

Owen County Council  
Minutes-May 9, 2022

Meeting was called to order by President Polly Chesser.

Pledge of Allegiance was said, and opening prayer was given by Polly Chesser.

Members Present: Polly Chesser, Verl Keith, Anton Neff, Andy Wood, and Amy Casebeer.

Absent: Chuck Hess and Nick Robertson.

Also, present Attorney Jim Bryan and Auditor Sheila Reeves.

Public sign in sheet attached for permanent record.

A motion to approve the minutes with the noted corrections was made by Andy Wood and seconded by Anton Neff. Motion carried 5-0.

Old Business

A financial review for all funds was given by Attorney Bryan, relating that all major funds have a positive balance. May 19<sup>th</sup> is still the projected Settlement date expected at this time. He also stressed the importance of having positive cash balances on June 30 for the 2023 budget that is used by DLGF. Inflation costs remain a concern for materials/goods and fuel for many departments. Copies of all summary reviews and monthly LOW Financial Reports that were provided by the Auditor and Mr. Bryan will be attached for permanent record. He then re-summarized the Jail Project and that the fifteen-million-dollar costs were agreed to be tabled by the commissioners. Again, stressing that the cash balances would require for the county fund balances to be as high as possible to receive the best interest rates.

Mr. Bryan reviewed options in moving forward to help with the balances. An opportunity to utilize the ARPA and EDIT Funds to pay down some current debts/negative funds was further discussed. The Commissioners had approved in their meeting the Council's request to change the ARPA Plan as had been voted on at their April Meeting. Funds will help build the General Fund and possibly offer raises for courthouse employees. Discussion on Vacation, Personal and Comp Time "Caps" was reviewed per policy and current balances of employees. Members want enforcement of the policies that will allow adherence to budgets and continued buy-outs. They are wanting departments to prepare/present plans to use the excessive hours by the end of the year. Review of the previous Additional Appropriation Request for a Clerk's employee to be paid from the Reassessment Fund#1188 was made. Based on discussion Mr. Wood asked if they wanted to reverse course and use Riverboat possibly. Mr. Neff made a motion to use Riverboat. Motion died for a lack of a second. It will be added to the June Public Hearing.

This also led into discussion of the Building & Mapping Request (was originally under new business) to be paid down some of her time as she is not able to get out of the office with being the only administrator. She had carried over from the Assessor's Office an estimated 392 hours. Mr. Burton added that the inspector should be made full-time and then could help with the office. Ms. Simmerman said she would be able to keep it down once it was at a manageable balance. Mr. Bryan and members agreed that the policy, and process needs to be followed. Employees should be aware of their time, Department Heads as well before submitting and then the auditor in review when processing payroll. A motion was later made by Amy Casebeer; seconded by Verl Keith to pay \$6597.10 from the Building Cash Balance. Carried 3-2Neff/Wood. It was also noted again that other individuals are above the cap and will be reviewed.

Also discussed was the holiday payout issue and making it fair to the employees who didn't get paid the additional as some Sheriff's employees had. A motion was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Amy Casebeer to match at the four hours that the others received for the 911 and EMS employees. The exact number of hours will be figured and presented at the next meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

Copies of the County Resolution 2021-20, Letter from Mr. Bryan regarding Policy 303 and 307, as well as the current employee lists of balances are attached for permanent record.

2022 Compensation Structure-An updated Committee Overhaul Report dated May 9<sup>th</sup> and an External Low Point salary was provided by Mr. Neff for review. Mr. Neff related that the committee had met and reviewed the structure and the fifth step is next (pg 6) Mr. Neff asked why only twenty courthouse employees when they could be looking at all—with ARPA monies. Mr. Burton related that the courthouse employees had not gotten any raises since he's been here. Mr. Neff reminded them that the everyone had agreed at the last meeting and again this is the next step to move forward collectively. Mr. Melton and Sheriff Hobbs both related that they could not offer/afford raises with their current budgets. No other discussion was made. Later in the meeting the Report and discussion were tabled by Ms. Chesser.

