

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY COUNCIL

January 8, 2024

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
Dalene Pattingill	Auditor	Chief Deputy	Present
Chris Monroe		Attorney	Present

The Bartholomew County Council met on January 8, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana.

Auditor Pia O'Connor called the meeting to order, led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Auditor Pia O'Connor continued the meeting by asking for a nomination for the 2024 County Council President. **Mark Gorbett made a motion and nominated the current President, Jorge Morales, to continue serving in 2024. Leah Beyer seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

President Morales continued the meeting by asking for a nomination for President Pro-Tem. **Leah Beyer made a motion and nominated the current Pro-Tem, Mark Gorbett, to continue serving in 2024. Greg Patterson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item was the approval of Minutes for meetings held on 11/30/2023 and 12/12/2023. President Morales asked Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence if she had any corrections that were submitted for the minutes. Mrs. Strietelmeier-Pence stated that there were no corrections needed. President Morales called for a motion to approve both sets of minutes. **Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Leah Beyer seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item covered was an E-911 Center Overview for 2023 presented by E-911 Director Todd Noblitt. Todd began by stating that it was a very busy year with dispatching for over twenty public agencies for both Bartholomew County and the city of Columbus. He continued by stating the E-911 center took 132,000 phone calls, down by 1% from the previous year. Out of the 132,000 calls received, 40,303 were actual emergency calls with a 4.6% increase over 2022. There were 6,745 texts to 911 transactions with a 44% increase over 2022. Todd mentioned texts to 911 have been extremely helpful in many situations for 2023. He continued by stating that they dispatched 104,076 law enforcement calls for service with an 11.7% increase over 2022, the fire department saw a significant increase of 25.1% calls with 16,671 fire calls dispatched, EMS responded to 10,475 calls with a 1% increase over 2022, and Animal Control calls reached 3,979 with a 5% increase over 2022.

Todd stated that the state mandated special training in 2023 for 911 centers, and though that was the first year it was mandated, it had little effect on the staff because the center had always provided a lot of training for staff. He continued by stating the E-911 center is audited yearly by the FBI and the Indiana State Police due to the access they have to private information and they received a great audit for 2023. He said they were also audited by the Indiana State Board 911 for cyber-readiness and received a perfect score. He mentioned that staffing has been an issue in years past, but when the Council approved the increase in salaries and shift pay in 2023, it significantly changed the staffing situation for the E-911 center. He stated they currently have 30 dispatchers, 22 full-time and 3 in training and are working to hire more.

Todd said the other big topic he wanted to cover was revamping the E-911 dispatch area. He said the desks, computers, tech equipment, etc. is around 20-25 years old. He said if the revamp is approved, they should be able to pay for everything out of the Cell Tower monies. He said the goal is to upgrade the space so they can occupy it for the next several years. President Morales asked how crowded the space is for the dispatchers. Todd said it's very crowded since the old desks and equipment take up so much space, the upgrade of newer things will alleviate the issue of space. Greg Patterson asked if there are any practices in line to cut down on swatting calls. Todd answered by saying that all calls are treated the same, but that dispatchers are trained to look/listen for signs and signals to be able to weed out the swatting calls to the best of their ability. Mark Gorbett stated that he wanted Council to be aware that there is a possibility for a 2025 ambulance contract. President Morales opened the floor for questions. There were no questions and he thanked Todd for his time.

The next item covered was the 2024 Contract for Legal Services. President Morales asked Attorney Chris Monroe if there were any changes. Leah Beyer read the changes of cost in the contract which were as follows:

- Cost for 2024 Council Meetings: \$16,469 to be paid in 12 monthly installments of \$1,372.42
- Cost for work outside of Council: \$175 per hour

Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the 2024 Contract for Legal Services as presented by Attorney Chris Monroe. Greg Patterson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

