

THE MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL MET ON MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 2023 AT 6:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: KIM MERIDETH, VICKIE KIVETT, TROY SPRINKLE, JASON MAXWELL, MELISSA GREENE, AND BRIAN CULP. ALSO PRESENT WERE; LINDA PRUITT, MORGAN COUNTY AUDITOR; DEB VERLEY, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT; AND JOSH MESSMER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR. CHIP KELLER WAS ABSENT.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRAYER (*Vickie Kivett*)

Minutes

Brian Culp made a motion to approve the July 5, 2023 minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Jason Maxwell. Motion carried 5-0.

Additional Appropriations:

- *Coroner*

Mike Ellis, Morgan County Coroner, was present to request an additional appropriation of \$6,500 from the General Fund (1000) into Account #1000.35900.000.0007 (Vehicle Lease/Rental). Mr. Ellis stated that his department recently sold a truck and leased an SUV, which is a new expense; and they would like to take the funds from the sale and re-appropriate them into the lease expenses. They have ordered a 2009 van, which will be replaced with a new leased vehicle. These amounts have been requested in the 2024 budget. Troy Sprinkle made a motion to approve the additional appropriation as listed. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Commissioners*

Josh Messmer, Morgan County Administrator, requested an additional appropriation of \$32,334 from the General Fund (1000) into Acct #1000.35900.000.0068 (Vehicle Lease/Rental). Mr. Messmer stated that instead of applying the funds from the sale of vehicles into the new leases, they issued checks and the proceeds must be re-appropriated. Mr. Messmer stated that the way this program works is to buy on the front end with a government discount and Enterprise monitors to sell at an optimum time. The proceeds are rolled over to the next purchase and over time the lease is bought down. Brian Culp made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 6-0.

- *ARPA - Commissioners*

Mr. Messmer stated that when the aquifer study was approved last year, it was after budget time and funds have not been appropriated for it or for the wastewater study. Mr. Messmer requested an additional appropriation from the ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (8950) of \$1,074,647 into Acct #8950.39008.000.0068 (Aquifer Study) and \$150,000 into Acct #8950.39011.000.0068 (Wastewater Study). Vickie Kivett made a motion to approve the appropriation as presented. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

Transfer:

- *EMA*

Abby Worth, Morgan County EMA, requested \$11,000 from Acct #1000.23300.000.0361 (Repair/Maint Supplies) to Acct #1000.36300.000.0361 (Repair/Maintenance). Ms. Worth stated that this will be used to replace batteries in tornado sirens around the county. Kim Merideth asked how long the batteries last. Mark Tumey, Morgan County EMA Director, stated that the batteries last approximately three years. They have gained at least two new sirens a year for the past five years. There are two more coming this year and they have a \$250,000 grant that if awarded, will place a siren at every school in Morgan County. Troy Sprinkle made a motion to approve the transfer as requested. Motion seconded by Jason Maxwell. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Parks & Recreation*

Bryan Collier, Morgan County Commissioner, stated that the Park Board has requested a transfer of \$12,000 from Acct #1112.36100.000.0803 (Contractual Services) to Acct #1112.23300.000.0803 (Supplies – Repair/Maint). Mr. Collier stated that they are working to prepare for the Old Town Waverly Festival at the end of September and this transfer is to cover this cost. Vickie Kivett made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Kim Merideth. Motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Collier also requested a transfer of \$1,350 from Acct #1112.36100.000.0803 (Contractual Services) to Acct #1112.16530.000.0803 (Workman's Comp). Brian Culp made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Jail*

Dave Rogers, Morgan County Jail Commander, was present to request a transfer of \$2,377.79 from Acct #1170.31750.000.0380 (Food Services) to Acct #1170.16530.000.0380 (Workman's Comp). Mr. Rogers stated that there is a shortfall in this line item. Troy Sprinkle made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Jason Maxwell. Motion carried 6-0.

