

Vermillion County Council

Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2018

6:30 p.m.

Commissioner's Courtroom, 2nd Floor, Courthouse

- I. Call to order. The Vermillion County Council convened in a regular meeting on Monday, January 8, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.
- II. Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.
- III. Roll Call. Members present were William Brent Bush, Ashley James, Randy Dreher, James McLain, President Jill Wesch, Michael Carty, Robert Spence, Auditor Amy Tolbert, and First Deputy Auditor Stephanie Simpson.
- IV. Election of officers.
 - a. Council President. Wesch made a motion to nominate Michael Carty for Council President, seconded by Bush. All in favor, motion carried.
 - b. Council Vice President. Bush made a motion to nominate Randy Dreher for Council Vice President, seconded by Spence. All in favor, motion carried.
- V. Approval of Minutes. A motion was made by Dreher to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2017 meeting and from the December 18, 2017 meeting, seconded by McLain. All in favor, motion carried.
- VI. Treasurer's Report. Carty acknowledged receipt of the Treasurer's Report.
- VII. Comp Time Report. Carty said the comp time went up \$2,300 from last month, he stated that was to be expected due to the bad weather we have had. Dreher stated that the highway employees have done a remarkable job with the county roads.
- VIII. Transfer of Funds.

Reporting only. Health Department transferring \$25.00 from Travel to Advertising.

Reporting only. Courthouse transferring \$218.40 from Electricity to Travel.

Reporting only. Extension transferring \$160.00 from Equipment Maintenance to Computer Copier Rent.

Reporting only. Commissioners Court transferring \$1,000.00 from Solid Waste Expenses to Additional Expenses for County Attorney.

Reporting only. Commissioners Court transferring \$85,000.00 from Group Insurance to Stipend.

Transfer of Funds. Pre-Trial Diversion is requesting to transfer \$12,000.00 from Support Staff to Deputy Prosecutor Part-Time. A motion was made by Spence and seconded by James to allow the Pre-Trial Diversion transfer. All in favor, motion carried.
- IX. Additional Appropriations.

No additional appropriations.
- X. Open Issues
 - a. Health Insurance. Insurance agent Jacque Pentell from USI presented information on the health insurance. Pentell stated the rates negotiated in 2017 were less than those in 2014. She said they market the insurance and bring the top four quotes to the commissioners then they are narrowed down to two. Pentell said the spousal carve out in 2017 saved the county \$69,245 not including the \$19,000 that the county put into Health Savings Accounts for those employees who opted to utilize the HSA. Carty asked James to have the health insurance committee make a recommendation for the upcoming renewal.
 - b. Southern Power – Economic Development Agreement. Dylan Rikken stated that the Economic Development Council met earlier and discussed the Southern Power project and is making a recommendation that a Redevelopment

Commission be established for the county. A. Tolbert said the Commissioners voted to establish a Redevelopment Commission at their last meeting but they don't have an ordinance yet. County Attorney Jon Spurr is working on the ordinance. The Council will appoint two members, the Commissioners will appoint three and there will be one non-voting advisory member from the North Vermillion School Board. Rigger stated that once the Redevelopment Commission has been established they will be the main acting body that will be dealing with any type of agreement. Carty stated that if someone from the Council was interested they could serve on the Redevelopment Commission Board. James expressed interest in serving on the Redevelopment Commission Board. The Council will make their appointments once the Commissioners sign the ordinance to establish a Redevelopment Commission.

- c. LIT (Local Income Tax) Budget. There was discussion on the LIT budget requests they have received. Carty said if we approved everything that is requested from Public Safety there would be \$447,739.40 left. Carty asked if the request on the Certified Shares of a metal detector, three handheld metal detectors, DVR system with high resolution cameras and four security officers could be included in Public Safety. A. Tolbert said according to the State Board of Accounts it can. Carty said the county needs to keep the jail remodel in mind and that if they borrow \$20 million at 2 percent interest, there will be a payment needed of around \$1.2 million. Carty suggested they leave certified shares alone to start accumulating money for the remodel.

James stated her concern over restrictions to the public safety funds. She said the public safety is more limited use. James said she would hate to tie up all certified share money if a project came up that needed funding that public safety couldn't fund. James also stated that the jail remodel will result in more employees that will also need funded. Dreher asked if they could hire an outside agency to provide courthouse security, Sheriff Mike Phelps said yes, but it would probably cost more.

