

SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING - THURSDAY AT 5:00 P.M.

The Switzerland County Council met in special session pursuant to law and by being duly advertised.

Those present: council: Tom Conroy, Steve Crabtree, Jeff Darling, Terry Hall, Mike Jones, Rachel Schuler, and Glenn Scott and the auditor, Gayle Rayles. The council attorney, Cody Kendall, was absent.

The meeting was opened by Mike who also led the pledge of allegiance.

Mike asked if Gayle had any preliminary comments. She explained that Frank has suggested the budget, as presented, be reduced by \$200,000.00. She felt that it is largely due to the amount of the additional appropriations he cited in his write-up. She reminded the Council that the additions consisted of employee benefits and donations paid for with Casino Revenue. There was also the additional appropriations done in January that were the result of the State holding the County's 2014 budget to the same level as 2013 even though there were sufficient funds. On the advice of the DLGF the 2014 budget was reduced and then the additional appropriations were done in January. She also suggested there be a building maintenance account added to the General Fund. Other than that, she felt the budgets submitted by the departments were within range but did not include any employee pay increases.

There were many employees present. Mike asked if anyone in the audience had something they wanted to say. Judge Coy commented on the large difference in what his and other employees make compared to the animal shelter employees. There was some discussion on this matter.

Steve Lyons asked the Council to consider hiring a County Engineer. He said that the County would be reimbursed \$20,000 from the State toward an engineer's salary. There were several questions regarding what a county engineer would be responsible for. Steve said they would design the approaches on the bridges and oversee bids. They would also be responsible for damage assessment after storms for any possible FEMA reimbursements. The recent cost for engineering services is \$47,000.00 for evaluations of slippages from storm damage and other miscellaneous bids and etc. The hope is that we could keep the cost of paying an outside firm to a minimum.

There was a discussion concerning the Health Dept. budget. Gayle said we took \$100,000.00 out of Casino Revenue earlier this year to supplement their 2014 budget and it will probably take another \$20,000.00 later this year to keep them in the black for 2014. No changes were suggested for their 2015 budget.

There was a discussion on the additional revenue the Highway Dept. receives since the State made their changes to the distribution formula. There was a discussion on the amount of Casino Revenue used to supplement the budget.

SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING - PAGE 2

Jeff made a motion to reduce the pay for the council and commissioners by \$1,000.00 per member and give the employees a 1% increase for 2015. Glenn seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 6 to 1 with Steve voting against.

Gayle brought up the additional pay for the auditor for the secretarial responsibilities. Steve said that a person running an office should know the duties and that being the secretary for council and commissioners is part of those duties. Gayle said that she had been aware of the responsibility, but when she took office in 2011 there were 26 evening meetings a year and now it is up to 50. Tom made a motion to pay the Auditor and additional \$1,000.00 a year. Jeff seconded the motion and the motion carried 5 to 2 with Steve and Mike voting against.

Judge Coy asked if he could reduce his budget by \$15,000.00 would the council consider giving the employees a 2% increase. There was some discussion on this that led to Judge Coy rescinding his offer.

Mike made a motion to increase the employees' pay by an additional 1%, for a total of 2% and to exclude the Council and Commissioners from the pay increase for 2015. Steve seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 4 to 3 with Jeff, Glenn and Terry opposed.

Terry made a motion to restore the \$1,000.00 to the council and commissioners previously voted on in Jeff's motion, seconded by Mike and the motion carried with Jeff and Tom opposed.

Glenn suggested Council review the General Fund budget line by line. Several cuts were made during this process resulting in net budget decreases before pay increases of \$38,950.00.

Council discussed meeting dates for the Casino Revenue percentages review. Mike is to send out emails to the members to coordinate this.

With no further business to come before council, Tom made a motion to adjourn, second by Steve and all agreed. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

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Attest: _____
Gayle A. Rayles, Auditor
Switzerland County, Indiana