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Martin

County

THE MARTIN COUNTY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING

September 6, 2022

MINUTES

The Martin County Council convened in special session Tuesday, September 6, 2022, in the Commissioners’ Room at the Courthouse located at 129 Main Street, Shoals, Indiana. Councilmen attending: Warren Albright, Randy Wininger, Keith Gibson, James Stiles, and Councilwomen Barbara McFeaters. Councilman Adam Greene and Councilwoman Sheri Bowling were absent. Also attending was Auditor Michelle Norris.

President Warren Albright called the meeting to order with the Pledge to the Flag at 6:39 pm.

Attorney David Lett presented to the Council Resolution No. 2022-30, Resolution of the Martin County Council to Revise the Local Income Tax by Establishing an Emergency Medical Services Local Income Tax. This a proposal which, if approved, will be sent to the Department of Local Government Finance. The DLGF will have 30 days to review the proposal and respond. Once the DLGF gives the okay to proceed, the Council will advertise and have a public hearing regarding the tax. Attorney Lett submitted for the maximum allowed amount, but that does not mean the Council has to approve that rate. The Council will have the opportunity to revise the rate. The process with the DLGF review, the advertisement, and public hearing has to be completed by October 31.

Councilwoman McFeaters stated the financial advisor estimated the EMS tax would bring in $440,000. This money would only go towards the ambulance service if the 0.20% EMS LIT tax were passed, which is the maximum allowed by statute. This is a new statute that went into effect July 2022. Councilwoman McFeaters said that during the budget department meeting it was stated if we decrease the EDIT tax by .20% and instituted this tax at .20% there would be no increase in income tax for taxpayers. It is not a property tax. How the LIT taxes are to be distributed has yet to be decided.

Taxpayer Kim Showalter wanted to clarify that LIT amounts were transferred instead of increased and no additional tax was instituted then, Crane would lose $5,000, Shoals would lose $25,000, and Loogootee would lose $75,000, in EDIT money. Councilwoman McFeaters stated this is correct. All EDIT money would not be taken way, but it would be a decrease in revenue for the towns and city.

It is estimated the ambulance service will cost about 1.2 million dollars a year to run. If the EMS tax of .20% were instituted, either as a transfer of LIT or a new tax, $440,000 would be collected for EMS. The County EDIT fund has budgeted $450,000 for the ambulance service. The projected ambulance revenue is about $300,000, but that amount is not certain due to the unavailability of records from the previous contractor. Some ARPA funds will be used on the ambulance service to help with costs and by next year there should be a better understanding of revenue coming in to the service.

President Albright stated he does not know how to pay for the ambulance service without raising taxes. The money is not there to pay for the service. If the tax were transferred from EDIT to the EMS tax, it will take $105,000 in EDIT money from the towns and city. He suspects the two towns and city also need the EDIT money. The County would also lose $335,000 in EDIT money which the Commissioners use to pay County expenses.

If taxes were raised by .20% for the EMS tax and an individual made $45,000 per year, the new tax would result in a yearly tax increase of approximately $78.00. If an individual made $100,000 it would result in a tax increase of approximately $188.00 per year. This would be if the EDIT tax was not transferred into the EMS tax, but an additional tax was instituted.

A motion was made by Councilwoman McFeaters to approve the Resolution of the Martin County Council to Revise the Local Income Tax by Establishing an Emergency Medical Services Local Income Tax, seconded by Councilman Gibson. A discussion was held confirming this was to start the process and send the paperwork to the DLGF for approval. Once the DLGF approves the resolution a public meeting can be advertised and held to discuss the tax with the public. Then a vote would be held to determine if a new tax would be established. Councilman Stiles, Councilwoman McFeaters, Councilman Gibson, and President Albright in favor, with Councilman Wininger opposed. Motion passed.

Ambulance Director Jeramey Osborn was asked to address the Council. Director Osborn presented the Council with the proposed salary and wages of the ambulance employees. Director Osborn also asked the Council to approve the use of overtime for the ambulance. Councilwoman McFeaters stated her option is that overtime it is something that needs to be done. She is not aware of any employees in the health field that are paid in overage hours using comp time. President Albright stated he feel like the service needs to be able to compete and we have committed to the service, so we need to make it the best we can have. President Albright asked if Director Osborn would accept a salary of $80,000. Director Osborn stated he would take 20% off his salary and accept $80,000. A motion was made by Councilman Wininger to approve the salary and wage ordinance as presented except for the director’s pay which is reduced to $80,000 per year, seconded by Councilwoman McFeaters. Councilman Gibson, Councilman Wininger, Councilwoman McFeaters, and President Albright voted in favor with Councilman Stiles opposed. Motion passed.

Director Osborn asked the Council to address the issue of overtime for the ambulance service. Councilman Wininger asked if there would be a limit to the amount of overtime an employee could accrue. Director Osborn stated there would not be a set limit, but he is going to watch the overtime hours very closely. It will be his job to make sure the overtime makes financial sense. A motion was made by Councilwoman McFeaters to approve overtime for ambulance staff, seconded by Councilman Wininger. All in favor, motion passed.

Director Osborn presented to the Council the statistics from the first seventeen days of the service. There were forty-one runs to date. From August 21st through the end of the month there were thirty runs with nineteen of those being transports. From September 1st through September 6th there were eleven runs with seven of those being transports. In August there were four runs out of Center Township, five from Halbert, zero in Lost River, zero in Mitcheltree, nineteen in Perry, and two in Rutherford. In September there were two from Center, zero from Halbert, one from Lost River, three from Mitcheltree, four from Perry, and one from Rutherford. Twenty runs went to Memorial Hospital in Jasper. Daviess Community Hospital had five and Bedford had one.

The first ambulance has been certified by the State, which is the second ambulance that was picked up. It needs decals and graphics placed. A seal has been created by a local man for the ambulance department, which will be placed on the doors of the ambulances and possibly the uniforms. The certified ambulance is the 2013. The wrap is being placed on the 2008 ambulance. The 2008 will be at Hindostan Days. The third ambulance is a 2014 with 36,600 miles and is a Duramax. It still needs picked up from New York.

Councilman Wininger expressed his appreciation and thanks for the work Director Osborn has put into the ambulance service. He stated we would be in bad shape and lost without the work Director Osborn has put in. Other Council members expressed their appreciation also.

Auditor Michelle Norris brought to the Council the need for clarification for a wage of a part-time employee in the Highway Department. Wage increases were approved for the Highway Department in the July 17th Council meeting. The part-time employee received an appropriation of $200 for the remainder of the year. Prior to the wage increase, the part-time employee was making $12.50 per hour. The Highway Department had intended for a $1 per hour increase for the Superintendent and road crew and $.50 for the clerk. The salary and wage ordinance states part-time employees can go up to $13 per hour unless otherwise stated. The Auditor’s office needs clarification that the Council approved for the part-time highway employee’s salary to raise to $13.50 per hour. After discussion, the Council agreed that they intended for the part-time employee to receive a dollar raise also. A motion was made by Councilman Stiles to clarify that the part-time highway employee was to receive $1 an hour raise bringing his rate to $13.50 per hour, seconded by Councilman Gibson. All in favor, motion passed.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 pm with a motion made by Councilman Gibson and seconded by Councilman Stiles, all were in favor and the motion passed. The next Council meeting will be held Monday, September 12, 2022, at 6:00 pm, which is the public hearing for the budgets.

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 Warren D. Albright Randy L. Wininger

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Sheri Bowling J. Keith Gibson

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Adam Greene Barbara McFeaters

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James A. Stiles

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Michelle Norris, Martin County Auditor