Helt Township Trustee Kevin Wickens spoke about the request presented by the township trustees. Wickens said the townships decided to meet as a group and put their proposal together. The trustees are requesting \$711,271.60 for the year to place paid firefighters/EMTs at Black Diamond, Dana, Cayuga, Perrysville and Newport Fire Departments. Wickens said he talked to Rockville and some other surrounding fire departments and said they have full time firemen but don't offer benefits. He said they decided to pay higher salaries and not offer health insurance in order to keep costs down. He said the townships would need to set policy and procedures in their departments. Wickens said the townships will have to run payroll and not all know how to, but will need to learn. Wickens said he is willing to help and is committed to help others and will also help oversee how the money is spent. Wickens said if money is given to each township and they have a surplus at the end of the year, then the council could reduce their distribution for the following year. Carty said he is struggling with who will oversee that the money is being spent the way it is intended.

Wickens also discussed the problems in the fire departments and stated that this won't fix them but it is a step in the right direction.

Wickens shared data from the Dana Fire Department. He said there is a better response on evening and weekends from volunteers. He also stated that if the request is denied that Helt Township will be reducing money from each department to fund this and hire a daytime person. He said the proposal the

townships came up with will get people on the roads faster and eliminate them from having to go to the fire house and then to the scene.

Vicky Ellis said Clinton Township already employs three full time EMT's and relief drivers. She said their need is for debt for trucks, for equipment and to pay higher wages to keep the employees they have so they won't have to look for higher paying jobs.

Albert Clark said their department covers Duke Energy, International Paper, North Vermillion schools, and Vermillion Rise, and this would greatly reduce response times. Carty said there is no question that this is a good purpose for the money, but who will be responsible and oversee the whole project.

Emergency Management Director Mark O'Heir said the township trustees would do so, and that they all met and are all asking for the same thing. He said the townships will all get together and write an operating guide.

Carty said it is hard when dealing with four or five different people and would be easier if there was one person to coordinate it all. O'Heir said the trustees plan on meeting more regularly and he said he could facilitate the meetings and help with the guides. McLain asked O'Heir if he could be the go to guy and O'Heir said he could.

Joey Tolbert stated that if you had three paid responders, from Helt, Vermillion and Eugene Townships, responding to Vermillion Rise that would be a great improvement and it would help save property and lives. J. Tolbert also stated the county wants to grow and this could be a selling point for potential businesses looking to locate at Vermillion Rise.

Carty again stated that the concern is not the money but the accountability. He stated he appreciates all the hard work the townships have put into this. Carty suggested a special meeting next week to discuss it further. It was decided to have the special meeting Tuesday, January 16, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

d. 2018 Appointments.

Economic Development Appointment. Carty said that White Construction is one of the ten largest employers in Vermillion County and is eligible to be appointed to the Economic Development Council. A motion was made Dreher to appoint Buddy White to the Economic Development Council, seconded by Wesch. All in favor, motion carried.

Council Attorney. Carty said they had interest expressed by Henry Antonini and by the firm of Cox, Zwerner, Gambill and Sullivan, with Scott Craig and Donald Bonomo to represent the county.

James asked about any potential conflicts, since Craig also represents the City of Clinton. Craig said he didn't feel that would be an issue. James also asked about any potential conflict with Henry Antonini because he has accompanied Southern Power to council meetings. Antonini said his representation of Southern Power is limited; it was basically to introduce them to the Council.

County Clerk Amy Griffin stated she had researched the position and did not feel the council attorney should be offered health insurance, especially after cutting benefits from the employees through the spousal carve out.

Dreher said with Craig and Bonomo that money would be paid to the firm and there would not be any benefits. Craig said no, it would be a 1099.

Dreher stated that both parties are qualified and it is a tough decision but looking at the saving that is a substantial amount of money we would be saving.

A motion was made by Dreher to retain Scott Craig and Donald Bonomo and their firm as council attorney, seconded by James. The motion was approved 5 - 2 with McLain and Spence voting no. Motion carried.

Having no further business to come before the Council, the motion was made to adjourn by McLain, seconded Wesch. All in favor, motion carried.

AYE

NAY

Michael Carty, President

Randy Dreher, Vice President

William Brent Bush

Ashley James

James McLain

Jill Wesch

Robert Spence

ATTEST:

Amy Tolbert, Auditor