President Morales continued with the next item which was the 2024 County Council appointments. He stated that Leah Beyer is the liaison for the Board of Health, Mark Gorbett is the liaison for Substance Abuse, and asked if they would like to continue their positions. Both Leah and Mark agreed to continue in these positions. President Morales stated that Matt Miller has been having difficulties attending the Greater Columbus Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and that Leah Beyer is the

proxy, he continued by stating they will be switching positions with Leah Beyer being the liaison and Matt Miller the proxy. President Morales stated that Roger Hackman will need to be reappointed in the February meeting. **Mark Gorbett made a motion to approve the changes presented by President Morales and Roger Hackman's appointment to the Economic Development Commission once contacted. Leah Beyer seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The next item covered was the 2024 Agreement for Services with Greater Economic Development. Commissioner Tony London stated that he and Larry Kleinhenz will be switching positions with Larry Kleinhenz being on the Chamber Board and Tony being on the EDC Board. He stated that county participation has increased in the EDC to match the city in order to bring more businesses like King's Hawaiian to Bartholomew County. Commissioners will be paying \$110,000 per year the EDC which is the highest level and will match the city. The Commissioners and the Mayor will each have a permanent seat on the executive board.

The next item was the 2024 Council Meeting Schedule. Auditor Pia O'Connor stated that the schedule that was given out to Council was showing Tuesday dates by mistake. Chief Deputy Pattingill stated she would correct the schedule with the Monday dates. Auditor O'Connor stated that work sessions would be scheduled as needed.

President Morales stated that everything on the agenda was covered and opened the floor for discussion. Mark Gorbett stated that he had a couple of things to point out: one being that there is a potential for additional funding for the Court House for the 2025 budget, the second being the deterioration of the Youth Service Center (YSC). Commissioners Larry Kleinhenz and Tony London agreed that that discussion can be put on hold due to ongoing negotiations as far as cost for the Court House project. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that in regards to the project for the YSC, the County Commissioners are waiting on further direction from the County Council.

Mark Gorbett stated he took a tour of the YSC the week prior and was appalled by the state of the building and the current environment for the workers. President Morales asked Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence if she still held the position of Liaison to the YSC, to which she answered yes but that she had not been to the center in person and has only attended meetings over Zoom. President Morales continued by stating that the center is in a pitiful state. Mark Gorbett said it is likely that a project for the YSC needs to be on a five-year plan. Commissioner Kleinhenz stated that the building was never meant to be a holding facility and the question would be whether a new center needs to be built and that decision is in the hands of the County Council. He continued by stating that it will be a very costly project. Matt Miller suggested forming a sub-committee that looks at all aspects of the project, financially and otherwise, to take emotion out of any decisions being made. President Morales asked if Matt would be interested in being the head of that project, to which Matt answered yes. Mark Gorbett and Auditor Pia O'Connor both expressed interest in working with Matt Miller on this project.

President Morales brought up the topic of the Rainy Day Fund not being on the agenda for this meeting. Auditor O'Connor stated it would be a better idea to cover that topic in the February meeting that way there is time to have numbers prepped and as up-to-date as possible. She continued that adding back into the Rainy Day Fund will not be an issue stating that the \$2.7 million spent on the King's Hawaiian project can be put back in the fund, in addition to extra money if necessary.

Matt Miller mentioned that during the December meeting, he was not able to enter the Zoom meeting due to technical issues. He asked if there was a way to have one single Zoom link for each Council meeting that way everyone has the same link and it is easier to join virtually when necessary. Chief Deputy Pattingill said she believed there was a way to do that and would look into it.

President Morales asked if there were updates from the boards and committees. Greg Patterson stated he attended the Sheriff Merit Board and there were 13 candidates passed onto them, with another three in waiting and the pipeline is full. He stated they wanted to start a review of the pension fund and

create a task force from county council, merit board and sheriff and that he volunteered to take on that task.

Commissioner Tony London said that he wanted to give an update on the Broadband project and stated that in mid-December the first county residents went online and ten-thousand more addresses would be available in 2024 and the project should be completed towards the end of 2025. He continued by stating they are working on a project that will give the public free Wi-Fi in all county parks.

Evelyn Strietelmeier-Pence stated that she had previously asked about a pickle ball area at the park and there was concern about having bathrooms available for patrons to use at the courts. Commissioner Tony London stated that there will be a twelve court pickle ball complex built to the west of the current restrooms and playground area. He stated that the commissioners will be reaching out to the City for assistance with space for parking as well.

President Morales called for a motion to adjourn. **Mark Gorbett moved to adjourn, Matt Miller seconded and the meeting 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