

**THE MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL MET ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRAYER (*Brian Culp*)

**Minutes**

Troy Sprinkle made a motion to approve the August 14 and 15 minutes and the August 21, 22 and 24, 2023 minutes. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 6-0.

**Additional Appropriations:**

• *Jail*

Dave Rogers, Morgan County Jail Commander and Sheriff Rich Myers, were present to request an additional appropriation of \$30,000 from the General Fund (1000) into Account #1000.36300.000.0380 (Repair & Maintenance). Mr. Rogers stated that the building is costing more to maintain. They must dig up concrete floors to repair pipes that are leaking. They are going to try to get by with this amount for maintenance until the end of the year, but some other things have come up since this was requested. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the additional appropriation. Motion seconded by Jason Maxwell. Motion carried 6-0.

• *Jail*

Mr. Rogers requested an additional appropriation of \$270,000 from the General Fund (1000) or LIT Public Safety (1170) into Acct #1170.31505.000.0380 (Professional Medical Services). Mr. Rogers stated that \$190,000 of this is for the Mental Health contract; they added additional services and staff after budget time last year to address ongoing mental health issues within the jail facility, and \$80,000 is for additional medical costs. They currently use Advanced Correctional, but will be using a new company in a week. Mr. Rogers stated that in 2016, it became mandatory that jails file for Medicaid for qualifying inmates. This can be used for hospitalization after the first 24 hours on a diagnosed issue. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the additional appropriation from the LIT Public Safety Fund. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 6-0.

**Transfers:**

• *Election*

Tammy Parker, Morgan County Clerk, was present to request a transfer of \$300 from Acct #1000.18800.000.0062 (Custodian) to Acct #1000.19800.000.0062 (Years of Service). Ms. Parker stated that one of the Clerk employees transferred to the Election Office. Melissa Greene made a motion to approve the request. Motion seconded by Troy Sprinkle. Motion carried 6-0.

• *Clerk (Records Department)*

Ms. Parker requested a transfer of \$450 from Acct #1000.21100.000.0279 (Supplies) to Acct #1000.19800.000.0279 (Years of Service). Ms. Parker stated that this was again because of an employee transfer. Troy Sprinkle made a motion to approve the transfer request. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 6-0.

• *Health Department*

Kim Merideth stated that Carol Bruner was not feeling well and was not able to attend the meeting. The Health Department requested a transfer of \$20,000 as follows:

\$7,500 from Acct #8951.11515.000.0000 (Part Time LPN Nurse)  
\$4,000 from Acct #8951.40000.000.0000 (Equipment)

To

(\$11,500) Acct #8951.23501.000.0000 (Incentive Supplies)

Chip Keller made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

The Health Department also requested a transfer of \$20,000 from Acct #8951.11510.000.0000 (Part Time RN Nurse) to Acct #8951.36100.000.0000 (Contractual Services). Jason Maxwell made a motion to approve the transfer. Motion seconded by Troy Sprinkle. Motion carried 6-0.

### Public Hearing

Kim Merideth opened the Public Hearing.

### 2024 Budget Public Hearing – Monroe Twp Fire District

Mike Wagoner, Chairman of the Monroe Township Fire District Board, stated that there were some issues with the budget at the previous meeting. Mr. Wagoner stated that the budget was reviewed by Peters Franklin and they didn't gain anything and asked for clarification on any issues. Linda Pruitt stated that what was previously published in Gateway was a request for \$0. The budget is now \$515,472. Kim Merideth asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

### Close Public Hearing

Ms. Merideth closed the public hearing.

### 2024 Budget Adoptions

- *Harrison Township Fire District Maximum Levy Appeal*

Kim Merideth stated that Harrison Township Fire District is submitting a Petition to Appeal for an Increase Above the Maximum Levy. This amount is \$4,565. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the levy appeal. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Harrison Township Fire District Budget*

Kim Merideth noted that the adopted budget is \$170,100 with a tax levy of \$77,159 and a rate of 0.0753. Brian Culp made a motion to approve the budget. Motion seconded by Jason Maxwell. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Morgan County Maximum Levy Appeal*

Kim Merideth stated that the county is submitting a Petition to Appeal for an Increase Above the Maximum Levy. This amount is \$1,132,194. Troy Sprinkle made a motion to approve the levy appeal. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

- *Morgan County Budget*

Kim Merideth stated that the adopted budget amount is \$52,144,756 with an adopted tax levy of \$22,433,673 and a tax rate of 0.5884. Special Funds total \$25,494,051. Chip Keller made a motion to approve the budget for 2024. Motion seconded by Jason Maxwell. Motion carried 6-0.

