

August 10, 2023

**BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**February 14, 2023**

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

The Bartholomew County Council met on February 14, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana.

President Jorge R Morales called the meeting to order.

Pastor Robert Lay of Elizabeth United Methodist Church gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Morales thanked Pastor Lay, recognizing that in addition to being a pastor in our county, he is also the father of our County Recorder Tami Hines, who was also present. He also requested that members of the community introduce themselves prior to speaking in order to capture their names.

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IT Director Scott Mayes was asked to update the Council on the status of the laptops discussed in the work session on February 6, 2023. Director Mayes indicated that the IT equipment should be prepared and distributed to Council members by the end of February.

The first item on the agenda was the Approval of the meeting minutes for January 9, 2023. **Mark E. Gorbett made a motion to approve the minutes; Leah Beyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The next item on the agenda, under Old Business, was a 3% Salary Increase for County Employees. President Morales called for a motion. Mark Gorbett stated that they have been advocating for this raise for over a year in hopes to more successfully retain and recruit good employees. **Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the 3% Salary Increase, retroactive to January 1, 2023, for a total of \$735,000.00. Leah Beyer seconded the motion.**

Bill Lentz stated that we should address other, more significant factors of employee retention, not just salaries and inflation. He also noted that he was all for the raises until the Council Work Session, where he became aware of many requests for funding coming in future meetings. Anticipating these other needs, along with the future property tax increases coming from the State, he will pass on voting for the increase at this time. However, he acknowledged that we have the votes in favor and is he happy for the employees.

Mark Gorbett stated that many of the upcoming requests were made last year but turned down, leaving over \$2,000,000 in surplus last year. There will be hard decisions ahead; much consideration will be given to prioritizing those things, but retaining and taking care of our employees must be a priority for us. President Morales stated that this is one piece

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of prioritizing employee retention; another piece of the matter will be forthcoming in New Business. Leah Beyer asked if they had a figure of the total budgeted expenditure for all the salaries. Chief Deputy Dalene Pattingill stated that because there are so many different departments, that figure is not currently available.

There being no further comments from the Council, President Morales called for questions from the public. Tom Heller, from the audience, asked if this 3% was on top of a recently enacted raise and when had that been implemented. Mark E. Gorbett confirmed that this is additional 3% and would be retroactive to match the previously awarded increase, effective January 1, 2023. President Morales added that Bill Lentz was previously addressing considerations of future budget hearings that will take place in August and be implemented in January of 2024. Hearing no further discussion, **President Morales** closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting and **called for a vote to Approve the Increase the Salaries of County Employees by 3%, effective January 1, 2023. The vote passed 4-2, with Bill Lentz and Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence dissenting.**

The next item on the agenda was a Request from Heather Siesel of the Solid Waste Management Department, to increase the wages of the Solid Waste Employees in the amount of 3% (following the County). This would be a \$10,640 increase for salaried employees and \$7,894.00 for hourly wages, for a total increase, including differential, PERF and SSI of \$23,692.85. She further stated that they could accommodate this amount increase with their existing budget. **Mark Gorbett made a motion to Approve the Solid Waste increase, as presented. Greg Patterson seconded the motion, which passed 4-2, with Bill Lentz and Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence dissenting.**

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The next item on the agenda under New Business was the Addition of a new position in Human Resources. Speaking on behalf of the Bartholomew County Commissioners, Chairman Tony London asked for the addition of a new position to hold the title Employee Resource Administrator. He stated that the three main reasons this position is critical are Protection for liability, Onboarding and Off-boarding, and Benefit Administration. They further believe that this position could become a net-neutral position, as it will free up resources from all other departments, and will add important consistency in procedures. Hopefully this could help “stem the tide” in employee loss. President Morales added that this is the first step in addressing administration benefits provided by the county. This position would continue to grow as the need arises.

Bill Lentz stated that the proposed starting salary is higher than some of our elected officials are earning. **Mark Gorbett motioned to approve the new position of Employee Resource Administrator with a starting salary of \$65,000. Leah Beyer seconded the motion.** Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence expressed concern that she thinks it could take power away from the elected officials. County Assessor Ginny Whipple, via Zoom, stated that, speaking as an elected official, she fully supports creating this position and recognizes the ongoing need of this type of support for both current and future elected officials. President Morales called for comments from the public.

