

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

December 12, 2023

Name:	Representing:	Title:	Present:
Greg Patterson	District 1		Present
Leah Beyer	District 2		Absent
Mark E. Gorbett	District 3	Vice President	Present
Jorge R. Morales	District 4	President	Present
Matt Miller	At Large		Absent
Bill Lentz	At Large		Present
Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence	At Large		Present
Pia O'Connor	Auditor	Secretary	Present
Dalene Pattingill	Auditor	Chief Deputy	Present
Chris Monroe		Attorney	Present

The Bartholomew County Council met on December 12, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana.

President Morales called the meeting to order.

Council member Greg Patterson led the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by President Morales.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of the November 12, 2023 minutes. President Morales made a motion to approve the minutes with Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence's corrections. **Mark Gorbett moved to approve the minutes. Bill Lentz seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The second item was a request for an additional appropriation presented by the Director of Alliance for Substance Abuse (ASAP), Sherri Jewett and Sheriff Chris Lane in the amount of \$215,524. Mrs. Jewett stated that she has identified three community organizations that provide substance use disorder treatments in the community that are interested in providing services to the Bartholomew County Jail treatment program. She continued by stating ASAP would like the funding assured so that they can provide the funding opportunity to the organizations in advance of choosing one. Mark Gorbett stepped in by clarifying that this money has already been previously approved by Council and that it is just being reappropriated to the ASAP program, to which President Morales replied yes. Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence asked if this would be all county money and multiple people answered that the amount is already in the budget for the jail's treatment program. Auditor Pia O'Connor stated the amount was already in County Budget and it was pulled instead of moved by mistake. **Mark Gorbett moved to approve the additional appropriation of \$215,524. The motion was seconded by Bill Lentz which passed unanimously.**

Mrs. Jewett continued with a second request for an additional appropriation in the amount of \$262,500 for the Opioid Unrestricted Fund. She stated that earlier in the year she came to council and asked for an allocation of Opioid Settlement Funds in order to put up funds for a state-matching grant. She mentioned that several programs did receive funding, but the Level 2 Recovery Residences did not receive funding. She is requesting that a portion of the money be approved in order to fund three additional recovery residences in Bartholomew County. She continued by stating that Centerstone received \$250,000 from the state to open and operate a Level 3 Recovery Residence, but they have not been able to find a location for the residence. Mrs. Jewett asked for the approval of \$50,000 from the Opioid Settlement Fund to be given to Thrive Alliance to use as a down payment on a residence that will be utilized and leased from Centerstone for a Level 3 Recovery Residence. Mark Gorbett asked if the monies would be for 2023 or 2024 to which Sherri answered that given the time of year, it is being spent for 2024 and there are agreements with each organization set in stone so that none of the money would be spent before January 2024. President Morales clarified that this money is from the Opioid Settlement and

not from County General. Mrs. Jewett stated that is correct. **Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the additional appropriation of \$262,500. The motion was seconded by Greg Patterson which passed unanimously.**

The next few things covered were multiple requests for additional appropriations presented by the Director of Work Release, Rob Gaskill who also spoke on behalf of the Director of Court Services, Brad Barnes. The following figures were presented to Council:

- Community Corrections Grant (9101) - \$1,530,117
- Pre-Trial Release (9107) - \$139,150
- Community Corrections Project Income (1122) - \$485,500
- Pre-Trial II (9203) - \$52,763
- Veteran's Treatment Court (9202) - \$9,000
- Drug Recovery Court (9208) - \$10,000
- Mental Health Court (9217) - \$84,307

President Morales stated to Council that all of this money comes from grants that have previously been applied for and that Council is voting to approve the spending of the money. Mark Gorbett asked Attorney Chris Monroe if he was able to make a motion to approve the additional appropriations for all seven funds, to which Attorney Monroe answered yes. **Mark Gorbett then made the motion to approve the requests as presented and was seconded by Greg Patterson. The motion passed unanimously.**

The next item was a request for an additional appropriation for the Public Defender Fund/Circuit Court in the amount of \$9,672.33 presented by Chief Deputy Pattingill on behalf of Tammy Johannesen. She stated that the account is used for defendants who are declared partially indigent and it may pay into the public defender fund through the clerk's office. The court uses these funds for different expenses in criminal cases where defendants are represented by a public defender. President Morales called for a motion. **Bill Lentz moved to approve the additional appropriation of \$9,672.33. The motion was seconded by Mark Gorbett which passed unanimously.**

Chief Deputy Pattingill presented another request for an additional appropriation in the amount of \$10,000 for the County General/Prosecutor fund on behalf of the Prosecutor's Office. She stated this is the same money that the Prosecutor presented in November and was advertised for a salary increase.