Salary Ordinance Amendments

Josh Messmer stated that they are asking to lower the salary amounts for the Engineer and Superintendent positions to \$105,000 and \$87,000. Mr. Messmer stated that the Board of Commissioners feels that they can fill both positions with good quality candidates and have room to grow. Bryan Collier stated that as these positions grow into mastering the needs of a highway engineer and highway superintendent, the pay for these positions could be increased. Mr. Messmer stated that they have an accepted offer for the highway engineer position and they are excited to start at the end of the month. The superintendent position is posted and will close in two weeks. Melissa Greene made a motion to approve the changes. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 6-0.

Job Maintenance Committee

Daree Fry, Morgan County HR Director, stated that the Job Maintenance Committee met a week and a half ago and there are more changes coming. Ms. Fry stated that they have received notification that they will be losing the EMA Director, Mark Tumey, at the end of the year and they will also be losing the Deputy Director, Davey Skaggs. Due to scheduling commitments, the deputy director position has been part time and the administrative assistant position has been full time. They would like to switch this back for the 2024 budget year. Kim Merideth asked if this would also change the pay. Ms. Fry replied that it would; but they would be in the same pay grade. Mark Tumey stated that with the last census, Morgan County's population was over 72,000; which allows that 50% of the salary for the deputy director will be reimbursed by the state, so the net difference will be a few thousand dollars. This amount is in the 2024 budget. Brian Culp stated that this was discussed in the committee meeting and it is a low impact on the budget and made a motion to approve the changes as presented, contingent upon Commissioner approval. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 6-0.

The Board of Health has requested an assistant Public Health Preparedness and Response Coordinator. This would be a grant funded, 20-hour per week beginning in January. Steve Lyday, Morgan County Emergency Health Preparedness Coordinator, stated that his position is currently partially paid by a grant through the Indiana Department of Health and supplemented by a City Readiness Initiative Grant. Beginning in 2024, when the Health Department begins receiving funding through the Senate Bill 4 funding, his position will be paid through these funds, leaving the grant funds available for an assistant. Mr. Lyday stated that he would like to train the person who takes this position so they can fill in when he retires. Brian Culp made a motion to approve the part time position. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

Ordinance 2023-18 - LIT Levy Freeze Rate

Dan Bastin, Morgan County Auditor's Office, stated that the state released the estimates for the 2024 LIT (Local Income Tax) funds. Using this, Mr. Bastin estimated what the 202 LIT Levy Freeze distribution will be and estimated an excess of \$747,686. This amount, if the county does nothing with the current 0.218 rate, will go into the Stabilization Fund that can only be used to supplement the LIT levy freeze if they run short of the \$3.9 million that is needed. Mr. Bastin stated that the possibility of needing to use the Stabilization Fund is nil to none, so it just sets there. Mr. Bastin stated that it would be wise to reduce the rate (0.218). There is a supplemental distribution amount of \$558,162 that was received in May and legislation passed this session that gives the Council the ability to designate that to go towards reducing the LIT levy freeze rate. The \$747,686 plus the supplement, for a total of \$1,305,848 can go towards reducing the rate. This equates to a .061 rate. Mr. Bastin recommended that the rate be rounded to .06 to allow for leeway in the calculations. The rate could be used to reduce the LIT rate; however this would be a very small change in income taxes. Mr. Bastin recommended that the reduction be applied to another rate, such as LIT Dedicated PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) rate, LIT Public Safety, or LIT Economic Development. Only .05 could be applied to the LIT Dedicated PSAP rate, but would result in an additional \$1,089,000 to the county and could possibly eliminate a tax levy for PSAP. Two areas of need are in PSAP and public safety. This request would need to be submitted to DLGF (Department of Local Government Finance) to make sure they agree

with the calculations the proposed ordinance and proposed public notice. They would also need proof that taxing units were made aware of the proposed change for 2024 (which was done before the August 1 requirement via certified mail). The Council will need to decide if they want to reduce the LIT levy freeze rate; if so, by what amount, and what to do with the reduced rate. Mr. Bastin stated that Ordinance 2023-18 A Resolution of the Morgan County, Indiana Council Directing Supplemental Tax Distribution to be First Used to Lower the County's Levy Freeze Tax Rate authorizes reducing the rate. Melissa Greene stated that the recommendation is sound, they need to decide where to allocate the reduction. Vickie Kivett made a motion to approve the ordinance. Motion seconded by Jason Maxwell. Motion carried 6-0.

