

Owen County Council
Minutes-February 14, 2022

Meeting was called to order by President Polly Chesser.

Pledge of Allegiance was said, and Opening Prayer given by Nick Robertson.

Members Present: Polly Chesser, Anton Neff, Verl Keith, Nick Robertson, and Andy Wood.

Absent: Chuck Hess and Amy Casebeer.

Attorney Jim Bryan and Auditor Sheila Reeves. Public sign in sheet attached for permanent record.

Ms. Chesser began by requesting that a new policy would require all Departments to have Agenda Information turned in by noon, Wednesday prior to their meetings or all items will be tabled. This will allow them to review and be better prepared for the meetings.

A motion to approve was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood. Carried 5-0

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Nick Robertson. Carried 5-0.

Attorney Jim Bryan gave a brief overview of the Fund Balances ending January 31, 2022, noting all major operating funds have a positive balance. He advises caution to make sure that expenditures don't exceed the revenue and stressing that this must carry through until Settlement. He also gave a review of the upcoming Workman's Comp and Liability Insurance Claims that will be due in March. It was agreed by members to have Mr. Bryan continue monitoring Funds and providing reports.

Another area discussed was the possibility of combining EMS with the General Fund to help with the Cash Balance. Ms. Reeves related that she had spoke with DLGF and they related that they would be concerned about it at this time. It would be at least June/July and making additional appropriation requests for a budget would be challenging. Ms. Chesser wanted it on record that she does not agree with this. They had moved the Sheriffs Budget-\$2.99million out of the General Fund and then moving \$1.89million back doesn't seem reasonable. Mr. Neff also agreed and was concerned with increase in the settlement amounts that EMS would be receiving based on the rates advertised. No action was taken at this time. Concerns for balances and obtaining loans might need to be looked at in the future and this could be a possible way to help. Copies of the Monthly Financial Report and Mr. Bryans reviews will be attached for permanent record.

Next Mr. Bryan reviewed the ARPA Funds and pending approval of a PLAN at the next Commissioners Meeting. It is expected that the Premium Pay for employees will be presented to them at the next meeting for appropriation/approval.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:30pm by Ms. Chesser for additional appropriation for the Matching Grant request for the Highway Department-Community Crossing Grant. Mr. Melton reviewed the opportunity to increase funding with the additional amount of \$83323.00. A motion to approve the amount from LIT-Edit Cash to Lit Edit 7332-41000 was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood. Carried 5-0.

Hearing was closed, and Regular meeting resumed.

Mr. Neff presented and reviewed multiple documents regarding wages and salary compensation, past ordinances, and structure-Owen County Government Compensation System Overhaul Report. He referenced page 4-5 that related to January conversation as well as the expanding of Step#3. An updated compensation structure showed the changes made during the January Meeting reversing the Circuit Court salaries as they denied their request for their employee pay raises. It was decided to form a committee with department heads and/or their appointees. A motion to hold a special meeting on March 1st @9am was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Nick Robertson. Carried 5-0. Ms. Reeves will send out an email to all departments with the documents for the meeting. Mr. Bryan presented a brief outline with Indiana Codes on the classification and compensation structure for Owen County Government. He referred to the 2016-001 Ordinance that assigns

every employee to one of eight position groups and nine position groups.

All the documents referenced and/or provided will be attached for permanent record.

At this time Mr. Neff went ahead and made a motion to adopt all the Salary Confirmation Summaries; seconded by Andy Wood. Carried 5-0.

Judge Lori Quillen and Judge Kelsey Hanlon requested for their Employee raises request to be table at this time. Working with the Committee and plan for a solution and deal with department by department. ARPA Funding is available with the change in the final rule for loss of revenue for county government and could be used for funding raises. Give departments an opportunity to make changes and let's move forward. With possible buckets of monies and absorb some of the costs and hit the mid-level point for employees. They do wish to be on the March Agenda. Ms. Hanlon feels employees will understand if they are working on it and have a provisional plan. Ms. Chesser asked Mr. Bryan if this was doable? A clear financial analysis would be needed, and it hasn't been explored as of yet and it would be determined by the Commissioners. Concern with sustainability was mentioned by members as well as everyone working together. These points and other options will be further explored at the March 1st meeting. A motion to postpone the Circuit Court request was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Nick Robertson. Carried 5-0.

Assessor Dusty White requested a re-appointment of Suzanne Simmerman to the PTBOA Board. A motion to approve the request was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Verl Keith. Carried 5-0.

911 Director Kathleen Lamb had nothing to present.

Highway Superintendent Greg Melton had nothing further to present.

Sheriff Hobbs reviewed his budget and presented concerns with a Cash Flow due to the monthly payments coming in versus the possible outflow with pending claims and commitments. He had a stack of pending claims he referenced that were outstanding contract services and an upcoming insurance claim. Mr. Wood asked if any budget areas he could do transfers. Mr. Neff asked Jim if a Resolution could be done with an internal loan up to a certain amount. Mr. Bryan reminded them that SBOA absolutely says that the new Fund cannot run in the red at any time. It was agreed for Mr. Bryan, Ms. Reeves, and the Sheriff review his funds to determine amounts possibly needed and present at the next meeting. Motion made by Andy Wood; seconded by Anton Neff. Carried 5-0.

Next Mr. Hobbs commented about the debt that the county owes that was part of the Audit Report that no one is talking about. Specifically, the payroll clearing-\$524000 and grant-\$448000 and exactly when is the county going to pay them back. Mr. Burton related that these debts are internal, basically owe ourselves. Mr. Hobbs says something needs to be set up that it doesn't look good with no plan at all. Mr. Wood ask what money is out there is that no one is talking about? They (referring to Council) are all aware of them he added. Mr. Melton frustrated, wanted it noted that he went to the Auditor and SBOA about the Grant monies Mr. Hobbs referenced of being overspent in 2019 because he was told by the last auditor that he had the funds. Now he finds himself here in 2021 having to pay it back. Commissioners and Council were both told about it.

EMS Director Cris Lunsford only related that he was looking at his budget/numbers for possible raises for his employees and will be bringing them to the March meeting.

Probation Director-Donna McElroy presented a request and statistics to increase a salary amount for Kevin's position. The position would be \$20000 more a year. They have the Funds in their current budgets and would be able to sustain it with other grants received. Mr. Bryan agreed if already budgeted and the only thing needed would be salary ordinance confirmation and a job description. No action was taken/needed.

Public Comment-Barron Barnett asked about the upcoming Plan Commission Meeting on Tuesday. Mr. Warner gave an overview. He also noted that "Free Money" is not free and encourages them again to be careful what comes with it.

Mr. Bryan presented a Mileage Ordinance as the State has increased the current mileage rate to .41cents. After the reading, a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-008 was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Anton Neff. Carried 5-0.

The Auditor had provided for their review copies of the coroners claims and noted the shortfall for Centerstone of \$3936 that would have to be appropriated at some point.

Council-

Mr. Keith thanked Mr. Bryan, co-members, and departments for helping them to get them back in the black. Mr. Neff reminded members of the upcoming AIC District Conference on April 6th. Noting one of the focal points to be Business Personal Property Tax.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Robertson.