Est

Martin

County

THE MARTIN COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING AND BUDGET ADOPTION

OCTOBER 2, 2023

MINUTES

The Martin County Council convened in regular session and budget adoption on Monday, October 2, 2023, in the Commissioners’ Room at the Courthouse located at 129 Main Street, Shoals, Indiana. Councilmen attending: Jordan Dant, Adam Greene, Warren Albright, Keith Gibson, Monty Gregory, Andrew Beaver, and Jim Hamby. Also attending was Auditor Michelle Norris.

President Jordan Dant called the budget adoption meeting to order with the Pledge to the Flag at 6:07 pm.

**RE: BUDGET ADOPTION OF THE 2024 BUDGET**

President Dant stated at this point the Council has had several meetings regarding the 2024 budget and the Council has had time to review the budget and ask questions. President Dant stated he would open the meeting for comments regarding the 2024 budget. Councilman Greene stated before the vote he would like to make a motion starting in 2025 the elected position in the Surveyor’s office would receive the same compensation as a commissioner. President Dant responded and asked Councilman Greene if he was asking for a motion, that come this time next year, for the 2025 budget the Surveyor’s office would be cut to the same pay as a commissioner. President Dant asked if that was a full-time or part-time role. Councilman Greene responded it would be the same position, just less pay. Councilman Beaver asked to clarify, it is not for the 2024 budget, it is because the surveyor is coming up for election in 2025 so any person or persons interested in the surveyor position in 2025 will know what salary to expect. Councilman Greene agreed, whoever is running for election for surveyor will need to know before January.

President Dant stated the Council does not have any idea what 2025 revenues will look like and things could change. Recorder Rhonda Sanders asked if she should also be worried about her job as she is also running for office again soon, or if the Council was picking and choosing. Councilman Greene responded it is a case by case. Assessor Carolyn McGuire asked if everyone needs to worry about their salary being cut next year. President Dant stated he does not think anyone is suggesting that, and he has not stated that. Assessor McGuire stated there is one elected official which is being discussed. Councilman Greene responded if it is not fiscally responsible it is the Council’s job to cut where it can. Assessor McGuire asked the Council if they realize what the Surveyor does for the Assessor’s office and for the taxpayers of Martin County, to which Councilman Greene responded yes. Councilman Greene stated the office could be run with less than 80 hours per week. Auditor Michelle Norris asked the Council to think about the quality of work, which will suffer if the current Surveyor and deputy are not doing those jobs. Councilman Greene responded they do not know what is being done because he and the Commissioners has asked and it was not provided.

Deputy Auditor Teresa Wininger asked what would be the criteria for that position and what is expected to be done and not done. Deputy Auditor Wininger stated she has to call the Surveyor and Deputy and depends on them to do what she needs to do. Councilman Greene asked if everything has been done every time the Surveyor’s office was called. Deputy Auditor Wininger responded she calls frequently and has never had an issue. Councilman Greene asked even if the Surveyor was gone for a period of time everything still got done, to which Deputy Auditor Wininger responded yes. Councilman Greene stated that is telling him that is okay to be gone. Deputy Auditor Wininger asked what Councilman Greene is referring to, being gone for a period of time. Deputy Auditor Wininger stated in general if she makes a phone call to the Surveyor’s office, if the call is not answered immediately, she receives a return call. Deputy Auditor Wininger asked what the duties are, to look at splits or to help when there is a taxpayer in the Auditor’s office needing assistance. President Dant responded the State decides what the surveyor’s job is and is not.

Assessor McGuire stated the State guidelines are not necessarily what they have been doing. Councilman Albright stated the surveyor’s office does not have to help the Assessor and Auditor’s offices. Councilman Gregory asked Assessor McGuire if her office pays for the assistance of the mapping. Assessor McGuire stated her office pays for part of the deputy’s salary. Councilman Gregory stated his goal is to look into creating a mapping department, what the surveyor is required to do is specified by the State and anything other than that he does not have to do. Councilman Gregory stated what Assessor’s office pays for, the surveyor does not have to do. He would like to make sure that position is doing what the Courthouse departments are wanting and needing done, he would like to ensure that is done by partly looking at the surveyor’s position and making it more specific with a mapping position. Councilman Albright stated when this is done the surveyor can take the phone calls and then start hiring surveyors to come in and do the work and then the Council will pay that bill. Councilman Gregory stated his concern is the mapping because right now the way it is set up the surveyor does not have to do the mapping. Deputy Auditor Wininger asked when looking at a mapping department what kind of hours would be needed. Councilman Gregory stated it is too early to tell. A motion was made by Councilman Greene that the 2025 surveyor pay would be the same as a commissioner pay, seconded by Councilman Hamby.

