

**THE MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL MET IN A REGULAR SESSION ON TUESDAY,
JANUARY 2, 2018 AT 6:30 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: BRYAN COLLIER, PAUL PRATHER, DAVE ZOLLER, KIM MERIDETH, DAN ELLIOTT, AND VIRGINIA PERRY. ALSO PRESENT WERE DAN BASTIN, MORGAN COUNTY AUDITOR; DEB VERLEY, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT; AND ROD BRAY, COUNTY ATTORNEY. VICKIE KIVETT WAS LATE.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRAYER (Daniel Elliott)

Minutes

Paul Prather made a motion to approve the December 5, 2017 minutes. Motion seconded by Kim Merideth. Motion carried 6-0. (Vickie Kivett was late.)

Reorganization

Daniel Elliott made a motion to retain Bryan Collier as President of the Council. Motion seconded by Kim Merideth. Motion carried 7-0.

Daniel Elliott made a motion to retain Paul Prather as Vice President. Motion seconded by Virginia Perry. Kim Merideth made a motion to close nominations. Motion seconded by Daniel Elliott. Motion to retain Paul Prather carried 7-0.

Park and Recreation Board

Joe Tutterrow, Morgan County Park Board President, was present to update the Council on Park Board activity. Mr. Tutterrow stated that the Board consulted with Tim Currens of Harris and Currens to prepare property regulations and a fee structure. The Commissioners approved the regulations at their meeting. The Park Board approved the regulations at their December meeting. Daniel Elliott inquired about use of the Learning Center and Blacksmith Shop and his concern that some rentals might not be appropriate. Mr. Tutterrow stated that he would present the concerns to the Park Board. Bryan Collier thanked Mr. Tutterrow for his time volunteering on the Park Board. Daniel Elliott made a motion to approve the Reservation Fee Structure and Bylaws. Motion seconded by Vickie Kivett. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Tutterrow stated that the budget was approved for a part-time employee and they will have a job description and a six-month task list completed by the end of the month. They will then advertise the position.

Dan Bastin noted that there is no signature page for the Reservation Fee Structure and Parks and Trails Rules and did not think that these documents required Council approval. Mr. Tutterrow asked if the Reservation Fee Structure would need to be in the form of an ordinance and presented for approval. Rod Bray stated that he would work with Mr. Tutterrow to accomplish this. Daniel Elliott stated that since the Council approved the rates, Mr. Tutterrow would not have to appear at another meeting; they would just sign the document.

EMS Update

Donnie Warren, Morgan County EMS Director, thanked the Council for their thoughts and prayers during the recent loss of his son.

Mr. Warren handed out information on revenues and accounts for October through December. There were 279 ambulance runs in November and 282 in December. There were charges of \$571,026.46 for this time period, \$88,000 in payments, and \$134,000 in insurance adjustments; the remainder is in processing. Some insurance companies will pay the mileage charge only to the nearest facility, the patient will have to pay the remainder if not taken to the closest treatment facility. The ambulance billing company estimated \$1.25 million in annual revenue and 3,500 runs.

Liberty Township, on the south side of Hendricks County lost their ALS certification and cannot provide coverage anymore. They are looking for assistance. Mr. Warren felt that assistance could be provided out of the Monroe Township station and he will work with Rod Bray to draft a mutual aid agreement. Mr. Collier asked if Mr. Warren was satisfied with the coverage placement of the ambulances. Mr. Warren stated that if he were to add an additional ambulance,

he would add a third one to the Martinsville area because of the statistics; the fire department did 17,079 rescue calls. The current two ambulances do 18 to 20 runs per day. The next priority would be a centralized unit in the Clay Township/Gregg Township area. There are taxpayers in Clay Township that are not being served by Brown Township because the township has a contract with Brown Township. Mr. Warren stated that Morgan County EMS can cover this area. Another situation is Harrison Township using White River Township in Johnson County. Bryan Collier asked if Mr. Warren would provide him with a report and map showing how many runs each location has done and the area each location serves.

Renovations of the old EMA building are in progress. Renovations at Paragon are on hold. Dan Bastin stated that his office did a search of county-owned, buildable property in Paragon, and there isn't any. The properties were acquired through FEMA and they are prohibited from building any structures. Mr. Warren asked if there were any tax sale properties available. Mr. Bastin stated that he would research this.

There were some personnel changes last month and Mr. Warren would like to reorganize the staff, removing the administrative assistant position and adding that annual \$20,000 salary to the training officer QA/QI position, along with \$9,000 from the insurance budget, for a salary of \$49,000. The current training officer would then transition to a part-time \$7.75 per hour (no more than 24 hours per week) public education position that would teach CPR classes and assist the training officer. This will combine a vacant position with a currently filled position that currently has a \$45,000 salary. Mr. Warren asked that these changes be considered at the February meeting. Kim Merideth stated that there will be additional costs, such as insurance, worker's comp, and other benefits. Discussion continued regarding employee training and public education.

Mr. Bastin stated that the new ambulance billing service is able to provide analytical reports and the Council should be able to refine the collection estimate for the next budget year.