Donna White, from the audience, asked who does this job currently and stated that she feels the \$65,000 salary is excessive. Don Strietelmeier, from the audience, expressed concern that this is moving in the direction of big government and suggests that the elected officials should be able to manage the needs of their department employees efficiently. Tom

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Heller, from the audience, stated that he believes this position is probably a worthy thing to undertake and could potentially “knit together” the organization that is Bartholomew County. Duane Hines, from the audience, asked whose employee this person would be. President Morales replied that it would be the Commissioner’s employee. Amy London, from the audience, commented that, from her experience, a key factor in employee retention in building a relationship with someone in the company within the first two weeks. This position would serve as one of the first points of contact and provide a key relationship and resource, therefore increasing the likelihood of successful longevity.

With no more comments or questions from the audience, **President Morales called for a vote, which passed 4-2, with Bill Lentz and Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence dissenting.**

**President Morales called for a Motion to Amend the Salary Ordinance to accommodate the new position. Greg Patterson made this motion. Leah Beyer seconded the motion, which passed 4-2, with Bill Lentz and Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence dissenting.** Counselor Chris Monroe stated that a second vote in the next meeting will be necessary to Amend an Ordinance. President Morales asked that this be included in the Agenda for the next Council Meeting, scheduled for April.

The next item, under New Business, was an Application for Tax Abatement by Sentry BioPharma, presented by Jason Hester, President of the Greater Columbus Economic Development Corporation and Tim Mitchell, President and CEO of Sentry BioPharma Services.

- *Started in 2005*
- *Built a plant in Indianapolis in 2007*
- *Provide Business-to-Business to Pharmaceutical Companies*

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- *Manages temperature sensitive product*
  - *Distribute product into and out of 43 countries, to date*
- *All products are currently stored only in Indianapolis*
  - *Request from Clients to split their product into two locations*
- *Second location will be Force Holdings Shell Building on Executive Drive*
  - *Sentry BioPharma has purchased the building through its sister company, SV Columbus, LLC*
  - *Sentry BioPharma will invest \$9.8 million to finish the building an additional \$1.1 million to equip the building*
- *10 new jobs will be created at average wage of \$32.80/hour*
- *Upon completion of the building, the estimated property taxes will be almost \$100,000*

John Warner, Vice President from Sentry, added that they are very proud to share that many of the materials they hold are used to create investigational drugs, which are used to go out to clinical trials.

Don Strietelmeier, from the Audience, asked how much of the property tax collected will go to the schools. President Hester stated that the same percentage of any tax dollar would go to the schools. Tom Heller added that during the initial abatement phase-in period, it would be a share of the (approximated) \$175 per year. President Morales stated that this is not a TIF; it is an abatement. Being no additional comments from the audience, President Morales called for a motion.

**Greg Patterson motioned to Approve the tax abatement as applied for by Sentry BioPharma. Evelyn seconded the motion.** Bill Lentz stated that he had made an oath not to vote for any abatements in TIF districts, so he wouldn't support it, although that

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he believes this is a very good company. With no further comments, **President Morales called for the vote, which passed 5-1, with Bill Lentz dissenting.**

The next item was an Application for Abatement by the George Utz, Inc., presented by President Hester along with Penny Grubbs, the Chief Manager with George Utz, Inc. Their previous investment, presented to the Council in 2021, added nearly 80 jobs for a current total of 181 positions. This new addition will invest nearly \$1M to finish out their space, \$22.3M in new equipment and will create another 34 new jobs at \$28.30/hour. They are requesting a ten-year tax phase-in on both real and personal property, which will transition their property taxes from the current payment of \$130,900 per year to an estimated \$1.99M per year in net new property taxes and \$3.83M in total taxes. These numbers include both the previous phase-in, approved in 2021 and the one in this Abatement. Additionally, they are asking to correct a clerical error from the 2021 abatement in which the real and personal property taxes were flipped.

**President Morales called for a motion to approve the Abatement. Greg Patterson motioned to Approve the Tax Abatement, as applied for by George Utz, Inc. Mark Gorbett seconded the motion.** President Morales opened the discussion to the public for questions. Mr. Heller asked if the TIF allocation was extended to the abatement in 2021. President Hester stated that the preexisting building was prior to the TIF and was included in the base. In this current new project, the company will be expected to pay just over \$60,000 in new real property valued at \$950,000. Additionally, on the \$22.3M investment in personal property, they will pay \$490,700 in net new tax that is not captured by the TIF that goes to the general fund. Chris West, German Township Trustee, recalled

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that when George Utz, Inc. first came to the county, they got waylaid when they lost their contract with the United States Post Office, and could have packed up and left. But they stayed and have far exceeded the goals they initially set and have been a welcome addition to the community and the township. With no other comments, **President Morales called for a vote, which passed 5-1, with Bill Lentz dissenting.**

**President Morales asked for Motion to correct the clerical error in the 2021 Abatement. Leah Beyer motioned to Approve the Correction. Greg Patterson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request for an Additional Appropriation for a Court Interpreter Grant, presented by Tammy Johannesen, Circuit Court.

