

**BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**August 22, 2023**

**Budget Hearings – Day 2**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Present:</b>
Greg Patterson	District 1		Not 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
Christ Monroe		Attorney	Not Present

The Bartholomew County Council reconvened on Tuesday, August 22, 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 at 1:00 p.m.

**1:00 p.m. – Surveyor's Office**

*Present – Surveyor E.R. Gray*

County Surveyor E. R. Gray came before Council to present three budgets. The Cornerstone budget is \$30,000 lower in 2024 because they asked and were approved to

purchase GPS equipment last year. They were also approved to hire a consultant last year to look at the coordinate system to look at the coordinate system in regards to latitude and longitude and how that has changed over the years. That contract was just approved by the Commissioners this week for around \$5,000 with a company called Wilbert who worked with the Surveyor's Office originally to set up the coordinate system. Drainage Board Funds are up \$25.00 for 2024 and the Surveyor budget itself, except for salaries, is down \$1,000.

The largest requested increase is \$66,000 for salaries, primarily for department heads. For the Field Crew Chief, he requested a \$10,000 increase. For the Head of the Field Surveys Department, the requested increase is \$12,400. For the Head of the GIS Department, he requested an increase of \$5,000.

Auditor O'Connor stated that based on Tuesday's consensus, these numbers have been adjusted to the agreed upon 4% increase from their previous salaries. President Morales noted the difference in the request to the adjusted amount as well as the 7% increase for elected officials. These specific increase requests will be addressed in deliberations.

Surveyor Gray added that there is a vacant, full-time position in his office that he has attempted to fill since 2019 while a part-time employee keeps the department going working two days per week. To date, there have been no applicants, though the position needs to be filled and there needs to be some money in the budget to allow the part-time person to stay on and train the full-time person for come crossover time.

Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence asked if Elevate, the GIS System, was going to stop being supported; she was directed to call Jeff Lucas.

President Morales asked if he had considered joining forces with the Assessor to make use of a drone in the future. Surveyor Gray affirmed that it would be extremely helpful and make it possible to have present-day data, as opposed to what is updated only every three to four years. He noted that they contract with an outside company to spray for brush along the regulated drains. They could also use a drone to fly and inspect ditches. Mark Gorbett stated that Sheriff's Department has four drones. Leah Beyer asked if they would need an FAA License to fly them. Matt Miller believes that for public safety, the Sheriff's Department does not need licensing but this type of use probably would need it.

President Morales suggested the Surveyor and Assessor departments get together to collaborate. Leah Beyer asked if the salaries presented included the 1.5% to be in compliance with the state code statute. Surveyor Gray stated that the statute only applies to the elected County Surveyor and yes, it was accounted for in the budget.

### **1:15 p.m. – Coroner**

*Present – County Coroner, Clayton Nolting*

Coroner Clayton Nolting, present via Zoom, came before Council to present his budget. He began by pointing out that there will be a change because of the tablet with a sim card that was approved last year by Council. This will carry a monthly phone bill added to the Communication & Transportation line. That was the only change he initially requested. However, the Pathologist had just notified him that the price for autopsies is going up in 2024, increasing from \$1550 to \$2200 each. As autopsies are now mandatory

on all suspected overdoses and any deal resulting in death that may result in prosecution, he expects increasing numbers in the coming year. Auditor O'Connor asked how many autopsies are budgeted for. He stated that so far there have been 26 to date, which projects approximately 50 for the year. This increase of \$650/each for the estimated 50 autopsies is \$32,500 to be added. Mark Gorbett agrees with Auditor O'Connor that she should add that into the budget now. There were no further questions.

### **1:23 p.m. - Purdue Extension**

*Present – Cora Carter, Director*

*Changes: \$5000 for positions paid from Purdue*

Cora Carter, Director of Coop/Purdue Extension, came before Council to present the 2024 Budget Requests for The 4H Cooperative Extension Office. She stated that Purdue has raised their contractual services by \$5000 this year. That pays the required fee to keep Elisabeth Eaton's, Harriet Armstrong's and her (Director Carter's) positions in the county. She requested a salary increase for the Office Manager position, which requires a bachelor's degree, to encourage better recruitment and retention. There were no other changes.

### **1:30 p.m. - Recorder's Office**

*Present – Tami Hines, County Recorder & Courtney Galbraith, Chief Deputy*

*Changes: Employee raises & Security ID Fund*

County Recorder Tami Hines presented her 2024 budget requests to County Council. She began with the aforementioned 4% raise for employees and special consideration for elected officials. Next, she requested the Security ID Fund (1160), which she is learning how she can access and use those funds. Her plan is to purchase for microfilm cabinets and pay for some of the redaction fees coming from the vendor.

