

COUNCIL MINUTES

August 24, 2020

BE IT REMEMBERED that a meeting of the White County Council was held at the White County Building in Monticello at 8:00 A.M. on August 24, 2020 for the purpose of discussing budgets for 2021 and any business that might come before the membership.

Council President Kramer called the Council meeting to order in joint session with the Commissioners. The following members were present:

James B Davis	Dennis E Carter	Arthur A Anderson
Janet J Faker	James G Annis	Raymond L Kramer Jr
Attending Electronically: Kevin L. Crabb		

Also, in attendance: Auditor Gayle Rogers; 1pm – 3pm Kevin Page was in attendance

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council President Kramer opened the Council meeting with the Council reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. This was done each day (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday).

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2020

Council began with a discussion overview of the proposed budget. Discussion turned to requirements of the general election regarding IT services. IT Director Eric Storm was called in. He had a very lengthy discussion with Council putting all their concerns to rest. IT was available to the Election Board throughout the primary election and will continue to be available throughout the general election.

The Commissioners joined the Council for lunch. Afterward they discussed various issues and projects:

Employee health insurance rates will most likely increase 5% - 10% above the current rates. In light of that, Commissioners suggested a 3% general wage increase if that is feasible in the upcoming financial climate.

A \$4.5M grant has been awarded for the Wolcott Wastewater Treatment Plant project that will benefit the MACP. The County will pay \$1,797,011 in matching funds.

The water line from Remington will cost the county approximately \$1.5M

The USDA loan for the County Road 1100W and water detention system will amount to \$1.4M which will be repaid by the county at 0% interest and a \$595/month admin fee over the course of ten years.

The Rosewater Wind Farm EDA should bring in approximately \$2.9M and the Indiana Crossings Wind Farm an additional \$9M to the Wind Farm Economic Development Fund.

There is activity in the county from at least two solar companies expecting to bring in solar farms consisting of 1200+ acres each. These will also include EDA's and revenue beyond taxes to the county for economic development.

Innkeepers Tax Commission was represented by Councilor Denny Carter, Auditor Gayle Rogers and two members of the SFLECC board. Dredging may be slowed or eliminated for 3-5 years depending upon revenue. Gabby Haygood (SLECC) will keep in close contact with Auditor Rogers to stay on top of the financial situation.

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Sheriff Brooks, Chief Deputy Roth, Jail Commander Blount and Office Manager Gregory presented the Sheriff and Jail budgets. They added funds to the repair and maintenance line item of the jail budget to allow funding for cosmetic upgrades to floors in need of repair. The Sheriff would like to add a deputy. He also informed Council that he has increased the pension plan line item and will continue to do so as the plan is only funded at approximately 70% which could be a problem in upcoming years. He is asking the Council to again contribute \$5,000 to the K-9 fund. He has taken several donations, but intends to allow those to accumulate until the day he has to begin replacing K-9's.

The last budgets discussed that day were Surveyor, HR and Veterans. No major requests.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2020

Council discussed budget proposals with the twenty-one remaining departments. Most were not requesting anything extraordinary. Council assured EMA and the Coroner that Council still considers finding a home for those departments a priority. Council agreed to allow the Auditor to change the base rate for Area Plan Zoning Administrators from the bottom of level three to increase to 50% of level three as a starting salary to avoid people being trained then leaving for another department after two years because it is a lineal move with fewer demands. Council requested that the Clerk and Election Board return on Thursday morning at 9:00 am for a more in-depth discussion of issues regarding the upcoming general election and the 2021 budget.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2020

Following much discussion regarding the need for funding for professional services in the Clerk's budgets, Councilor Kramer stated that the line would most likely be cut. Council is not in favor of the Board securing outside IT personnel for elections, nor for hiring legal services outside of our county attorney.

Discussion moved to the hourly rate to pay absentee/voter board employees who work prior to election day, including the employees needed to assist the election clerk with the increased load of mail-in votes due to COVID.

Councilor Faker made a motion to pay absentee/voter board employees \$15.00/hour rather than the \$11.38/hour stated on the matrix and in the salary ordinance, due to the pandemic for the 2020 general election only. Councilor Anderson seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous

The remainder of the day Council spent going through all the budgets line by line and deciding as a group what to approve as presented and what to amend.

Councilor Davis made a motion to allow the Auditor to adjust the base rate of Area Plan Zoning Administrators to 50% of Level 3; second by Councilor Faker. Vote: Unanimous

During discussion of the election budget, the motion was made by Councilor Faker and seconded by Councilor Crabb to cut the election board pay in 2021 and forward to one-half the election year amount during non-election years. Vote: Unanimous

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Auditor Rogers was instructed to look into having a resolution drawn up to ensure this practice continues indefinitely.

Upon completion of scrutinizing each budget line item, Councilor Anderson moved to accept the budget and matrix as amended including a general wage increase of 3% for 2021. Second by Councilor Davis. Vote: Unanimous

Auditor Rogers will print approved budgets for Department Heads. If any Department Heads wish to speak with Council, they may do so prior to the budget being adopted at the September 21, 2020 Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before the Council, Council President Kramer adjourned.

The next monthly meeting, 2nd reading of the budget, along with adoption of the budget, of the White County Council is September 21, 2020.

DENNIS E CARTER

JAMES G ANNIS

ARTHUR A ANDERSON

JAMES B DAVIS

(Absent)
KEVIN L CRABB

RAYMOND L KRAMER JR
President

JANET J FAKER

Attest: _____
GAYLE E ROGERS, AUDITOR