Councilman Albright asked if there were other offices they should talk about what their pay is going to be in 2025 while they think they can look in a crystal ball. Councilman Greene responded if they are brought up, they can be talked about. Councilman Albright stated it has always been hard enough to do the budget in the middle of the year much less a year and a half out. Councilman Greene asked how someone would feel if they were elected as surveyor in 2025 and the pay is one fourth of what they thought it was going to be, which is why he thinks it needs to be done now. Assessor McGuire asked it was legal to do the budget that far ahead. Councilman Greene responded it is not budgeting, it is making an agreement, otherwise something else needs cut because this was in leu of cutting the deputy.

Taxpayer Mary Smith asked if this position’s pay is cut to what the commissioners make and no one applies for the job. What about the work that needs to be done at the Courthouse if there is no surveyor to do that work? Is the County going to have to hire someone to do that work and what is the County going to pay them? Councilman Greene responded there is a full-time deputy to do that work.

Assessor McGuire asked if the Council was going to pay the deputy’s pay. Councilman Greene responded they are now and with partially reassessment fund money. Assessor McGuire stated if he is not doing reassessment work, she is not going to pay the deputy using reassessment funds. Councilman Albright stated there is no guarantee the County will be able to keep the deputy, the current deputy could choose to go elsewhere, especially if the Council continues to focus on this one office. Councilman Greene stated it should have been taken care of three years ago and not been kicked down the road this long.

An audience member asked how much would be saved by reducing the surveyor’s salary. President Dant responded about $30,000 per year. Councilman Greene stated if you do not need it, you do not need it. Councilman Albright stated Councilman Greene has not paid for too many surveys out in the county. Deputy Auditor Wininger asked if anyone on the Council has looked at the way a survey actually reads and what has to be interpreted in a survey. Councilman Greene stated he is not denying that they are not doing a good job but he thinks they can still do it with less budget. A commissioner will make about $9,300 next year. Councilman Greene stated Daviess County pays their surveyor about $10,000. Deputy Auditor Wininger asked what was Daviess County’s cost for what is contracted out. Councilman Greene stated he is not sure and he is not able to get that information. President Dant stated he does not like to make the comparison, but he has been told Daviess County’s contracted amount is about $50,000. Councilman Beaver stated if the salary is dropped to $10,000 and if the same amount is contracted we will be spending more money. Councilman Gregory stated benefits will be paid either way because it is an elected position. Councilman Greene stated it is unknown how many surveys Daviess County is getting compared to Martin County. Deputy Auditor Wininger stated if that is the case the County could potentially end up paying more, to which Councilman Albright agreed.

President Dant stated he struggles to see the fiscal status a year from today and there is a lot that can change from now to next October and the Council would be committing to what they are going to do next October now. Councilman Greene stated his point is that it will be too late in October to make that change. Councilman Beaver stated just bringing up the motion right now people will have an idea and realize the Council is discussing this and will think about if they want to run for surveyor or not. President Dant asked for those in favor, to which Councilman Greene and Councilman Hamby responded yes. Those opposed were Councilman Gregory, Councilman Beaver, Councilman Albright, Councilman Gibson, and President Dant. Motion did not pass.

Auditor Norris read notice to taxpayers for Martin County with a civil max levy of $2,774,943 with a property tax cap credit estimate of $30,200. Notices have been posted on Gateway at: budgetnotices.in.gov A motion was made by Councilman Albright to adopt the 2024 budget for Martin County, seconded by Councilman Gibson. President Dant and Councilmen Albright, Gibson, Gregory, Beaver, and Hamby were in favor with Councilman Greene opposed. Motion passed. Councilman Greene stated he was opposed to the budget because with the previous motion not passing the other option was cutting the deputy in the 2024 budget.

Auditor Norris read the notice to taxpayers for the Martin County Solid Waste Management District which has a budget of $437,500. There is no max levy or property tax cap credit estimates. A motion was made by Councilman Hamby to adopt the 2024 budget for the Martin County Solid Waste Management District, seconded by Councilman Gregory. All in favor, motion passed. The meeting for the budget adoption was closed at 6:33 pm.

President Dant opened the regular meeting of the Martin County Council. The revised minutes of the special meeting of August 21, 2023 and the regular meeting of September 18, 2023 were approved with a motion made by Councilman Albright, seconded by Councilman Beaver. All in favor, motion passed.