### New Business

Extension-Jennifer Abrell was moved up on the agenda for an update on 4-H. Ms. Abrell provided/reviewed information for 4-H Youth Development, Agricultural and Natural Resources, Book Club, Performing Arts, and Health and Well Being Programs. Members Sam and Ivy were present to relate what they have done and/or learned being involved with the programs including leadership skills, confidence, public speaking, planning skills, role models. Ms. Chesser asked for a comparison on enrollment, Abrell related it is currently down. Next Ms. Abrell presented information regarding her shortage in payroll due to the former assistant retiring. She estimates that she will be \$3012.02 short. It was agreed that no action was necessary at this time.

Building Department discussion was brought up under old business along with the Clerks portion. Following the review, a motion was made by Amy Casebeer; seconded by Verl Keith to pay \$6597.10 from the Building Cash Balance. Carried 3-2Neff/Wood. It was also noted again that other individuals are above the cap and will be reviewed. It will be advertised for a public hearing in at the June Meeting.

Additional Appropriation request was made by the Coroner for Autopsies. Following discussion, a motion was made by Verl Keith to appropriate \$20000 from the Riverboat Fund. Motion carried 5-0.

Sheriff Hobbs presented a request for additional appropriations to specific line items with funds that were received for a surplus sale. A motion to advertise from Fund#1170 Cash for a total of \$29174 to Vehicle Repair was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood. Carried 5-0.

Health-Christine McBride presented a Grant Appropriation for \$1000 into Fund#4911 that had been received through a survey. Motion to appropriate was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood. Carried 5-0.

Donna McElroy had received the Community Corrections Grant Application and will be presenting to Council during the 2023 Budget Hearings.

Mr. Bryan presented and read Resolution 2022-009 rescinding resolution 2019-0016 a resolution to allow transfer of funds from LIT-Edit to Motor Vehicle Highway. This allows the highway not to pay back the loan. This action was taken to adhere to the SBOA Audit Report in January 2022. A motion to approve was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Verl Keith. Carried 5-0. The resolution will be advertised and sent to SBOA and DLGF.

Property Tax Abatements were presented by Marce King for Hoosier Energy and Mader Mill. Copies of Compliance Statements were available for review/discussion. Letters of approval from the Spencer-Owen Economic Development and Abatement Review Committee were given. All paperwork will be attached for permanent record.

A motion to approve Hoosier Energy Rural Electric Cooperative Inc. was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood. Motion carried 5-0.

Following an update from Scott Mader-Mader Mill and Ms. King it was agreed that they met all the terms

required except a substantial non-compliance on the key component of employment. It was explained this was due in part to covid, salaries and finding qualified applicants. The Development Commission provided a qualified recommendation that the abatement continue for the current year and would be subject to future deliberation. A motion to approve with the employee component further review was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Amy Casebeer. Motion carried 5-0. Following further discussion from Mr. Bryan a motion was made to put Chamber on notice of the substantial compliance requirement despite the labor supply chain. Motion made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Woo Carried 5-0.

A motion was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood to allow Polly Chesser to sign all the Salary Confirmation Summaries that were presented. Motion carried 5-0.

#### Elected Officials' Comments

Angi Frank asked to address the ARPA funds and pay for her deputies that was previously tabled. Mr. Bryan related that the ARPA Policies specifically states no payments for part-time employees. It was tabled again pending further review and possible options.

#### Public Comments-

Victor Vaillette asked members to consider a County Manager position that had been recommended in the Crowe Report, and it would provide guidance five days week and deal with issues as they arise.

Michael Browning asked about the Holiday Pay issue that has been discussed in prior meetings. It had been five months ago and still no answers. Mr. Neff did an analogy of hours worked of eight/seven and totals worked versus the policy. Mr. Browning said it was originally a floating holiday and changed and now paid out quarterly. They work ten-hour shifts and EMS 12 hour. He again asked why he wasn't notified of the policy change and that they are violating their own policy. He was reminded that Sheriff Hobbs had taken responsibility of him not getting the policy. He added that the Sheriff had told him later that he had never gotten the policy either. He then said he finally got it today and signed off on it-seventeen months later. So, his salary cut to only eight hours, but works ten. Not notified appropriately, no handbook sign off was received and then got it from chief deputy today. Ms. Reeves suggested for the members to make a motion that all departments will receive official notice. A motion was made by Anton Neff that all active employees receive notice of all policy changes. Motion seconded by Amy Casebeer. Carried 5-0.

No further comments were made by the Elected Officials, Public, Attorney, Auditor or Council. A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Neff.