Estimated Property Tax Levy Limits and Circuit Breaker Reduction Review

Linda Pruitt handed out a spreadsheet showing amounts that DLGF has predicted as estimated maximum levies. In the past, the Council has asked that all units stay within their maximum levies. Kim Merideth asked that the minutes reflect that this was received and reviewed.

LIT Correctional Facility Rate

Dan Bastin noted that the county could have a correctional facility rate from the .06 LIT levy freeze rate reduction. The Council would have time to review the options, hold a public hearing at the September 13th Council meeting, and take action at the October meeting.

Josh Messmer stated that there are a lot of capital expenses earmarked for the jail in the 2024 budget. Instead of spending down this fund, a possible solution could be to allocate a portion of the reduced levy freeze rate to a LIT correctional facility rate. Bryan Collier stated that this tax is already being collected and would only require a shift. Mr. Messmer stated that a portion of the reduction could also go towards PSAP funding. Melissa Greene stated that only a few counties are using this rate. Mr. Collier stated that this could help with some of the jail infrastructure issues that are arising. Mr. Bastin suggested revisiting this every year for the next 10 years.

Commissioner Update

Bryan Collier stated that as long as there is a strong resale market on vehicles, the first two actions the Council approved will continue to work, as it allows the fleet to rotate at a less expensive cost to the taxpayers, but if the secondary market falls out, they will be reviewing this process.

Mr. Collier attended an economic development meeting regarding a development in the northern area of the county. One person represented and had access to "tons" of labs and asked how much water the county has. Mr. Collier stated that they are being proactive in doing the aquifer study, as they can reply to this question with the study details.

Mr. Collier thanked Dan Bastin for the way he has presented budgets the past eight years and stated that he has been spoiled by Mr. Bastin's spreadsheets. The state auditor representative also commented on how fortunate the county has been to have Mr. Bastin's knowledge.

Mr. Collier gave kudos to the EMA team for revamping spreadsheets that FEMA is now using for disaster situations.

Mr. Collier stated that Josh Messmer has worked hard in getting the county's banking partners to increase interest rates and these additional funds are always helpful.

Mr. Collier stated that BOT III is the next phase and will be discussed more next month. They Administration Building is under full construction and they are moving forward in getting the Columbus Street parking lot under construction once the house is removed. There will be additional lighting added to the outside of the building for safer late night and early morning travel to and from the parking lot. Stormwater structures are going in, foundations will start and steel will go up in late October; late December or early January, the framing should be done and they will start enclosing everything. Vickie Kivett expressed her concern with the curbs in the parking lot and expressed that she would like to see a flat lot.

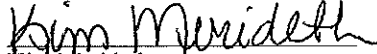
Next Meeting

Kim Merideth noted that the next regular Council meeting is Wednesday, September 13th.

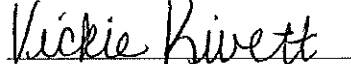
Adjournment

Brian Culp made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Kim Merideth. Motion carried 6-0.

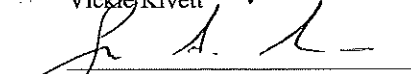
MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL



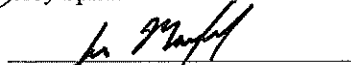
Kim Merideth



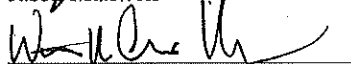
Vickie Kivett




Troy Sprinkle



Jason Maxwell



Chip Keller



Melissa Greene



Brian Culp

ATTEST:



Linda Pruitt, Morgan Co. Auditor