- *Court Interpreter Grant (9826)* \$ 4,969.13  
*This covers interpreters whenever required.*

**Bill Lentz motioned to Approve the Appropriation. Mark Gorbett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request for an Additional Appropriation for a County General, presented by Tammy Johannesen, Circuit Court.

- *County General (1000-36)* \$ 15,000.00
- Jury Fund – Not necessarily for jury payroll, although some of it may go to that. We are currently transporting a jury to and from another county daily to Bartholomew County for a murder trial.*



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**Mark Gorbett motioned to Approve the Appropriation. Leah Beyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously**

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**Mark Gorbett motioned to Approve the Appropriation. Leah Beyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The next item was a Request for an Appropriation for the County General Fund for the 3% salary increase and creation of a new position, in the amount of \$800,000, presented by County Auditor Pia O’Conner, via Zoom. The Council Members discussed this and it was decided that this Appropriation was sufficiently voted on earlier in the meeting and therefore dismissed.

The next item was a Request for an Appropriation for the Opioid Settlement Funds, presented by Sherri Jewett, Executive Director of ASAP. The State of Indiana has made up to \$25 Million available for communities to request as matching funds to their Opioid Settlement dollars.

Teresa Patten, Developer of the BART Program, presented the variety of Recovery Residences that we already have and that will be developed using these funds, as follows:

- **Level I** – homes currently exist locally, typically have no hierarchy and are peer-run, primarily serve people who have been engaged in treatment over time, have sustained recovery and need the support of peers
- **Level II** – homes currently exist, such as Whitney House (Centerstone Property), have a house manager, someone currently in recovery, in-house meetings, rules and structure
- **Level III** – need a certified staff, case managers, life skills, more structure, serve as a bridge for individuals who have spent time in therapeutic and/or correctional facilities and need assistance reintegrating into society, maintain very specific rules about employment, medication, but do not usually provide in-house treatment.
- **Level IV** – Resembles residential, in-patient treatment facility. It is very strict and rigid, will have complete supervision, be run by licensed, clinical staff, provide credentialed staff, life skills, education, and in-house treatment.

Pastor Mark Tieke spoke about an established 501c3 called Bridge to Dove. They have teamed up with Dove Recovery House out of Indianapolis, which is a Level 4 Recovery Facility with a 69-74% success rate. They allow the women to stay for up to 2 years when coming out of treatment. The Goal of Bridge to Dove is to operate a 15-bed facility for women in Bartholomew County, hoping to open in 12 to 24 months.

Rachel Flohr-David, an FFY Prevention and Substance Abuse Council Member, spoke to address that the State Funds state that in addition to Recovery, there must also be a focus on Prevention, Education and Harm Reduction.

Director Jewett stated that the grant opportunity in question opened on January 31 and closes on February 28. The State has earmarked the first round of funding to be used for Jail Treatment Programs, Recovery Residences and Harm Prevention. Because our community has already worked together to identify the needs and gaps of care, they were able to pull together the list of proposed recovery residences and what services they were able to provide. The City Council has agreed to provide their Opioid Settlement Funds, as well. In order to secure the maximum Matching Grant from the State of Indiana, Director Jewett requests that the County's Opioid Settlement Funds be allocated as follows:

- |  |    |            |
|--|----|------------|
| • <i>Opioid Restricted Fund (1237)</i>   | \$ | 445,452.09 |
| • <i>Opioid Unrestricted Fund (1238)</i> | \$ | 190,696.38 |

President Morales stated that all these requests are being funneled through the ASAP program, and the county will be represented by County Council Member Mark Gorbett and Commissioner Carl Lienhoop.

Leah Beyer asked that for clarification on the listed of proposed facilities. Bridge to Dove will be a Level 4 Facility for women; Centerstone will provide Level 3 for men. Director Jewett stated that Ascension/Capital is willing to come in and operate additional Level 2 residences. In addition, although grant money will be requested to help initially

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launch these facilities, these programs will all be self-sustaining. Thrive Alliance will be using the grant money as down payment to purchase five additional recovery homes and an organization like Ascension will lease the properties from Thrive. The State has indicated that even though county only received \$750,000 from the settlement funds, once the match is all in, they may match more than the 750,000. There are also five more settlements coming in the future.

