

Owen County Council
Regular Meeting-August 11, 2021
(8:30am)

Meeting was Called to Order by President Andy Wood.

Pledge of Allegiance was said, Prayer given by Sheriff Hobbs with special memoriam for Mr. Staley.

Mr. Wood gave a heartfelt condolence for the loss of EMS Employee Brandon Staley and asked everyone to keep the family, friends and EMS Family in their thoughts and prayers.

Roll was called, all present. Public signed in, attached for permanent record.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Anton Neff. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Wood opened the Public Hearing at 8:32am.

Jeff Peters-Peters Consulting provided a copy of the proposed Owen County Fiscal Plan for review.

Mr. Peters began with the Capital Monies projected: County-\$3,060,000/Gosport-\$55000/Spencer-\$765000. Operational Budget in moving forward, how much Correctional Facility LIT, not enough Bond, Do Lease until its occupancy-estimated 2 years. If delay might want to stop current tax. Deby Bond Service? Mr. Neff asked if Lease; he replied-interest cost element to debt service. They have already used 1 of 22 years and can rescind the Jail Tax LIT rate and re-adopt later. Mr. Neff-can it be split for public safety. Peter's referenced page 34 with confirming his comment that 21% of what you bring in would go to other taxing units.

Ms. Lamb-Cap? He replied .9% is max available. Related that she is 911 and what if others needed it; assuming if at max-couldn't. Mr. Peters says an expenditure rate of 2.5% is all that is allowed and that includes Public Safety Agencies.

Capital at Highway MVH allocate more, L&R available-utilize it, can re-direct to MVH. Mr. Neff was split 1176/1173 with restrictions and must account for general operations. Cum Fund @2 can go to 3 (pg21) for Bridge Projects. Public Works Loan Limit 10 years at \$2million amortization?

Implements full amount available and get on right side and restore "Operating Cash Balance"

Mr. Neff-pg 33 certified of 1% does the school get ¼?

Mr. Hess doesn't recall Correctional Facility Tax as Public Safety Tax?

Mr. Bryan said an ordinance to get it working exactly.

Mr. Hess said 1-1/2 month for sheriff to use tax for facility modifying LIT Tax Rates .2%--80% maintenance and 20% Operating.

Mr. Robertson said if we don't adopt Plan can't continue with services.

Mr. Hess said the \$910000 mistake in 2019-2020 and overspending has brought us to the \$1.8 million deficit in 2021.

Mr. Peters 1782 is not a good document to use to evaluate.

Mr. Hess Increase Tax to recover last two years, and they have already increase to 3%. What is the comparison and medium income?

Ms. Chesser isn't hearing any alternatives other than an increase at this time.

Mr. Hess doesn't feel they have all the information needed to decide. Requested for the number of residents in each township, median numbers, property income etc. to make an informed decision.

Victor Vaillette commented to Chuck doesn't know because he didn't use LOW.

Mr. Burton-population working in Owen County? Mr. Peters didn't know.

Mr. Neff asked how they had the ability to pay for demographics. Median Income Gross only, not taxable to max 2.5%.

After review of the proposed plans and possible options given; no further discussion was made on the Fiscal Plan Proposal at this time.

Attorney Jim Bryan began with an overview if the proposed Tax Increase Ordinance was adopted at the .9% it would generate \$3million dollars. This would allow for the whole Sheriffs Department Budget of an estimated \$2.2million to be moved out of the County General Fund #1000 to help reduce the deficit. The approximate cost of \$445 to each of the taxpayers based on an annual income of \$50000. Owen County has used all its cash reserves. Mr. Bryan continued that the deficit is unacceptable by Statute. State Board of Accounts and DLGF are aware of the situation and have allowed the claims to be continued to be paid. The proposed amounts that are to be approved in the Public Hearing at 6pm from LIT Edit, Riverboat, Jail Housing, Sheriff Fuel Reimbursement will help carry the next few months but when the money is spent-it is gone. It is the Councils job to cut, and all revenue spent needs to have a better plan how to pay everything if no money. Nothing else will be paid if line items are in the red. Again, they must have a Cash Reserve.

He proceeded with the First Reading of the proposed LIT Tax Increase Ordinance 2021-016. A copy will be attached for permanent record. Public that signed into comment was Barron Barnett and Don Bingham, Victor Vaillette.

Mr. Barnett related he had provided previous letters of things to do to address this problem. The concept of bonds and taxing was not the way out. Treating it at the root of the problem, our County cannot afford suggested to cut 20% of the employees. Services must be done but they can't afford it like it is.

Mr. Bingham said 60% is high, maybe consider 30% as this is going to be hard on a lot of families.

Mr. Vaillette had stepped out and was not heard. No other comments were made. Mr. Wood closed the Hearing at 10am.

The next Item was presented by Auditor Sheila Reeves per IC 6-1.1-17-3.6 of the 2021 property tax levy limits and estimated circuit breakers for each taxing unit of Owen County Government. A motion was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Anton Neff to acknowledge review of and accept the levy limits and estimated circuit breakers. Motion carried 7-0.

Elected Officials-

EMS Director Cris Lunsford related to members that he would not be able to be present at his scheduled hearing time, as he was going to be meeting with the family of Mr. Staley. Mr. Lunsford explained a little bit of the circumstances with the extremely sad situation. Mr. Wood offered that he could present at whatever time would work for him and they will make it work. Mr. Melton offered to switch his time on Thursday, so agreed.

Mr. Anderson once again wanted it restated his need to hire, replace the individual who had left.

Mr. Wood said that it would be discussed during the budget hearings.

Recorders Perpetuation Fund was tabled.

Sheriff's Department-Additional Appropriation Request for the Emergency Chiller Replacement in the amount of \$85000 was approved at the last meeting. An additional \$40000 for maintenance for the remainder of the 2021 year from Correctional Facilities Fund with the motion made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Anton Neff. Motion carried 7-0.

Transfers in the amount \$1739.88 from Jail Housing Supplies to other services also were approved with a motion by Nick Robertson; seconded by Chuck Hess. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion to approve the Salary Confirmation Summaries for Brown, Weinberg, and Parrish was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson. Motion carried 7-0.

No additional Attorney Comments, Auditor Comments or Council Comments were made.

A motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson.

A 15-minute break before reconvening budget hearings was requested also. Motion carried 7-0.