

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: Tom Conroy, Steve Crabtree, Jeff Darling, Terry Hall, Mike Jones, Rachel Schuler, Glenn Scott, the chief deputy, Richard Lock, the council attorney, Cody Kendall, the auditor, Gayle Rayles, and the deputy auditor, Connie Christman.

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

#1 Reorganization

Steve Crabtree made a motion to appoint Mike as council president. Terry made a motion to appoint Rachel as president. Jeff seconded Steve's motion and the motion passed.

Terry nominated Rachel as vice-president, seconded by Steve and all agreed.

The minutes of the previous special meeting of December 31st were approved as presented on a motion by Tom, seconded by Glenn and all agreed.

#2 Ginger Furnish - Extension Office Copier

Ginger came to request funding for a new copier. They have had their current copier since 2006 and it is used quite extensively. She is suggesting that their old copier be moved downstairs to the adult learning center since they would not be using it as much. The cost is \$7,170.00 for a new one. Terry made a motion to purchase the copier, from Cum Cap funds, seconded by Steve and all agreed. They are to check to see if the old copier can be traded in.

#3 Jewell DeBonis - Lewis & Kappes - Legislature Update

Jewell came to give the county an update on what is happening at the state legislature. She had a handout for each council person and the commissioners that were in the audience.

Of the House; 69 are republicans and 39 are democrats. In the Senate; 37 are republicans and 13 democrats. She said 45 of the House members are newer. Tim Brown is the budget chairman.

The gaming issue will be in the upcoming session. It is estimated that gaming revenue will lose an additional \$100,000,000.00 when the Ohio casinos get up and running as well as the casinos in Michigan and Illinois; does not include the casinos coming to Chicago.

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Jewell DeBonis con't

There is also concern about the number of lost jobs due to the casinos not doing as well in Indiana. The employment rate for casinos is at the lowest level it has been since 1997. Behind the sales tax revenue and income tax revenue the third greatest source of revenue for Indiana is gaming revenue. Corporate tax revenue has fallen below gaming revenue as a source of income.

Some of the solutions that have been discussed are moving one of the casinos in Gary to a high visibility location near the Gorman Expressway which would leave one casino in Gary that could be moved to a better location within the city. Or maybe make an entirely new market; possibly Fort Wayne. It has been discussed about moving some of the existing casinos to new places. Providing some kind of tax relief for the casinos was discussed. There has been some talk about changing the admissions tax and that directly impacts the county. They also talked about giving some type of tax credit for anything the casinos would do on capital improvements to the property in terms of economic development. We would give them a credit if they do something to upgrade the property.

A bill has been filed to allow the Miami Indians to have a casino somewhere up around Peru. They have tried this in the past.

Charity gaming issues will come up again this year.

The "held harmless money" is from the admission tax. The "held harmless money" is a little over \$1,000,000.00 a year for the county.

Mike asked who Lewis Kappes represents: Switzerland County, the City of Rising Sun, Dearborn County, and the city of Lawrenceburg.

Glenn asked how the possible changes would affect the agreements with the other counties. He wanted to know if they could ever be stopped.

Other issues to be discussed: jobs, the budget, restoring some of the funding cuts, income tax, road funding, health care and insurance issues, gun laws, mental health issues, criminal sentencing, legalization of marijuana, Sunday liquor sales, same sex marriage, and county reorganization among others.

Jewell said there would be between 1,500 and 2,000 bills to go before government.

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#4 Board Appointments

Legal Council: Steve made a motion to keep Cody Kendall as the council attorney, seconded by Glenn and all agreed.

Board Appointments:

Economic Development - Judy Firth
Region Planning Commission - Jon Bond
School Endowment - Tom Conroy
Extension - Glenn Scott
Alcohol Beverage Commission - Bernie Gaudin

Rachel made a motion to reappoint the above representatives to these boards, seconded by Jeff and all agreed.

SISWD - Tom made a motion to appoint Rachel as the council's representative to this board, seconded by Terry and all agreed.

Glenn said the Fire Chiefs were recommended at their last audit to have a council member on their board. Terry said he would be on that board. Steve made a motion to appoint Terry, seconded by Tom and all agreed. This is an advisory position - not a voting position.

Gayle asked if anyone had heard from the EMS attorney; no one has so Cody will contact him.

#5 Other Business

Gayle gave the council a sheet to show the situation with the casino revenue.

Gayle said the meeting with the insurance company, APEX, has been cancelled for now.

Ginger Furnish invited the council to the extension office's chili cook-off on Monday, January 28th.

Terry had a question about the holidays. He wanted to know what happens when an employee has to work a holiday. The sheriff's department, jail, and communications all get a floating holiday; the other county employees get comp time.

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With no further business to come before the council, Steve made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Tom and all agreed. The meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

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