**Mark Gorbett motioned that Opioid Restricted Fund (1237) of \$445,452.09 be Appropriated to the Matching Grant Funds. Greg Patterson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**Mark Gorbett motioned that Opioid Unrestricted Fund (1238) of \$190,696.38 be Appropriated to the Matching Grant Funds. Leah Beyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The next item on the agenda was a Request for the Appropriation of the CHIRP Grant (8922) in the amount of \$33,000.00, as presented by Jail Matron Bobbie Shake. This money was used to fund the overtime used for Operation Pullover. **Bill Lentz motioned to Approve the Appropriation, as presented. Mark Gorbett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously** (Greg Patterson absent).

The next item, under Miscellaneous, was the Consideration of 2023 County Council Appointments. President Morales read the list of Appointments/Liaisons, as follows:

<i>Board /Commission</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Appointee 2023</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Broadband Initiative</i>	<i>Jorge Morales</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Broadband Initiative</i>	<i>Matt Miller</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Extension Board</i>	<i>Greg Patterson</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Greater Columbus Econ Devel</i>	<i>Matt Miller</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Greater Columbus Econ Devel</i>	<i>Leah Beyer</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Health Board</i>	<i>Leah Beyer</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Job Review/Classification</i>	<i>Jorge Morales</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Job Review/Classification</i>	<i>Evelyn Pence</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Job Review/Classification</i>	<i>Matt Miller</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Joint Council/Emergency Dispatch</i>	<i>Mark Gorbett</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Local Emergency Plan Committee</i>	<i>Mark Gorbett</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Col Area Metro Planning Policy Bd.</i>	<i>Bill Lentz</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Parks and Recreation</i>	<i>Evelyn Pence</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Parks and Recreation</i>	<i>Greg Patterson</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Personnel Administration Committee</i>	<i>Matt Miller</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Personnel Administration Committee</i>	<i>Bill Lentz</i>
<i>Commission</i>	<i>Bartholomew Co Redevelopment Com</i>	<i>Jorge Morales</i>
<i>Commission</i>	<i>Bartholomew Co Redevelopment Com</i>	<i>Leah Beyer</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Sheriff Merit Board</i>	<i>Greg Patterson</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Solid Waste Management District</i>	<i>Bill Lentz</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Substance Abuse Public Funding</i>	<i>Mark Gorbett</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>YSC Advisory Committee</i>	<i>Evelyn Pence</i>
<i>Commission</i>	<i>County Plan Commission</i>	<i>Jorge Morales</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>County Commissioner Liaison</i>	<i>Jorge Morales</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Community Corrections Advisory Board</i>	<i>Mark Gorbett</i>
<i>Commission</i>	<i>Alcoholic Beverage</i>	<i>Phyllis Apple</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Parks and Recreation</i>	<i>Brian Weber</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Parks and Recreation</i>	<i>James Mahoney</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>PTABOA/Property Tax Appeals</i>	<i>Barb Dunlap</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>County Board of Zoning Appeals</i>	<i>Eric Scheidt</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Library</i>	<i>Stephen Shipley</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>Library</i>	<i>Gary Gron</i>
<i>Commission</i>	<i>Columbus Economic Development</i>	<i>Roger Hackman</i>

**Mark Gorbett motioned to Approve the Appointments, as presented. Leah Beyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (Greg Patterson, absent).**

President Morales briefly updated news from the Commissioner's Meetings, including an awarded contract for mowing services to Right-of-Way Turf & Ornamental,

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an agreement with Smithville to improve the Wi-Fi in the Government Office Buildings, and the Park Board has a current Heflin Park Restoration Project. In addition, Chris West has been appointed as the new Director of Weights and Measures with Suzanne Randle becoming the note taker for the Council. They also approved a Grant Application for Mental Health services by Judge James Worton.

President Morales called for any further items. Sandra Bush, from the audience, asked for three minutes to address the Council. She stated that she spoke to the Commissioners yesterday. She is a member of Change for Bartholomew County, an animal activist group and advocates for the County to adopt the City Animal Welfare Ordinance. She stated that they should be able to adopt the ordinance without any additional funds.

There being no further business to come before the Council, **Mark Gorbett made a motion to adjourn. Leah Beyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

#### **BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jorge R. Morales, President

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark E. Gorbett, Pro-Tem

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Matt Miller, Member

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evelyn Strietelmeier Pence, Member

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By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leah Beyer, Member

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Lentz, Member

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Patterson, Member

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pia O'Connor, Auditor  
Bartholomew County