

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

August 23, 2023

Budget Hearings – Day 3

Name:	Representing:	Title:	Present:
Greg Patterson	District 1		Present
Leah Beyer	District 2		Present
Mark E. Gorbett	District 3	Vice President	Present
Jorge R. Morales	District 4	President	Present
Matt Miller	At Large		Present
Bill Lentz	At Large		Present
Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence	At Large		Present
Pia O'Connor	Auditor	Secretary	Present
Chris Monroe		Attorney	Not Present

The Bartholomew County Council reconvened on Wednesday, August 23, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana.

President Morales called the meeting to order. He began with a brief statement about the revised schedule with the goal being to finish deliberation on Thursday afternoon, if possible. With this in mind, IT Director, Scott Mayes has agreed to change his presentation of the new website to 12:30 on Thursday. The Council will break briefly around 2:15 for ten to fifteen minutes.

1:00 p.m. – Sheriff / Jail / Drug Treatment / Courthouse Security

Present – Sheriff Chris Lane and Major John Martoccia

Big Requests: Matrix Pay increase

New Employees: Exchange five part-time for two full-time

Staffing continues to be the biggest problem for the Sheriff's Department. The applicant pool is down 50 percent. This summer, a pool of 26 applicants was reduced to three who remained both qualified and available to complete the process. It then takes up to two years for a new hire to become fully trained and riding solo. Sheriff Lane states that their request to increase the Merit Deputy base pay to \$70,000 should make Bartholomew County competitive enough to recruit and retain the best of the best. They are not asking for any additional positions at this time. There are still three open positions.

President Morales stated the E911 was awarded some extra funds to prepare for the eclipse. He asked Sheriff Lane if he had included enough overtime dollars to cover an increase for this event. Sheriff Lane stated that the eclipse is in April. No one is allowed to take off. Since it is still early in the year, he feels there will be overtime to cover it but he will give it further consideration prior to finalizing the budget.

The pension decreased \$6,000. The fleet costs are flat. Radio costs are reduced by \$10,000. He has created a 5-year plan to pace the replacement of radios and prevent the need for any large purchases all at once. He also has a plan to offset the expense of replacing the Tasers. Military pay is increased because they have actively recruited and are hiring more veterans. Food costs have increased by \$24,609. President Morales asked if food fees

cover Youth Services/Community Corrections as well. Sheriff Lane stated that they do not. They are reimbursed for the food they prepare for the YSC. Medical costs increased \$29,261. They requested an increase of 5% for employees not on matrix but understand that will be adjusted to 4% now. Matt Miller asked if there was a prediction about how much the payment for retirement would go up, based on the \$70k base pay. Sheriff Lane knew they had addressed this and he believed that number was around 18% but it was but there are many factors to consider. There is only one Deputy eligible for retirement today.

Sheriff Lane requested to cut four part-time positions in exchange for two full-time positions. This still left an increase in the budget request, so there is a fifth part-time position that can also be cut to fund the two full-time positions that they want to prioritize. They want to hire one Civil Process Server and one permanent, full-time Front Desk/Records Clerk. These changes will actually decrease the budget by \$17,951. Earlier in the year, Sheriff Lane asked Council for two additional Merit Deputies to implement a “hire ahead” strategy and combat the lag time from vacancy to solo operation. In fulfillment of that agreement, he now proposes that the \$106,100 for those two patrol cars including up-fitting costs and the \$33,520 to offset the Tasers be funded from the Commissary and Drug Seizure money. Mark Gorbett asked if there was still money for training. Sheriff Lane said yes, the state has reimbursed funds lost when they eliminated gun permits, which goes toward the purchase of ammo for training. He suggests that the revenue from the Misdemeanor Fund, which has not been used for several years, can be used to offset some of the medical expenses. The Fleet prices are flat. Budget request is \$318,300. Body Armor must be inventoried, inspected, and replaced at 5-year mark; half the expense is paid for

through a grant. Car and body camera estimate is 131,000, but anticipate it going up to 140,000 in 2026. Bill Lentz asked if they are down in patrol officers, and do they use less mileage since there are fewer officers on patrol. Sheriff Lane stated that they are down three officers and some vehicles may have had less usage but the vehicles of officers getting the overtime probably had more. He stated that they usually trade vehicles in around 150,000 miles but will look into whether there is more advantage to trading at lower mileage. Auditor O'Connor pointed out that embedded in the Sheriff's proposed budget changes, he is essentially giving back \$157,571. President Morales asked the Council if they agreed changing the 5 part-time for 2 full-time positions. With some discussion, the Council reached unanimous consensus. ASAP Jail Addiction budget 2024 request is \$215,524, which includes the 4% salary increase and insurance. The Courthouse Security budget increase is the 4% salary increase and an increase for uniform and weapons. President Morales stated that aside from these changes, the Merit Deputies to \$70,000 and general pay raise 4%, everything is basically the same.

