

REGULAR MEETING – WEDNESDAY AT 5:00 P.M.

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

Those present: Mike Bear, Lisa Fisher, Andy Haskell, Rachel Schuler, Glenn Scott, and John Welch, and the sheriff, Nathan Hughes. Council member Elizabeth Jones and the auditor, Gayle Rayles, were absent.

After some discussion the minutes of the previous meeting of January 17th were approved as presented on a motion by Mike, seconded by Andy and all agreed.

#1 Billy Kay – Salvation Army

Ms. Kay came to speak to council about funding for 2017. They are requesting \$6,000.00 from the casino revenue for their emergency assistance program. They are in the process of trying to find someone to replace Bert and Debbie Allen who are now just board members and no longer write checks. They are thinking about partnering with SEIOC and a representative from there would work in this county. They are having a hard time finding someone to take over this county who actually lives here. They only raised \$495.00 in this county last year through the red-kettle program. An average of \$28,000.00 is spent annually in Switzerland County. Lisa made a motion to approve \$4,000.00, seconded by Mike and all agreed.

#2 Carolyn Miller – Cemetery Commission

Carolyn came to give the annual report for 2016. She reminded the council that the commission is actually part of the county; they are appointed by the commissioners but funded by the council. Carolyn explained how they have spent most of the \$10,000.00 that council gave them last year. She has to send a report every year to the DNR explaining what has been done in the previous year. After some discussion, Mike made a motion to approve \$10,000.00, seconded by John and the motion carried with a vote of 5 to 1.

#3 Rick Hall – Tech Building Refinance

Rick Hall, of Barnes & Thornburg, came to explain the process of refinancing the tech building. In 2011 the building was financed for a five-year period which expired in May 2016. The county made payments of about \$100,000.00 in principle per year and then a balloon payment was due at the end of the 5 years in the amount of approximately \$2.4 million. Last spring the bank agreed to an extension of 6 months and then again in November; the due date is now May 2017 for the \$2.4 million.

Crowe Horwath, the county financial advisor, advised that the county should talk to local banks. If they chose a 15-year payment plan it would cost about \$310,000.00 annually. Under the original agreement the county is currently paying between \$250,000.00 and \$275,000.00. The original loan had a longer amortization period but Crowe Horwath doesn't think it could be financed that long today; 15 years would be the longest. If the loan can only be financed for 10 years then the payment would be \$430,000.00. The bonds that were issued in 2009 have annual payments of about \$450,000.00 and they have a reserve fund set up for them. They have a 10-year term. If the county can make it through the first year, and capitalize the new debt, then the \$445,000.00 and the \$275,000.00 could be replaced with a payment of \$430,000.00 on a 10-year period or \$310,000.00 for a 15-year period. These numbers are the worst case scenario.

REGULAR MEETING – PAGE 2**Rick Hall – Tech Building Refinance cont'd**

The process that has to be gone through is long and cumbersome and that is the reason Rick came to the meeting; to get things going if they are going to meet the May deadline.

Commissioner Josh South said they had tried to work with the local banks in the past and did not get much interest in refinancing the tech building. If the local banks are not interested then Indianapolis banks would be contacted. Rick said Crowe Horwath with help with finding the bank with the best rate.

Glenn asked Rick what he needed tonight. Rick walked the council through the process. He asked what length of term the council wanted Crowe Horwath to look for. Glenn asked if there would be a penalty for earlier payment and Rick said that would be decided in negotiation of the loan. Glenn said he would prefer 15 years and then pay it off early if there is extra money.

Rick informed council that county government cannot accrue anymore debt that what is equal to 2% of 1/3 of the assessed valuation. The county debt limit is about \$3,000,000.00 and currently there is approximately \$830,000.00 leaving about \$2.1 million available. One way to get around the debt limit is to use a lease financing corporation, which is done routinely.

If the council wanted to pay the amount down then a bond could be issued which is less cumbersome. If a not-for-profit building corporation is formed, the commissioners would be the ones who would do it and find 3 volunteers to serve on the board. The corporation would lease the building back to the county who would then pay lease payments from the casino revenue that would pay off the debt. This would still be a 15-year plan. Lisa is more in favor of a 10-year plan of repayment. Rick told the council to do what is good for the long term financial plan of the county. Rick will have more information by the March 8th meeting and hopefully have representation present from Crowe Horwath in attendance.

