor/Drainage Board: Randy Haddock, Surveyor; County General, Surveyor Perpetuation – Haddock stated the Drainage Board salaries will not be increased. Cornerstone progress was discussed. Haddock stated this was mandated in 1967 and County only has 28 remaining. Schneider has not increased their fees over the last 6 years. Surveyor Perpetuation revenue is collected from Recorder fees which allows for more than \$30,000/year in cornerstone work. Haddock explained Statue stated all cornerstones must be completed and then rechecked.
 - h. Discussed Jordan Creek Wind Farm Abatement appeal. Clay Andrews made a motion to pay up to \$20,000 in legal fees from JCWF Economic Development fund for attorney fees seconded by John Comer, all voted in favor. Andrews will contact Barnes and Thornburg. Ben Dispennett made a motion for additional appropriation for the attorney fees seconded Rusty Hart, all voted in favor.
 - i. Area Plan/Animal Control: John Kuiper, Zoning Director/Animal Control – Kuiper explained no major changes to the 2024 budgets. Andrews suggested adding APC and BZA board paying \$100/meeting and administrator pay

- \$3000/year. Kuiper will present administrator job description to Commissioners. Discussed \$6,000 Board pay and \$3,000 administrator pay to the zoning budget. Discussed tracking of animal control work.
- j. Warren County Health Department: Dr. Sean Sharma, Health Officer and Laci Frodge, Health Nurse; Funds 1161, 1159, 9775 – Dr. Sharma explained State is changing funding. The amount of funding will be \$130,000 - \$175,000 from State for Local Public Health Service Fund which will begin Jan 2024 replacing the legacy 1206 and 1168 funds. Health Board approved 2024 budget. Fund 1159 has all salaries with 3% increase included and fund 1161 has all other budget lines. Discussed final amount of funding for 1161 will be determined by the number of Counties that opt In. Dr. Sharma explained the State required Health Plan and Key Performance Indicators. Warren County Commissioner opted in for the State funding in July. Final opt in date is Sept 1st so final numbers will not be declared until after this date.
 - k. Assessor/Reassessment Funds: Jessie Kerst, Assessor - Kerst explained the duties of the Assessor Office and the State Code changes in future with how property will be assessed. Discussed increase of plotter printer as print head will need replaced. Hutchison requested quotes for a new printer.
 - l. Prosecuting Attorney/Title IV-D/IV-D Incentive: Bonnie Adams, Prosecuting Attorney – Adams explained the requested increase in salaries. The inability to be competitive creates issues with keeping employees and the valuable knowledge with years of experience. Caseloads have increased over 40% since 2022 with 8 new over the weekend. Requested 45,000 salary for employees. Discussed a community outreach program. Cases will increase more with a K-9 unit. Adams explained the use of Diversion Funds for body cameras this year and use for K-9 in 2024 if needed. Adams is advocating for salary increases across all other offices as she works with in the entire system. Discussed using deferral funds for salary increase if necessary.
 - m. Purdue Extension Office: Stacey Drake, Jon Charlesworth – Stacy explained the summer intern budget increased due to the only 1 summer intern this year so more workload. Basically 3% increases for salaries and all other increased budget items. Discussed the summer intern position as 2023 allowed a full-time position so no increase to summer intern budget.
 - n. Veteran Service Officer: Derek Puterbaugh, VSO – Presentation showing the duties and activity of the Veteran Office. Puterbaugh explained the hours of required training, outreach to veterans, saving the county funds with State paid gravestone markers, created newsletter with 40 currently being sent. Continued work on VSO webpage and contact info. Discussed the very low salary compared to other counties.
 - o. Custodial Care: Russ Haddock, Custodian – Haddock explained the increase in budget. Addition of \$110 to hand tools and power equipment. Discussed the building maintenance increase due increase in County buildings in past years.
 - p. Human Resources: Jill Wilson, HR Director – Wilson explained the need for technology upgrade such as projector and computer. Discussed ADA training and projects such as repairing the cannon in the front of courthouse.
 - q. Commissioner, Council – Discussed changes in the budget. Weston-Hubner explained the Mental Health budget is State required. Utility increase was discussed. Warren County Parks has been moved to its own department budget. Liability insurance due to more and newer vehicles, equipment.
 - r. Community Services – Donations were discussed. Suggested a letter asking for report of funding.
 - s. EMA: Phil Astell, EMA Director – Discussed changes to budget. Requesting to purchase retired sheriff vehicle for EMA to use.
 - t. Coroner: Justin Brummett – Brummett explained the budget request increases such as large increase in salary, vehicle gas/oil, uniform, deleted transportation of deceased, increase equipment replace/repair, vehicle maintenance and new transport trailer. Brummett stated the need for a trailer to haul multiples, refrigerator would be best. Hart inquired how often needed and suggested the use of Sheriff trailer. Brummett stated maybe once a year use and has borrowed Benton County Coroner trailer. Brummett stated to date 11 coroner cases, turned down 4 curtesy calls, 2 nursing home with 15-20 normal. Hospital 7, 3 nursing home, home deaths 5. Increase autopsy budget possibly due to new law with drug overdose case causing more expensive autopsy fees.
 - u. Warren County Park Board: Brian Jordan, President – Jordan explained the budget which originally was not divided. Cody Kuiper has been hired to manage the parks. Mowing fees are approximately \$4,000 - \$6,000 per year. Dispennett stated commitment to grow the County access points for county parks. Discussed change in request switching park maintenance and utilities as well as increase County Park Maintenance Contract.
 - v. Court/Probation/CASA/VOCA/Pauper Attorney: Judge Hunter Reece – Judge Reece presented information showing numbers are finally beginning to normalize to pre-pandemic. Judge has written and received over \$1.7 million in grants for 2023 and would like to break \$2 million in 2024. Judge explained the Public Defender grant of \$15,000 saving the county, public defender chose not to take health insurance. Over \$34,000 was returned of 2022 budget to County General. Drug court has 17 attendees. Judge explained increases to the 2024 budget. Public Defender increase of \$5,000 which is all funded with grants. Salary increases are conservative and aligned with the increase in consumer goods, cost of living is up 6.5%, 10.1% food, gas 213%. As a result of this, Judge has one employee resigning as salary does not support the cost-of-living increases. Increase in part time salary due to Diane retiring in 2024. This will allow for 2 weeks of training and will decrease back down in 2025. Possibly in 2025 increase office technology due to audio and video changes needed due to increase in zoom hearings. Council stated they appreciate Judge working on grants.
 - w. Auditor – Weston-Hubner explained the duties of the Auditor's Office. The increase in workload over the past 9 years. Explained increase in departments, employees causing immense workload increase for the Auditor's Office thus requesting a large increase in salaries for the office to create competitive wages. Explained other budget lines were decreased slightly.
 - x. Personnel – Weston-Hubner explained the increase in Health Insurance, WeCare, etc.
 - y. Statewide 911/Dispatch – Weston-Hubner explained the contract with Fountain County is \$325,000 which will renew May 2024. The budget is \$150,000 in 911, County General \$87,500, Public Safety \$87,500.
 - z. Cumulative Capital Development – No increase/change.
 - aa. Economic Development – Weston-Hubner explained the budget reflects the revenue for 2024 with no additional items due to the fund balance being depleted.
 - bb. Rainy Day – No change/increase.
 - cc. Plat Fund – Weston-Hubner explained the GIS Administrator salary.
 - dd. County Farm – No Change remain at \$50,000 as per Ordinance
 - ee. JCWF Expense – Fund has been depleted, moved grant writer \$20,000 to Commissioner budget.
 - ff. JCWF Econ Dev – Weston-Hubner explained \$50,000 for community improvements only. Discussed Williamsport Pool project.
 - gg. Salaries – Discussed the salaries and longevity.
 - hh. Clerk – Discussed having no tax rate and the impact.
 - ii. Reassessment – Discussed ½ rate at tax levy of \$40,000.
 - jj. Custodian – Discussed having custodian work done by each department rather than paying custodian.
 - kk. Commissioner – Move ADA budget of \$10,000 to Cumulative Capital Development budget.