Highway Personnel – Part-time/Temporary

Norman Voyles, Morgan County Commissioner, was present to address a request from the last meeting regarding a 2018 pay rate for experienced part-time/temporary county highway truck drivers and equipment operators. Mr. Voyles stated that this rate would be mainly for snowplow drivers and salt and sand truck drivers. If the highway department is short on drivers during a snow storm, they can't have just anyone drive a truck; they must have a CDL. There are some retired employees that still have a CDL and are willing to fill in if necessary. Marvin Whaley, Acting Highway Superintendent, had suggested an hourly rate of \$20 per hour for this situation. Bryan Collier asked for a definition of emergency; would this require that the Board of Commissioners declare a snow or travel emergency? Mr. Voyles responded that if the regular route driver was not available or there is a need to plow 24 hours a day, the part-time personnel would be used. Mr. Collier stated that during budget time, maybe the Council should look at positions. Daniel Elliott suggested having a written definition of experienced and emergency. Dave Zoller stated that this should fall on the superintendent, it is not for the Council to decide who they hire; they decide how much they make. Kim Meredith stated that the Council created a budget, not an evolving budget that changes every quarter. If they are going to re-visit part-time wages, it needs to be done at all levels and it is a budget time issue. Mr. Collier stated that it is the ultimate responsibility of the Council to ensure that employees are compensated adequately. The regular part-time rate is \$11.25 per hour, should that be changed to \$20.00 for a special skill set? Virginia Perry asked how many employees this would affect and would they have employment applications? Bryan Collier stated that the part-time budget dictates how many employees can be hired; if the budget is \$100, then they can have five people for one hour or one person for five hours. Vickie Kivett asked about the availability of plow equipment. Mr. Elliott stated that he sees the need, he just needs more definition. Mr. Voyles stated that an emergency would be defined by a lot of snow to plow or a lot of salt and sand to spread, someone is off, and they need an experienced driver. Mr. Elliott asked for the information in written form from the highway superintendent. Paul Prather stated that he was in favor of the concept because of safety concerns, but did not want someone sitting at the highway garage instead of being out on the roads. Mr. Collier asked for a job description for the next meeting. Vickie Kivett asked for an equipment inventory. Mr. Prather stated that he did not want to micromanage; as a Councilman, he felt it was his job to manage funds as his constituents would want him to do. Vickie Kivett made a motion to table the issue until the following information could be obtained: job description, equipment inventory, and how many drivers have received overtime in the last 24 months. Motion seconded by Virginia Perry. Motion carried 7-0.

Veterans' Service Officer

Norman Voyles stated that this item was introduced at the last meeting. The current Veterans' Service Officer position is a part-time, 28-hour per week position. Mr. Baum is putting in more hours than this, but is not getting paid for it. The amount of work has exploded since taking this position in June.

Rick Baum, Veteran's Service Officer, handed out information regarding activities in the office. Mr. Baum stated that since June he has had 232 visits in his office, 13 outside visits, and 549 incoming calls. Factoring in the time it takes to work on filing a claim, it quickly absorbs 28 hours a week. There are 74 pending claims and many more that are not processed. Many claims take several visits before the claim is fully developed and ready to submit.

Mr. Baum stated that he was questioned about assisting veterans from other counties. The state of Indiana Code of Ethics for Veterans' Service Officers states "The Service Officer will provide services without prejudice to all persons making a claim to the Department of Veterans' Affairs." In the absence of a VSO in Morgan County, other counties have stepped up to the plate. Last year Indiana missed out on over \$250 million that could have been received for veterans.

Mr. Baum thanked the Commissioners and Council for establishing the office and stated that he sees three phases for the office: being full time, adding an assistant, and easier access for disabled visitors.

Kim Merideth asked if a part-time assistant to answer calls would free up his time to devote to processing claims. Mr. Baum stated that it would help, but he would still need to be in the office full time and the office he currently occupies is not large enough. Bryan Collier stated that he talked to veterans who were very complementary to Mr. Baum, but mentioned the need for an assistant. Mr. Collier stated that the need for transportation was also raised.

Daniel Elliott stated that when they budgeted for the VSO, it was new and they didn't know what to expect; they knew they would have to make some adjustments and waiting till budget time would be doing a disservice to the veterans. Paul Prather called for a vote.

Virginia Perry stated that census information shows 5,183 veterans in the county. Mr. Baum stated that of those, 1,600 are receiving health care, 661 are receiving pensions, and 999 are receiving compensation.

Bryan Collier stated that if an established office requested to change a part-time employee to full time, he would deny the request. However, if there was a demand that the employee take on additional duties, he would expect justification for the change. This is a new position and there is a learning curve. Mr. Collier stated that although this is a budget time issue, he would be willing to vote in favor due to the circumstances.

Paul Prather stated that he agreed with Mr. Collier about this being a new position, he liked that this position can bring in \$22 million in compensation for veterans in the county, and made a motion to make the position full time with a \$12,848 increase in salary. Motion seconded by Daniel Elliott stated that many veterans are suffering because of things caused in combat and this was the least they could do. Vickie Kivett stated that they need to find a better office space. Kim Merideth asked about space in the Washington Township building. Dave Zoller stated that he was 100% for it. Virginia Perry stated that this is a budget time item. The growth in Morgan County is only 1.1% and this does not support a full time position. Motion carried 5-2. Vickie Kivett and Virginia Perry were opposed.

Dianna Jennings, a Morgan County resident, stated that she was thankful that the Council voted to make this a full time position. She, and her family, would be living under a bridge if not for having this position. Ms. Jennings stated that there will be more and more veterans contacting Mr. Baum if for nothing else than health care. They need someone who knows the system.

Vickie Kivett stated that she voted against it because it is a budget time issue. She would hope over time that it tapers off. Virginia Perry stated that it was not easy to vote against this; there are 68,000 people in the county and 5,000 to 6,000 veterans and she must represent the majority of the people.

Bryan Collier mentioned the need for job descriptions.

Other Business

Bryan Collier stated once the budgets have been approved by the state, he would like to have workshops on some of the funds so they can be better prepared during budget time.

The next meeting will be Monday, February 5th at 6:30 pm.

Adjournment

Vickie Kivett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Daniel Elliott. Motion carried 7-0.

MORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Bryan Collier

Paul Prather

Daniel Elliott

Vickie Kivett

Dave Zoller

Kim Merideth

Virginia Perry

ATTEST:

Dan Bastin, Morgan Co. Auditor