

**WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL AND COMMISSIONER MINUTES  
TUESDAY JULY 30, 2018**

The Warren County Council met for their second meeting in the month of July 2018. Present for the meeting were: John Comer, Clay Andrews, Sharon Hutchison, George Taylor, Laurie "Lee" Kay, Steve McIntosh, Steve Eberly, Brian Jordan and Nancy Litzenberger, County Attorney. Also, in attendance Hunter Reece, John Kuiper, Charity Shettle, Bill Miller. The meeting was called to order by John Comer, Council President and Steve Eberly, Commissioner President.

Hunter Reece, Judge, presented information concerning the Court Budget 2019. There have been substantial increases in the court cases over the last year, doubled on most. Reece explained the 2016 – 2018 information concerning the increases. Over the last 18 months \$115,000 in grants and third-party funding has been received for the circuit court. There is a new tax intercept program for traffic tickets. This will give an infraction a notice to the Department of Revenue and the tax refunds are not given if the ticket is not paid. There also is a late fee of \$25.00 for tickets that Reece began this year which has generated approximately \$1,000 back to the general fund. There has been approximately \$35,000 reimbursed by the State for Public Defenders in 2017. This is the pauper council line item which is increased 25,000 in the 2019 budget. Reece looks for the State to change the reimbursement in the future. Despite the heavy increase in criminal court the 2017 budget still came in \$17,000 under budget. There are additionally a couple of new programs such as mediation grant, CASA program which are fully funded grants. Reece explained a moved for one deputy clerk to share between the Clerk's office and Court, Jill Reynolds. The amount of case work increase has caused a lot of extra time needed for each of the court deputies. The increase in volume of 200% is hard on the court staff. Due to the amount of work, Reece is asking for salary increases to match the Auditor's Office deputies which was increased in 2018 for the HR/Payroll/Accts Receivable plus 3% cost of living increase. From 2007 to 2018 there has only been a \$10,000 increase in the court budget over all the years. The 2 employees are overworked as there are now e-filings, abstracts, etc. that are time sensitive. When there are items that are needed immediately, it takes one of the deputies away leaving one to maintain the Court. The court deputy responsibilities have increased per State changes. Taylor questioned if there are times during the year that they are busier than others. Reece stated that a lot of time in December things are a little slower. Hunter stated that he will have a Court Deputy that will be having surgery later this year and possibly early next year as well. Reynolds will be filling in part time, but Reece stated he will need to hire a temp to cover as well. Reece is asking for an additional \$900 on top of the cost of living increase for all 2 Court Employees. Pro-tem added to the 2019 budget for \$200 previously John Rader did the pro-tem work but has retired. Bob Hall has been tasked for another county as well. Hunter is trying to schedule his vacation for 2019 as he will need a senior judge for the cases to be seen during that time. The pro-tem is paid \$25.00 a day. Kay proposed a \$1500 total increase to the deputies and \$750 for Reynolds in the court budget, all agreed. Additionally, the possibility of adding a position next year if the increase continues. Hutchison stated that the County might consider a part time up to 30 hours a week with full time benefits. Kay questioned that there were funds remaining in the surveyor deputy budget. Weston-Hubner explained that a deputy has taken days unpaid as she has no sick or vacation time remaining over the last couple of years. Comer questioned the deputy issue and if this has been discussed with the office holder. Eberly stated that he will discuss this issue with Randy Haddock. There are items for this that need to be addressed in the handbook as well as to the granting without pay for routine matters.

John Comer discussed the increase that was requested for the Council Salaries to \$4,000 Council Members and \$4,500 for the President as they are the lowest paid in the State. All agreed to the increase. Kay stated that with the increased workload for the Council/Commissioner Secretary and increase of \$2,000. Discussion ensued on the sheriff pension request for 2019. The cost of living increase of \$112,525.00 was approved by all.