- ll. Public Safety ADA lowered to \$5,000 and remove fire department donation as fire territories have added funding to fire departments.
- mm. Area Plan – Add BZA/APC Board pay of \$50/mtg, budgeting \$6,000 and \$3,000/year admin.
- nn. Personnel – Change PTO Payout down to \$5,000 and Health Insurance down to \$1.2 million.
- oo. EMS – Include a 4% increase to \$364000; Public Safety Ambulance Equipment \$0.
- pp. Human Resources – Change Technology to \$2,000; Equipment to \$1,000, furniture to \$1,000.
- qq. EMA – Change Small Equipment to \$3,600; Travel to \$2,500; Public Safety to \$0 Vehicle.
- rr. Park Board – Increase County Park Maintenance Contract by \$1,000, Change Utilities to \$1,000 and Park Maintenance and Repairs to \$5,000.
- ss. Health Department – Local Public Health Services Fund change Internet Service to \$0, Health Officer salary from 1159 of \$19,570 to full salary of \$30,900, postage down to \$3,930.
- tt. Cumulative Capital Development – Change \$90,000 Capital Improvement and \$10,000 ADA.
- uu. Discussed Salaries – After much discussion, a 7% full time and 5% part time increase. Prosecutor Deputies to Jailer Rate of \$45,017.
- vv. Neil Ellis made a motion to approve the 2024 budget as discussed seconded by Matt Commons, all voted in favor.

5. Elected Official/Department Head comments:

6. Public Comment: No public comment.

Next Council meeting August 28, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business Neil Ellis made a motion to adjourn with a second from Matt Commons, all voted in favor.

There being no further business John Comer made a motion to adjourn with a second from Craig Greenwood, all voted in favor.

COUNCIL:
 ATTEST: Robin Weston-Hubner
 Robin Weston-Hubner, Auditor

Ethan Foxworthy
 Ethan Foxworthy, President

Matt Commons
 Matt Commons, Vice President

Ben Dispennett
 Ben Dispennett

Sharon Hutchison
 Sharon Hutchison

Neil Ellis
 Neil Ellis

Russell "Rusty" Hart
 Russell "Rusty" Hart

Dwain Akers
 Dwain Akers

COMMISSIONERS:

ATTEST: Robin Weston-Hubner, Auditor Clay Andrews, President

David Craig Greenwood, Vice President

John Comer