2:00 p.m. – Veteran's Office

Present: Veterans Service Officer Larry Garrity, via Zoom

VSO Garrity was having some technical difficulties. Auditor O'Connor shared that his only change was he requested an increase of \$1,000 for the burial of soldiers. President Morales called for a consensus to approve the requests. The Council reached consensus in unison.

2:05 p.m. – Human Resources

Present: Vickie Michael, Employee Resource Administrator

Tony London, County Commissioner

Commissioner Tony London said that they have met with Administrator Vickie Michael many times since she started and things were going very well. Ms. Michael requests a salary increase of 4%, \$500 for supplies, \$10,000 for professional services, and \$1,500 for printing and advertising. Mark Gorbett shared that the Council has asked for an employee merit reviews to be a part of the annual salary increase beginning in 2025 and Administrator Michael's office is likely to be a big part of that, which might also involve some training. She said she looks forward to it. Commissioner London stated the Commissioners are comfortable with the budget. Leah Beyer suggested that as they look for electronic onboarding forms, they look for something similar to SharePoint that may simplify data sharing between departments. Auditor O'Connor stated that is already in the plans, and the Auditor's Office tries to attach electronic forms to be paperless as much as possible. Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence asked if there would be an employee handbook online. Ms. Michael stated that she has a digital copy already and emails it to all new employees. President Morales called for a consensus to approve the requests. The Council reached unanimously by consensus.

2:17 p.m. – Soil & Water

Present: Director Heather Shireman

Director Shireman requested a 6% salary increase but understands that it will be adjusted to 4%. She requested an increase for office supplies and fees for the annual conference. Educational Fees were increased by \$300. Professional Services were

increased 5% for the part-time contractor. Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence asked if there were any new programs. Director Shireman stated that SISMA has kept them busy, which is very popular program that educates people on how to handle Invasive Species. President Morales stated that the increase for the contracted part-time employee would need to be changed to 4%. President Morales called for a consensus to approve the requests. Council agreed in unanimously consensus that after those two changes were made, all other requests would be approved.

2:22 p.m. – Code Enforcement

Present: Director Michelle Cox

Director Cox requests 4% salary increases across the board for all positions with the exception of the Assistant Code Enforcement Officer, for whom she requests an additional increase based on the responsibility of the position. She believes that salary should be closer to a midpoint between the building inspectors and Chief Code Enforcement Officer, suggesting \$2,000 bump plus the 4% increase.

Under Professional Services, she requests an increase of \$35,000 in case of continued issues with code violations. This is to prevent coming back for additional appropriations again this year, if the problem continues. - Bill Lentz asked what attorney they use for the code violations. Director Cox replied that they use Attorney Jim Shoaf.

She requests an increase of \$7,000 for other services and charges. This is to facilitate going to digital codes and will provide inspectors the ability to find instant answers in the field for contractors. President Morales called for a consensus to approve the budget as requested. Council agreed unanimously by consensus that the Assistant Code

Enforcement Officer salary would be adjusted as discussed and all other requests would be approved.

2:33 p.m. – Adult Protective Services / Victim of Crime Acts (VOCA) /

STOP Grant / Pre-trial Diversion / Child Support /

IV-D Incentive / Prosecutor's Office

Present: Prosecutor Lindsey Holden-Kay

New Positions: Deputy Prosecutor & Criminal Investigator

Prosecutor Lindsey Holden-Kay presented seven separate budgets before Council.

Adult Protective Services – requests a 5% salary increase. She understands that this will be adjusted to 4%.

VOCA Grant – requests the same salary increase.

STOP Grant – requests the same salary increase. She requests that the Victim Advocate go from part-time to full-time. The STOP Grant funds this position 100% but until it is awarded, they will not know if full-time funding has been approved. When the funds are received, they will come back to Council with a request to make this change at that time.

Pre-Trial Diversion – requests the same salary increase.

Child Support – requests the same salary increase. She also requests a \$1,000 increase for printing and advertising and decrease equipment from \$6,000 to \$3,000.