Josh said the commissioners need to start the process of forming the Tech Building Corporation at their next meeting on February 20th so he needs guidance from council as how to proceed. Council said to go ahead with the corporation formation; it doesn't have to be used depending on what council decides to do.

#4 Pam Acton – Community Foundation of Switzerland County Inc.

Pam came to explain to the new council members about the endowment that was set up by the commissioners in the past. The county received \$10,000.00 for a Quality of Life grant from this endowment. Currently the endowment is worth \$553,000.00 which is permanent. The principle is never touched that is why the amount of the grant fluctuates due to the markets. The commissioners also set up an endowment using the money donated from the Hazel Danglade estate and the check this time from that is \$550.00. A donor also set up an endowment to help the animal shelter; the check this time was for another \$550.00. Pam said she would be glad to explain in further detail just how the Foundation works, all they have to do is contact her.

REGULAR MEETING – PAGE 3**#5 Aaron Bell – SISWD Annual Report**

Aaron handed out a copy of the Southeastern Indiana Solid Waste District's annual report. It explains who they are, what they do and some of the statistics for 2016. They have 21 employees 5 of which are full-time. There was about 7.5 million pounds of material collected to recycle in 2016. This is more than 2015. They had to reinstate fees for electronics and increase the tire fee although they did not want to. They really had a problem with illegal dumping; animal carcasses, etc. They are going to work more closely with law enforcement to help correct the problem. Aaron thanked council for their continued support.

#6 Katie Collier – S.W.C.D. – 2016 Update

Katie came to give council a handout regarding what programs S.W.C.D performed in 2016. The "cost share" program paid out over \$17,000.00 for livestock owners. County council supports the district and part of that money goes to cost share payments. The Indian Creek 319 Watershed Project ended in 2016 and there was over \$215,000.00 paid out in cost share. They have received various other forms of income to use within the county for farmers and land owners.

#7 Keisha Morton – After Prom

Keisha thanked council for their past support. She came to answer questions voiced at the last meeting. After Prom had submitted a request for \$2,000.00 to help with the cost of the annual event. Andy wanted to know if they did any fund raising or just relied on donations; just donations. Whatever money they raise is what they work with. After some discussion, Lisa made a motion to fund \$1,000.00, seconded by Andy and the motion carried with a vote of 5 to 1.

#8 Vicky Hinman – Vevay Main Street

Vicky handed out paperwork to back up Vevay Main Street's request for \$10,000.00 for the 2017 budget. She gave an overview of the grants, etc. received in 2016 and the services/programs they performed. There are currently 7 board members. The by-laws state a minimum of 7 board members and a maximum of 11 board members is required. The direction of Vevay Main Street is community involvement, historical preservation, etc. The budget Vicky gave council was approved last night at their meeting but could change upon what money is received. They will meet with the Town of Vevay later in this month for a funding request. The biggest portion of the budget is for salaries and operation. Vevay Main Street is the sponsor of the First Friday event. They will be asking the Town of Vevay for \$10,000.00 also. Andy would like to wait to see how much they receive from the Town of Vevay. Lisa made a motion to table a decision until after Vevay Main Street meets with the Town of Vevay, seconded by Andy and all agreed.

#9 Park Board Appointment

Andy made a motion to reappoint Laura Shroer to the Park Board, seconded by Mike and all agreed.

#10 Library Board

There are no appointments at this time.

REGULAR MEETING – PAGE 4**#11 SCRC Board Appointment Signatures**

The council signed the documents approving Fred Stave's and Bernie Gaudin's appointment to the Switzerland County Redevelopment Commission board. This was voted on/approved at a previous meeting.