Currently there is a balance of \$888,479 in Perpetuation Fund (1189). Recorder Hines stated that, by law, this fund is restricted to only covering the operating costs of the Recording Office. She is requesting an increase in office supplies, hourly rate for part-time workers, and maintenance and repairs, in hopes to replace some of the scanners that are aging out of usefulness. She also included an amount in machinery and equipment to purchase new desks. She has prepared the required sworn statement verifying the proper use of Perpetuation Funds and will provide it at the appropriate time. Mark Gorbett asked about her Chief Deputy. She stated that her Chief Deputy, Courtney Galbraith, has been with her for almost a year and can perform all of the duties of the Recorder in case of her absence.

#### **1:45 p.m. - Treasurer**

*Present: County Treasurer, Barb Hackman*

*New Employees: No*

*2023 to 2024 Changes: Raises for elected officials, 4% raises for all employees*

County Treasurer Barb Hackman came before Council to present her budget for 2024. She began by requesting raises for her full-time and part-time employees. She stated that having the lockbox next door and with First Financial has been an enormous help. She

added later that she increased the budget for printing and mailing based on the cost of sending out the tax bills, which was approximately \$30,000. Aside from that, she proposed that the possibility of working with National Associates of Counties (NACO) in the future was a worthy consideration. They have asked Bartholomew County to pilot a new program with them and she believes they are a good company worth looking into, particularly for a future Treasurer with less experience and resources. The discounted cost would be \$10,000, and they guarantee to bring at least that value returned in full. They would partner with the Treasurer's Office to assess cash, bank, and the current investment management program. Though she believes it to be a promising program, it was not something she felt she needed for this year, as the interest income by end of 2023 will be \$2M. Last year was a little over \$1M. We currently use Stifle, set up by Auditor O'Connor, which is a broker that does investments with bonds.

President Morales asked if Treasurer Hackman could address the topic of the bond for the jail. She stated that she can only invest money out into the next five years. President Morales said he did not remember what the exact amount for that bond was. Auditor O'Connor stated that if it were paid off in January, it would be right about \$6M. Treasurer Hackman stated that she has been anticipating this possibility and preparing for it, in case the Council makes that decision. Auditor O'Connor stated that the current Jail bond rate is 2.05%. They discussed the wisdom of keeping the current jail bond and the need to evaluate these and other finance changes, interest changes, penalties, etc. Mark Gorbett asked if the county should pay it off so we are not paying the 2.05%.

Treasurer Hackman said the payoff date is January 2027. Bill Lentz asked if she is currently doing treasury bonds, CDs, etc. Treasurer Hackman said she is getting a little over 5% in five-year bonds. She does bonds, municipal bonds, and public fund money markets, which are over 5%.

President Morales asked what Bartholomew County's rating is when they borrow. Auditor O'Connor said when the Commissioners did the bonds for the Highway Garage, Bartholomew County had the highest rate available and received the lowest possible rate, also. Mark Gorbett asked Auditor O'Connor if we can pay off the Jail Bond at any time. She replied that yes, we are past the penalty date and can pay it off at any point without penalty, but it is set to be paid off January 2027.

## **2:00 p.m. - Solid Waste**

*Present – Director Heather Siesel*

Heather Siesel, Director of the Bartholomew County Solid Waste Management District (BCSWMD) came before Council to present her 2024 budget. There is no major landfill work planned, resulting in an overall budget number much smaller than in previous years. They will be increasing the gate rate to \$36.00; it is currently \$34.00. The tax rate will be increased to 3.25 from 2.25. This is necessary to cover increased landfill contract expenses. Landfill contract was increased 5% this year.

100s – They included a 6% increase but will follow whatever the County does. Their salary resolution continues to have loyalty pay. She performed a salary and wages study and identified several positions to be increased in either their salary or hourly rate

based on the findings. Those positions are the Recycling Center Supervisor, Office Manager, Controller, and all hourly Landfill positions. As well, there are several long-term employees with a lot of leave, creating a need to transition the part-time Scale House position to full-time, to be able to cover for the employees on leave. As well, we anticipate the forthcoming retirement of a longtime Controller and will need a three month overlap with a trainee prior to her departure. These changes have been added to the salary resolution. \$1,228,227, which will be adjusted to the wage increase as necessary.

200s – Some increase in supply costs to adjust for inflation.

300s – Services and Charges. They increased the landfill contract service fees, CPI Inflator fees, state operating fees for permit renewals, general increase in fees through IDEM engineering fees for groundwater, storm water monitoring. There will be some decreases in engineering because there is no major landfill work planned in the coming year. This section of budget is \$2,340,750. President Morales asked about the increase in phone budget, going back up to \$5000 from \$4000. Director Siesel stated that telephone service at the landfill had gone under Information Technology's umbrella and those costs were from that transition.