Tom Hetrick, Commissioner, teleconferenced in to discuss the County Farm Contracts. Hutchison suggested having the farms bid out every 5 years as having cash rent, this would provide an actual number for budgeting. Eberly discussed the loss that is to be considered to the farmer. Stewardship a lot of times goes away with the cash rent option. Hutchison stated that the Council and Commissioners are liable to the taxpayers for a deficit. Hetrick stated there is no Will on the County Farm, there is on the Followell Farm. The contract to Herman Fink is not a lifetime as the contracts are signed each year and should stay 50/50. The contracts are the Commissioners purview. Hetrick wanted to clarify from the last meeting minutes corrections as such. McIntosh clarified that the County Farm was purchased in 1869 with 440 acres from Tom Chenoweth. Comer stated that the County Farm was the site of the County 4-H Fair in years past. Eberly stated that a public access is being formalized in the Rainsville area. There is a area at Mooreshill bridge that the county owns and people park there on the south side right now. A trash barrel would need to added to keep the liter down.

John Comer discussed the Ambulance information that was gathered by Bill Miller as well as discussions that Comer had with Bruce Buchanon, Benton County Council, concerning the Benton County EMS. The cost is \$940,000 per year plus ambulances. Jordan stated that the amount is the general amount as Parke County. Comer the issue with transfers as Benton does not have a hospital and this is a plus for our citizens. Eberly discussed adding an EMT training as the at the Learning Center.

Lee Kay inquired concerning funding through LEDO for part time grant writer. There are many grants that could be utilized by the County. Eberly stated that this would need to be discussed with the Foundation Board. Kay stated that the street fair in Williamsport on Saturday was wonderful. Ehler stated that there was a band on Saturday night as well. The Williamsport Fire Department will be having a car show, barbeque cookoff, etc. on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

Steve Eberly stated the grant writer option is something that the County as well as the Towns could utilize. Additionally, there are many options with KIRPC as well. Grant writing is something that needs to be addressed eventually. Hutchison discussed the KIRPC meeting last week. Jordan stated that the value of a grant writer would be an opportunity for the County and Towns to have funds coming in that would aid the budgets. Eberly stated that the grants for the Town of Williamsport utilities as well as the West Lebanon sewer and water from 1990 would something to consider. The last month Economic Development funded the rate study for water and sewage as well. Kay stated that having the township trustees involved would be very helpful as well.

John Comer inquired about the rate changes for the LIT funds that had been discussed at the last meeting. McIntosh stated that we do have the 21<sup>st</sup> highest of 92 in the State for LIT tax at 2.12%. Comer stated that the Property tax replacement credit is also included. McIntosh suggested not increasing but moving the rates with a net change of 0% overall. Hutchison stated that more funds need to go into the public safety and net 0% is recommended. Steve McIntosh made a motion to mover the pubic safety to 0.3% and economic development to 0.2% which would possibly net around \$78,000.00 and would not increase income taxes. Sharon Hutchison seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Robin Weston-Hubner, Auditor, presented requests from several office holders to increase the part time hourly rates. The part time hourly rates were discussed. Currently the part time rates are Jail inexperienced \$10.50 and experienced \$11.50, Courthouse inexperienced \$10.00 and experienced \$10.50 as well as Highway inexperienced \$11.75 and experienced \$17.00. This is something that was discussed in detail. It was decided to increase the rates to Courthouse inexperienced \$11.00 and experienced \$13.00, Jail inexperienced \$12.00 and experienced \$17.00.

There was a request to add a Highway uniform line into the budget by the Highway Department. This would allow for uniform purchases of up to \$100 per person. It was agreed to add \$2,500 line for uniforms in the Maintenance and Repair Highway Budget.

Highway Budget was discussed and decided to leave the Stone budget at \$600,000 which was lowered to add to the equipment line.

There were changes to the July 23<sup>rd</sup> minutes that were suggested and the minutes will be corrected to be signed at the next meeting. Additionally, there were corrections to statements that Tom Hetrick had suggested during this meeting.

Charity Shettle stated that the minutes from July 3<sup>rd</sup> mistakenly stated that she had issues with the APC Attorney and she stated that this was incorrect. Weston-Hubner will listen to the meeting to verify.

The next County Council meeting will be the Budget Hearing being held on August 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, George Taylor made a motion to adjourn with a second from Lee Kay. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST: Robin Weston-Hubner WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL  
Robin Weston-Hubner

John Comer  
John Comer, President

Laurie Kay  
Laurie "Lee" Kay

Clay Andrews  
Clay Andrews

Steve McIntosh  
Steve McIntosh, Vice President

Sharon Hutchison  
Sharon Hutchison

Adam Hanthorne  
Adam Hanthorne

George Taylor  
George Taylor

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