**RE: YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COUNCIL DONATION**

Loogootee Mayor Noel Harty, Shoals High School Principal Josh Mullis, and Martin County Extension Director Dena Held came before the Council to present a check on behalf of the Youth Civic Engagement Council for the Martin County Ambulance service in the amount of $1,100. Director Held stated the Youth Civic Engagement County of Martin County started out as the Mayor’s Youth Council in 2018. One of the service projects the Youth Civic Engagement Council did this last year was to learn about the ambulance service and the struggles, barriers, and also the opportunities. Mayor Noel Harty stated they have had the Youth Council for the last five years but will not have the Youth Council this year, they are hoping the CEO program will take the place of the Youth Council next year and will include both schools. When the Youth Council was started Mr. Dittoe met with principals of both schools and it was decided to combine both schools in the program and Martin County was the first in the State to have a Youth Council which included two high schools.

**RE: PROBATION ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT SALARY AND WAGE AMENDMENT**

Auditor Norris stated Judge Wright-Ryan has asked for an amendment to the salary range of the probation administrative assistant. The pay is currently $14 per hour and the Judge is asking for a range in the salary of $14.00-$15.00. Chief Probation Officer Stephanie Helton stated the money is in the budget to cover the range, so they would not be asking for any additional money. A motion was made by Councilman Hamby to approve the salary and wage amendment, seconded by Councilman Beaver. All in favor, motion passed.

**RE: TRANSFER REQUEST**

The following transfer request was submitted to the Council for the cumulative capital fund:

From: 1138.178.4000.19 Land $5,000

To: 1138.178.3000.17 Land Bank $5,000

A motion was made by Councilman Beaver to approve the transfer request for the cumulative capital fund, seconded by Councilman Gregory. All in favor, motion passed.

**RE: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS**

**Additional Appropriations**

General Fund- 1000

Circuit Court

Psychiatric/Medical $6,250

A motion was made by Councilman Hamby to approve the additional appropriation for the general fund circuit court in the amount of $6,250, seconded by Councilman Greene. All in favor, motion passed.

**RE: COURT REPORTER SALARIES**

Auditor Norris presented to the Council a listing of court salaries for the 2024 budget. For 2024, the court is requesting court reporters L3 and L4 to have a pay range of $15.00-$16.77 and they are currently making $15.00 per hour now. The L2 court reporter is making $18.72 right now. President Dant stated he understands the court is having difficulty keeping people in these roles because it is $15 per hour, and in light of that, recommended to the Council to bump the range for L3 and L4 to $16.77 to $18.72. L2 would get the standard increase of 5% in January.

Councilman Albright asked if these increases were for 2023 or 2024. Auditor Norris responded L3 and L4 would be for this year due to inability to keep employees. President Dant stated if L3 and L4 ranges are increased this year they would not get a 5% increase in January because they will be getting about 11% now. President Dant asked the Council what they wanted the range to be for L3 and L4. The Council decided to give a range from $15.00-$18.72 for L3 and L4. A motion was made by Councilman Beaver to approve a salary range for court reporters L3 and L4 from $15.00 to $18.72 effective September 24 with no percent increase in 2024 and the L2 court reporter a 5% increase in 2024, seconded by Councilman Gregory. All in favor, motion passed.

**RE: SHERIFF UPDATES**

Sheriff Josh Greene stated there are new employees being hired and now have more employees than there are full-time positions, so now have some part-time help. Sheriff Greene stated the pay raises have made a difference in applications turned in and hiring new employees. Sheriff Greene stated he bought one new truck today off the lot, a Dodge Ram. Sheriff Greene stated he has been having trouble with the F150s and has spent $2,000 last month on repairs which were not covered under the warranty. Sheriff Greene stated Ram is appearing to have the best deal at the beginning of the year. Currently the only Ram offered is a big truck with a $60,000 starting price with no government incentive. Sheriff Greene stated unless they can find another truck on a lot and get a deal like they got today, they will not be able to buy another truck until after the first of the year. Sheriff Greene stated after purchasing the truck today he has about half the amount needed to buy a truck in the 2023 budget. Sheriff Greene stated he would like to get the order placed and then encumber the amount in the 2023 budget into 2024.

Councilman Beaver asked Sheriff Greene if he had F150s ordered, which he has not received. Sheriff Greene responded he has three on order but with the deal today the dealer has honored the trade in value given last June and almost 40,000 miles ago. The Ram purchased today is a 1500. Councilman Hamby asked if the rest of the current fleet has been upkept. Sheriff Greene stated all the trucks have new tires or are getting better tires before winter. President Dant asked if the inmate count was still up. Sheriff Greene responded he is keeping the jail full.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm with a motion made by Councilman Beaver and seconded by Councilman Gibson, all were in favor and the motion passed. The next regular Council meeting will be held Monday, November 6, 2023, at 6:00 pm.

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Jordan Dant Adam Greene

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Warren D. Albright J. Keith Gibson

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Andrew Beaver Jim Hamby

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Monty Gregory

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

Michelle Norris, Martin County Auditor