In the Capitals, no major landfill work is planned. There are some repairs that need to be accomplished – A scale house roof, an enclosure for a three-phase pump out in Petersville, a roll-off pad repairs to the concrete, a second oil container at the landfill, additional cardboard containers. In years with no major work, they fund the future closure/post-closure. They estimate closure to be 65 years from now. This section of the budget is \$346,550.



The total budget (without reducing the 6% to 4%) pay increase stands at \$4,017,527.

**2:15 p.m. - Clerk's Office**

*Present: Shari Lentz, County Clerk*

County Clerk Shari Lentz came before Council to present her budget for 2024. Due to COVID in 2020 they moved the early voting location, which is required to be offered 28 days prior to election, to Nexus Park for social distancing. Being a Presidential Election year, it was extremely busy, but with a full poll worker board and bipartisan workers present at all times, it went very well. There was COVID money to cover expenses in 2020. There were no elections in 2021. The Fall Elections next year may again be hosted at Nexus Park, but the rental fee is \$4,900 and there are no more COVID funds.

She requested an increase in Professional Services for legal counsel and to reprogram machines, prepare ballots. They are required to hire a professional to be sure it is done correctly.

Poll Pads had issues in 2020. The cases caused pressure points and many had to be removed, switched for backups and worked with all day long. They were purchased in 2015 and can no longer be updated. Clerk Lentz is requesting the funds to purchase an entirely new set of Poll Pads for \$29,480. President Morales asked if she had worked with the IT Department on this. She replied that no, these are not maintained by IT. He then asked how

many voting locations there would be this November, a City election. – She replied that there would be eight. – President Morales then asked how many locations there would be in the Fall of 2024. She said the election board had not yet voted on that but that there would likely be 13 to 14, and they can add more machines to each location as needed. – President Morales asked if all of the machines have a paper trail, and was Bartholomew County the first county in Indiana to have that? – Clerk Lentz answered that Bartholomew County was the first county in Indiana to have an EV Pad for every machine. Now there will be a case and the EV pad together, which is given to us by the past Secretary of State, Holly Sullivan, who started that process.

### **Break**

As the Council returned from break, President Morales announced that in the month of September there would not be a work session. Instead, on Tuesday September 12, 2023, there will be a regularly scheduled Council Meeting. We will have an Abatement and the First Reading of the County Budget.

Auditor O'Connor had information to share regarding the Coroner's budget. The question had previously been raised as to where in the budget was the \$5,000 that had been paid to Coroner Clayton Nolting for the lease of his personal vehicle. She stated that the money had been found in Professional Services. After discussion, Council members decided to leave the money in the budget in as a cushion to absorb some of the increased expenses incurred by the mandated autopsies. Steps will be taken to assure that those funds will not be directed back as they were originally set up.

### **2:45 p.m. - County Council Budget**

Auditor Pia O'Connor presented the 2024 County Council budget. The 01-11 contains the 3% one time catch up and the 7% elected official increase. Professional Services was decreased, as that was a service for Wagner, Irwin and Sheely and we do that work in-house now. The Council Attorney was increased by 4% and President Morales instructed the same increase to be entered for the Commissioners' attorney, as well.

Auditor O'Connor removed the \$30,000 from Consulting Services. President Morales recommended that we put \$50,000 into Consulting Services to look into the different departments where we have a lot of questions regarding changes in laws and requirements. Mark Gorbett feels it would be like putting tools in our belt. Matt Miller agrees this is a good idea, but who do we hire? He suggests they form a sub-committee to look into consultant firms prior to choosing one. President Morales called for a consensus. All were in agreement except for Bill Lentz, who dissented based on track record. Greg Patterson was not present to vote.

Auditor O'Connor moved on to the \$3000 in the Communications & Transportation and Other Services & Charges in the Council's budget. These funds are there if Council members attend AIC conferences or any other training they may choose to attend. All members agree to leave that in place. There are no additional questions at this time.

### **3:00 - VIP**

### **Visitor's Center**

Nicholas Sprague, Treasurer of the VIP Commission and Misty Weisensteiner, Executive Director Columbus Visitor's Center came together before Council to present their 2024 budget and answer any questions. Office Manager Robin Gray also attended. The budget request is \$1,550,000, which is what they project will be the 5% collected from the tourism tax in the county. Because the budget follows behind collection, they must adjust their budget as necessary if tourism declines. The budget amount for 2023 was \$1.42M; they have already collected \$925,000 so far this year, which tracks as it should. They also hold a four-month reserve in case of a global pandemic or other major occurrence. Council agrees the budget seems in order; nothing would be changed. Leah Beyer asked if they were considered city, county or stand-alone employees. Executive Director Weisensteiner replied that they are their own independent staff and have a large group of volunteers to assist with tours, as well.