IV-D Incentive Fund – requests the same salary increase.

Prosecutor - The demands on the Prosecutor's Office have increased greatly since 2008, yet the resources, from a personnel standpoint, have remained the same. Dramatic increases in violent and drug crimes stretched the Prosecutor's Office far beyond what is recommended. Prosecutor Holden-Kay has developed a five-year plan to bring the Bartholomew County Prosecutor's Office up to what is a more efficient and effective structure where they can successfully prosecute the increasing case load.

In the 2024 budget request, she is asking to add one (1) **criminal investigator** and one (1) **deputy prosecutor**. She plans to request another deputy prosecutor in 2026 and then another in 2028. This will bring the personnel to the goal she anticipates Bartholomew County needs to manage the cases going to prosecution. Auditor O'Connor stated that there are opportunities for State Funding to explore when you have murder cases. She has not previously looked into it but she can do that as early as this Fall if Council would like to pursue it.

The requested salary for the Criminal Investigator position will have a range of \$70,000 to 90,000, which is necessary to attract the caliber of candidate with the experience needed to perform the duties. Mark Gorbett stated that this may actually be too low a salary for the qualifications she presented. President Morales pointed out that it could be someone coming out of retirement.

The salary for the new Deputy Prosecutor position would initiate a new salary range. The current prosecutors are all paid \$97,132. Going forward, the new prosecutors would be paid within a range of \$75,000 to \$97,132. This allows the office to hire less

experienced prosecutors in at the lower end and increase their pay as they graduate to carrying a felony level caseload. President Morales stated that this would go along with the Council's plan to establish a merit process in 2024 to be implemented in 2025 to be able to pay people based on performance and knowledge. Mark Gorbett stated that something to put on the radar down the road would be that as the number of prosecutors increase, the support staff would need to be increased, as well. Prosecutor Holden-Kay stated she believed that as long as the caseloads remain somewhat static, they will be okay with existing support staff but that is not likely to last indefinitely.

Greg Patterson asked what would happen if she tries to hire an investigator and it is going to cost more than \$90,000. Mark Gorbett answered that she can come back to Council or they can adjust it. President Morales asked if there were any more questions from Council. Being none, he thanked her and said they would take these matters into consideration.

3:00 p.m. - Maintenance

Present: Director Rick Trimpe

Director Rick Trimpe requested standard salary for all employees. He increased Office Supplies by \$5,000 because paper products tripled in price. He added \$49,000 more to Repairs & Maintenance for the remodel and the Courthouse, and four bathrooms will be remodeled. President Morales thanked Director Trimpe for all the ways he has saved the County money by doing the work themselves instead of hiring out. President Morales

called for a consensus to approve the maintenance budget as requested. Consensus is unanimous.

3:09 p.m. - Health Department – Nursing Division

Present: Director Amanda Organist,

Michelle Matern, Indiana Department of Health

New Positions: 2 RNs requested, postponed to 2025

Director Organist requests the standard 4% increase for salaries. She added \$29,000 for insurance previously funded in Environmental Division. She had previously asked for two full-time nurses but has decided to wait until 2025 to be sure they are sustainable. 60% of the Health First Indiana funds must be used on core Health services. Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence asked how many new programs they had started. Director Organist stated that they have continues to provide all required services and only added Indiana Navigator classes. President Morales stated that the Council asks that any time a new program is started they wish to be informed. President Morales called for a consensus to approve the requests.

Commissioner London stated that there are no new programs but the way the state handles the money is changing. Michelle Matern of Indiana Department of the Southern Region of the Local Health Services stated that there could be new programs as a result, depending on the results. For example, if the state identified a Bartholomew County had a specific need, they could create a program to support it. The members of the Council have not conclusively identified their consensus.

3:35 p.m. – Health Department – Environmental Division

Present: Director Link Fulp, Michelle Matern of IDOH

and Dr. Brian Niedbalski, Health Board Liaison

New Position: PHP Coordinator, previously part-time

Director Fulp asked for a salary increase significantly greater than the standard 4%. He requests salaries to match the salary amounts in the Nursing Division. He has performed an industry-specific salary study to demonstrate the need to increase the salaries for these positions. He requests an increase for the Director of Environmental Health to match the Director of Nursing and for Environmental Health Specialists to match the salary of the RNs. The Administrative staff is being requested at 10% increase.

The 1159 Fund has no increases.