Mark Gorbett moved to approve the additional appropriation of \$10,000. The motion was seconded by Greg Patterson which passed unanimously.

The next item was a request for a transfer by Director of Weights and Measures, Chris West. Mr. West mentioned that after going to training conferences he has found some things that are needed. He stated there is money left in the budget since his position was not filled for a portion of the year and he would like to use that money before the years end. He would like to purchase a cart for two five-pound provers, a new printer for his office and a scale for package checking. He stated he is also in charge of AED's and CPR training and he will be purchasing an AED for the second floor of the GOB. He will also be purchasing thirty-two OSHA approved first aid kits, one for each office and two spares.

He continued by stating that while at conference, he learned that Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations will be under the purview of the Weights and Measures department. The tests for each station require four fifteen minute tests, a total of one hour per station. The state is trying to get EV stations under their purview so that their inspectors can run the tests or we can borrow their equipment to run the tests. The AC testers for EV stations cost \$50,000. There is not a price or plan approved yet for the DC Supercharger testers, but they are estimating those will cost \$100,000. Mr. West stated that it may be possible to have the counties ban together and pitch in for a tester. Auditor Pia O'Connor said that would be a good question for the Association of Indiana Counties (AIC). Mr. West presented the following transfer requests:

- From 100's to 200's - \$1,650
- From 100's to 300's - \$250
- From 100's to 400's - \$3,700

Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the request for transfer in the combined amount of \$5,600. Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item was a request for a transfer in the amount of \$5,000 presented by Youth Services Center (YSC) Director, Mariah Lucas-Georges. She opened by stating the money would be transferred from the 100's to the 300's. The YSC was holding a youth that had to be transferred to Allen County Juvenile Detention due to needing a higher level of security and being a safety issue. She stated that the Department of Corrections put a hold on their safe keeping program for the period of time that the child was becoming an issue so YSC had to find another place in the state to hold him. Allen County had a padded room and was able to meet his needs so he was placed there. **Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the transfer of \$5,000 from the 100's to the 300's. Bill Lentz seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a request for transfer for the Election Board presented by Chief Deputy Pattingill. She stated that they are needing the money to cover expenses for the election. She said the money is already in their budget and they just need to move it around. Chief Deputy Pattingill presented the following transfer requests:

- From 100's to 300's - \$29,117.30
- From the 200's to the 300's - \$4,900

Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence made a motion to approve the transfers in the total of \$34,117.30. The motion was seconded by Mark Gorbett which passed unanimously.

Auditor Pia O'Connor mentioned that the Coroner was not present and skipped but his request is something that is really needed. Chief Deputy Pattingill says the request for additional appropriation is to satisfy the Coroner's Office's expenses in 2023 due to forensic autopsies, toxicology and radiology. Auditor O'Connor stated that by approving all claims and seeing the bills that need paid, prices have gone up and the county needs to be able to pay their bills. **Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the**

additional appropriation in the amount of \$20,000. Greg Patterson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The next item was the approval of the 2023 and 2024 Salary Ordinances presented by President Morales. He asked Attorney Chris Monroe if Council could vote for both at the same time to which Attorney Monroe answered no. President Morales called for a motion to approve the 2023 Salary Ordinance to reflect the Prosecutor's salary change. **Mark Gorbett moved to approve the motion which was seconded by Greg Patterson. The motion passed unanimously.** President Morales continued by calling for a motion to approve the 2023 Salary Ordinance to reflect the Prosecutor's salary change. **Mark Gorbett moved to approve the motion which was seconded by Bill Lentz. The motion passed unanimously.**