### Public Hearing

Kim Merideth opened the public hearing

### Preliminary Determination to Enter Into a Lease – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

Bryan Collier, Morgan County Commissioner, stated that he is excited to come before the Council for BOT III. Since starting the BOT (Build Operate Transfer) process, more waterlines and sewer pipes have broken, equipment has been ruined as water flows over desks and shuts down courts; there has been problem after problem. If they had waited another seven months to start the project, the costs would have increased by \$3 to \$5 million along with increased interest rates. Remodeling the Courthouse and not tearing it down it respectful to the past. Mr. Collier stated that it is important to continue to tell their story and if they need pictures of broken water lines, etc., he would be happy to share with them.

Zach Klutz, Taft, stated that this meeting is identical to what they did at the last meeting. This is the second statutorily required public hearing on the preliminary determination to move forward. If this resolution is adopted, at the next meeting he will present the bond ordinance and the lease agreement. At the previous meeting, Resolution #2023-9-13 was introduced, A Resolution of the County Council of Morgan County, Indiana Making a Determination of Need for a Courthouse Renovation Project, Making a Preliminary Determination to Enter Into a Lease Agreement and Authorizing the Circulation of a Taxpayer Petition and Ordering of Appraisals. They would like to make a couple of amendments to the resolution that was introduced. There was reference to interest rates between 3.95% and 4.75%. The bond ordinance will state a not to exceed amount of 6 or 7%. For estimation purposes, they have used 4.75%. On the second page, the county's debt service levy for the purposed bonds is estimated to increase by \$6,447,800; this is actually the maximum combined debt service limit. The \$6,447,800 will be the maximum combined debt

service for not only the bonds they are talking about, but also for the 2022 GO Bonds and the 2022 Lease Rental Bonds. The maximum debt service tax rate is estimated to increase by an amount not to exceed – it will actually be .1277 – it is not going to increase by that amount. They will have the final numbers once they go to market and sell the bonds. Jason Selmer, Baker Tilly, stated that there are estimates, but as they have done in the last two financings, these are estimates based upon current rates, they will have the final payment amounts once the bond sale is complete.

Kim Merideth asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There were none.

Kim Merideth closed the public hearing.

Chip Keller made a motion to approve the resolution as amended. Motion seconded by Jason Maxwell. Motion carried 6-0.

**Job Maintenance Committee**

Daree Fry, Morgan County HR Director, stated that she submitted a job description for a Director for the Health Department. This position would start in January and will be funded by the new money they are getting from the state. This is a seven-hour per day position and is \$63,283.50 annually. Employees would report to this position in the absence of the Health Officer. Brian Culp made a motion to approve the job description. Motion seconded by Melissa Greene. Motion carried 6-0.

**Other Business**

Josh Messmer stated that the county has a new Highway Engineer, Justin Schneck. Mr. Schneck stated that he graduated from Purdue in 2014 and has worked as a private design consultant in the transportation industry. He also did construction inspection and has been involved in designing bridges, roadways and trails.

**Comment**

Sue Levell, Morgan County resident, stated that she is concerned that the county option tax is extremely high. There is a group of citizens that live in Morgan County that it affects. It is a cruel tax for retired people who live on pensions and their savings. Someone with an income of \$150,000 would pay over \$4,000 for the county option tax. Property tax is very reasonable. Ms. Levell asked that they think about the age of the population and thanked them for planning for the future.

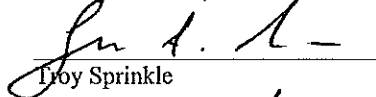
**Adjournment**

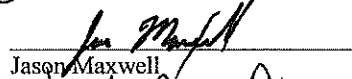
Chip Keller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Brian Culp. Motion carried 6-0.

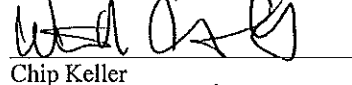
MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL

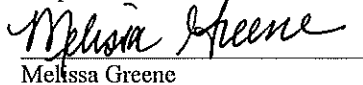
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Merideth

  
Vickie Kivett

  
Troy Sprinkle

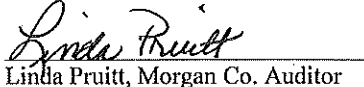
  
Jason Maxwell

  
Chip Keller

  
Melissa Greene

  
Brian Culp

ATTEST:

  
Linda Pruitt, Morgan Co. Auditor