#12 Commissioner Josh South – Legislative Update

Josh said one gaming revenue bill is dead the other one (the Houston bill) that affects the held-harmless money which reduces the admissions tax came out as public policy today. The amendments to this bill are as follows: the held-harmless money will be reduced, they have taken mental health out completely. In fiscal year 2020 the held-harmless money will decrease to \$44,000,000.00; this is down from the current \$48,000,000.00. In 2021 it will decrease to \$40,000,000.00; in 2019 the admissions tax goes completely way; this equals about \$4.5 million. The held-harmless amount will be reduced by \$8,000,000.00 over 2 years. The last part of the amendment will increase the wagering tax by 3% of the AGR. From 2002 until present, Switzerland County has lost approximately \$54,000,000.00 due to the imposed cap. This is a complicated issue and more amendments will definitely be added later. Josh has spoken to the originator of the bill, Mr. Houston. It will go to the Ways and Means Committee next and they may not accept public testimony. Josh will be going up next week and will let council members know when he knows more about the proceedings in case any of them should want to go as well.

John Bond, of the EDC, and Marisa Lynch, of Grounded in Grassroots, are working on what the impact would be to the county. In 2017 the impact will be about \$7,500.00 as the legislation stands now. In 2018 the impact will be about \$300,000.00, in 2019 about \$560,000.00, in 2020 about \$715,000.00, and then in 2021 about \$870,000.00. This is all based upon the 2016 AGR.

Mr. Houston did acknowledge that Ohio and Switzerland counties are different from the other counties affected by the bill. His original goal was to put everyone on the same playing field but now knows that there may have to be a special legislation to accomplish this in regards to Switzerland and Ohio counties.

Josh said that backing a bond at this point and time with gaming revenue is not a bad idea as government cannot pass legislation to take away revenue tied up in county debt.

#13 Little League Football (not on the agenda)

Cori Dawson of the Little League Football organization came requesting funding in the amount of whatever council would approve. Last year council gave \$3,000.00. She is to go to the Town of Vevay as well on Monday to ask for assistance. The season starts at the end of May. She was advised to come back at a later date and to fill out an application with the auditor.

#14 Adel Snook – Hoosier Theater (not on agenda)

The Hoosier Theater has filed an application for casino funds and is grateful for the past support of council. They are truly a 501c3 not-for-profit entity. Next month the theater will start showing movies again. Through the generosity of another entity they have been able purchase a projector and screen. They are going to ask different businesses to sponsor the movies due to cost, then the businesses would get advertising in return. The amount requested is \$10,000.00 and they have received \$6,000.00 the last 2 years. Lisa made a motion to give \$5,000.00, seconded by Rachel and all agreed.

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#15 Melody Foucher – Safe Passage (not on agenda)

Ms. Foucher came to give an overview of Safe Passage’s services. They go into the schools to promote healthy relationships, teen dating violence education at the high school level, domestic violence training for law enforcement, and case managers to help the victims, etc. They have an office in Vevay but it is not publicized due to safety reasons. The shelter is in Batesville under lockdown conditions. Andy made a motion to approve \$6,000.00, seconded by John and all agreed.

#16 Commissioner Mark Lohide

Mark came to speak to council about the work the cemetery board does. He said he had a complaint from someone about an overturned/chipped headstone and Carolyn Miller helped him get someone to fix it correctly.

He came to discuss the East Enterprise Regional Sewer District funding. The commissioners do not want to pay for repairs but they are under an order by the state to do so and really need the funding from council. EERSD never received the OCRA grant the first time but have reapplied.

Mark also told them about the countywide cleanup on April 21st, 22nd, and 23rd at the county highway garage but there will be limits as to what can be dropped off.

Mark told council that the commissioners found a 1997 road grader in very good condition, only 900 hours, from Yazoo, Mississippi and they have the money to pay for it.

He said they are having a special meeting on this coming Monday evening at 5:00 p.m. to talk about just highway issues, bridges, and road slips, and invited council members to come if they so choose.

#17 Council Attorney

Jud McMillan had put in a resume to be the council attorney but his retainer is more than what was approved in the budget and technically it would be hiring a firm and not just 1 employee as has been done in the past. John asked if council had to have an attorney – not necessarily some counties share an attorney with the commissioners. After some discussion this was tabled until a later date.

With no further business to come before council, John made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike and all agreed. The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

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