The next item of discussion was the Jail Bond. President Morales called Treasurer Barb Hackman to speak. Auditor Pia O'Connor stated that the Jail Bond is already in the budget in 2024 and is part of the tax rate. Mark Gorbett stated that it was previously discussed that the county was making more money on the interest rates than the actual bond. Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence stated that she felt that Council should pay off the Jail Bond since the money is available because it would lower the tax rate for tax payers. She continued by stating it is Council's job to look out for the tax payers. Treasurer Hackman stated that she had numbers available to review that may be helpful for the discussion. She stated that with interest, the county is bringing in more than \$4 million. The average interest rate on CD's, money market accounts, Trust Indiana, and any public funds is a little over 5%. She stated she keeps up with the banks to revisit interest. She continued by saying a new bank has come on board and has the best rate she has seen. She said in 2022 the county brought in around \$1 million but this year is over \$4 million due to investments. She stated the interest rate paid on the Jail Bond is right around 3% with 5% being the average. She said the rate could go lower but her recommendation is that Council not pay off the Jail Bond.

Mark Gorbett stated that since the county is making money on the interest for this bond and the county has capitol, that paying this bond off now would be a mistake. He stated that there could be a

possibility of revisiting paying it off in a year. He, Treasurer Hackman and Auditor O'Connor checked and stated that the bond is due to be paid off in January of 2027 which is not far from now and he is not in favor to pay it off. **President Morales asked Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence if she would like to make a motion to pay off the Jail Bond. She made a motion to pay it off and stated she believes the county is double-dipping on the tax payers.** Bill Lentz stated that Council has spent a lot of money this year and spending more would be tough but he understood where Evelyn was coming from. He said the tax payers can invest their money better than a body of government can. Mark Gorbett stated he realized that it is tax payer money and can be reduced but doesn't want to be in a position to lose that money in case it is needed in the next 3-4 years. President Morales asked if anybody would second the motion before the discussion continued. **Bill Lentz seconded the motion for the sake of continuing discussion.**

Bill continued by stating that from the government side, he understood Mark's point of view but from a tax payer's side, he understood where Evelyn was coming from as well and that the choice is hard. Greg Patterson asked how much the tax payer obligation would be lowered by if Council were to vote to pay off the Jail Bond. Auditor Pia O'Connor answered .0285 cents per hundred dollars of assessed value is what would be saved. Treasurer Hackman said the county would also lose the interest income as well and it would offset any savings. President Morales called for the vote. **Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence voted aye, Bill Lentz voted aye with the rest of Council voting against. With a 2-3 vote, the motion failed.**

The next item to be discussed was the topic of the Rainy Day Fund. Auditor Pia O'Connor asked if the discussion was to still take place in the absence of Matt Miller. Mark Gorbett said he wanted to table the topic until Matt's return because he wanted to be a part of the conversation. He was unable to enter the zoom meeting due to technical issues so the topic would be moved to the next meeting.

President Morales stated that the meeting times for 2024 are open to being changed from 6 p.m. to 3 p.m. He asked Chief Deputy Pattingill to email Leah Beyer and Matt Miller to see if they would be okay with the changes since everyone else agrees.

He stated that Board appointments are the next topic. Chief Deputy Pattingill stated that she would send out an email with a list of who may need to be reappointed and it will be covered in the January meeting.

President Morales asked if any other discussions need to take place, there were none. He continued by thanking everyone for their participation and being orderly and respectful to each other. Attorney Chris Monroe asked if the board intends to retain him for 2024 because he normally signs an agreement at the first meeting in January so he wanted to clarify. Mark Gorbett asked if Attorney Monroe can draw something up for them for the next meeting, he answered yes.

President Morales called for a motion to adjourn. Bill Lentz moved to adjourn, Mark Gorbett seconded and the final meeting for 2023 was adjourned.

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

By: _____
Jorge Morales, President

By: _____
Mark Gorbett, Pro-Tem

By: _____
Greg Patterson, Member

By: _____
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence, Member

By: _____
Matt Miller, Member

By: _____
Bill Lentz, Member

By: _____
Leah Beyer, Member

ATTEST: _____
Pia O'Connor, Auditor
Bartholomew County