The Health First Indiana (1161) – This PHP Coordinator position is being moved from 1159 to this fund. It is also requested to transition from part-time to full-time. Director Fulp stated that as the salary ordinance was changed immediately for nursing, and he would like to see the full-time person be added quickly, even if everything else has to wait until January 1. President Morales said his request would be noted.

Matt Miller stated suggested that he look over the Sheriff or Prosecutor's presentation as a model for future request presentations. President Morales asked Director

Fulp to make himself available tomorrow when the Council deliberates if they have any further questions.

Director Fulp thanked the Health Officer, Dr. Niedbalski, for appearing at the hearing today. He states, "I did want to note that in the IC-16 Code, 'the County Fiscal body shall fix the compensation of employees of County Health Departments after considerations of the recommendations of the local board of Health.'" He then asked Dr. Niedbalski directly if he, as a representative of the board of health was in support of these changes. Dr. Niedbalski replied, "Yes. I think the Board is as well." President Morales noted this for the record.

Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence asked if the part-time position had been funded by a grant that had been lost. Director Fulp stated that no, they still have the \$25,000 Public Health Preparedness Grant. They are just looking to fund the full-time position out of the Health First Indiana fund and they will still make use of the PHP fund. Having that position is a requirement. They have lost four previous employees because they left to accept full-time positions.

4:20 p.m. – Deliberations

Regarding the Health Department, Auditor O'Connor said she and Chief Deputy Pattingill will work on putting spreadsheets together so they can see a better analysis and come up with something that is a little easier to understand.

Re: Prosecutor Lindsey Holden-Kay – Mark Gorbett is in support of all that she proposed for this year and the 5-year plan. Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence supports it, based on what Mark Gorbett says, as well. President Morales did a poll and all members were in support.

Auditor O'Connor had an update regarding Court Services. Fund #4700 is a Health Trust Fund that was established 6 or 7 years ago. There is no current revenue that comes out of that fund but it can provide the \$400,000 needed to cover the health insurance costs for Court Services for the next two years. President Morales asked for the Council to concur on this as a solution. Leah Beyer said she would support it but there is still a need to address the three unfilled positions and moving the money for those positions into a place where those funds are needed more. Chief Deputy Pattingill pointed out that because the grant is tied to the positions, they cannot simply be eliminated. Auditor O'Connor and Chief Deputy Pattingill identified a way to move the grant positions to court services to preserve the grant. Council is in consensus. The Council decided to ask Director Barnes to come back tomorrow afternoon so they can relay to him what they have decided to do with court services.

President Morales stated that as things stand, the Council had arrived at a consensus for everything except for the salaries of the elected officials and the Health Department salaries. -Bill Lentz stated, regarding the Director Barnes' budget, there is still \$400,000 coming out of the Budget. -Mark Gorbett said no, that money is not coming from the budget; it is from a Health Employee Trust that has been untouched for several years. -Bill Lentz seemed more concerned that it is still being spent.

Mark Gorbett stated that he has been working on the elected official salary. He prepared a document with data from Boone and Kosciusko counties' salaries and did some comparisons. Looking at the Chief Deputies and elected officials, comparing it to what Leah Beyer had come up with, the proposal was to bring the Clerk to \$76,000, the Assessor to \$74,000, to set the Auditor at \$80,000 the Recorder at \$70,000, the Treasurer at \$72,000 and the Surveyor at \$75,000. Then taking 85% of those numbers for their Chief Deputies, no 4% on top of this.

President Morales asked Mark Gorbett to make that available to the Council for them to look over and consider. He asked where they stand on increasing the Chair by \$500 per year. Mark Gorbett believes it should be there because it involves more time and travel. Leah Beyer supports it. Matt Miller does not think it is necessary when the Council members take turns. Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence thought it was illegal.

Leah Beyer asked about the 4H Program Assistant, the Surveyors Department Heads and EMA Director Adjustment. Those will be addressed tomorrow as well. President Morales asked if everyone is willing to stay a little longer on Thursday if necessary to finish. Council will meet at 12:30 p.m. with the website and 1:00 with the Budget Session, inviting Director Barnes to come back at 2:30 for 10 or 15 minutes to relay to him what we plan to do.

Adding to the conversation, criteria and credentials should only be considered and used to determine to salaries when it is attached to something that is not subjective, like Assessors Ginny Whipple who has a level three or Auditor O'Connor who is a CPA and

holds an MBA. Otherwise, it should default to the base salary rate with only very clean tiers.

Having no more questions, President Morales called to postpone the meeting until tomorrow, August 23, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.