### **3:00 - Information Technology**

Director of Information Technology, Scott Mayes came before Council to present the IT budget for 2024. The goals of "Modernizing County Government," improving and updating the electronic and digital services to the public continue to be the focus and long-term goals of the department. Some of the tools and methods used to accomplish these goals are using Microsoft, Infrastructure, licensing the VMware services, cloud services, and some of the Microsoft 365 services. The Public Safety Platform is a joint, shared-

expense project with the City of Columbus. Cyber security is getting a new network environment this year.

The Department, as a whole handled over 30,000 phone calls and 1,500 tickets in the past 12 months. Upcoming projects include new case management software for the Youth Service Center; initial cost will be \$25,000, annual upkeep \$11,500. He also mentioned the Kiosks for digital check-ins for Court Services and Work Release Center. This potentially reduces and replaces receptionists. The estimated cost for the Kiosk System is \$50,000 initially, then \$5,000 per year maintenance. The 911 Center is anticipating some IT phone system updates. These will take more than one year to complete. The Sheriff's Department will need some public safety software updates that will cost approximately \$18,000 as well as \$6,000 for integrations equipment and training initiatives. The State has advised us that all county employees will soon be required to use a multi-factor authentication process to log in and gain access to information.

We are looking at a new, integrative, electronic workflow system that will begin at onboarding, flow into the new timekeeping software and will then be capable to share information into other departments' systems as well. Director Mayes noted that he has one employee on staff who is a data integration specialist who would help oversee this project. Part of modernizing and sharing data in the systems includes facilitating digital input options for the departments who currently record fieldwork by hand on paper and come back to the office to enter their data. These departments are Animal Control Office, Coroner's Office, Assessor, Health Department, Surveyor, Weights and Measures, just to

name a few. Bill Lentz asked about the time cards. Auditor O'Connor stated that we *will* eliminate paper time cards by the end of the year. Director Mayes mentioned that when buying electronic and computer equipment for the county, he practices centralized purchasing and often saves up to 55%.

In closing, President Morales commended Director Mayes for the service he and his department provide, affirming that they are just as important to the First Responders as the First Responders are to the rest of us. Without them, the First Responders would not be able to do what they do for anyone else.

### **3:45 - Emergency Management**

Shannan Cooke, Director of Emergency Management, came before Council to present her budget for 2024. She requests a 6% salary increase for both the Director and Deputy Director. At the recommendation of the Commissioners, she also requested a one-time salary adjustment to \$63,779 to restore the previous \$9,000 gap that was altered after the salary study of 2022 increased the Deputy Director's salary last year. Of note: The EMA office receives a 50% salary reimbursement grant that has a cap of \$55,000. This year, their total still falls under that cap; next year may not.

Director Cooke states that the only other change is line 03-20, the Everbridge Contract. This is 55/45 shared with the City of Columbus. We are signing a contract from 2024 through 2026, and our portion increased by \$544.

She also had the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Budget. She decreased the planning by \$1,500 and just increased the Haz Met Equipment by \$1,500.

### **3:52 p.m. - E911**

E911 Director Tod Noblitt requested a \$1,000 increase for supplies, printing and advertising and a \$1,000 increase for recruitment and professionalism. He hopes to focus more on recruiting from job fairs and reports he has one recent recruit from the C4 program.

The Statewide 911 budget originally requested a 6% salary increase but that has been adjusted to 4%. It does include “tier bumps” based on years of service. Director Noblitt stated he had not included a request for increased overtime for the eclipse but may need another \$10,000 to cover the event. President Morales suggested that they go ahead and add that into his budget now rather than having him come back later to ask for additional appropriations. Council members agreed and it was done. Insurance was increased by 5% at the advice of the Auditor’s office. He added \$11,000 for cellular air cards and monthly fees and \$8,800 for the Carr Hill Tower, which is the E911 back-up communication system, which is also used by three other organizations and has had a significant increase in cost.

### **4:04 p.m. - Weights and Measures**

Director of Weights and Measures, Chris West, came before Council to present his budget for 2024. He requested a salary increase of 6%, a maintenance increase of \$600 for a set of tires and \$400 for to replace the batteries in the Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). He also requested \$900 for required association dues, conference fees and hotel

expense for required Continuing Education Conference and AED, CPR and First Aid Training Certifications.

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