

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE
COUNTY COUNCIL OF HUNTINGTON COUNTY INDIANA
OCT 29, 2018 COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

The Huntington County Council met for this Special Session the 29th day of October, 2018, in the G.A.R. Room of the Huntington County Courthouse, Huntington, Indiana at 7:00 P.M for the purpose of considering all business brought before it pursuant to notice given to the Huntington Herald Press, Oct 25th, 2018.

Council Members present: Kendall Mickley, Todd Landrum, Shane Bickel, Terry Miller, John Hacker, Keith Eller and Ron Kline.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Ron Kline and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kendall Mickley advised everyone that this is a public hearing and asked for comments from visitors regarding the .2% increase in the Income Tax for the Jail.

Theresa Kaylor is the 1st speaker: Theresa expressed her concern for the notification of the Councils meetings and how she could not find anything on this meeting on the internet. And that she feels that the public has no idea of Councils Meetings. Theresa stated she would love to speak more of what Council is voting on but she just found out about this meeting at 3 o'clock this afternoon. So until she could educate herself, which she tried to do this afternoon, and she spoke with Terry Miller and with the Sheriff but doesn't really have a lot of information to give a valid opinion, other than she does not feel it is fair to vote this in tonight with so much of the County being totally unaware of the problem, the situation and the change in the taxes. She feels that the public has no idea that there is a problem and that there is a tax increase requested to solve the problem. She also feels that a lot of the people that are being housed could be better served by going through a program and she does not know how we could direct funds to those programs but if this could be done with the lower offenses that would be her recommendation and she would be happy to serve on committees to make that happen. If that is even possible. She feels like the city is uninformed of what is going on and should be given a chance to understand the situation before it is voted in.

Brenda Williams came before Council to ask them to vote against this tax hike. Brenda feels that we have a drug problem in this town and that is the problem with the overcrowding in the jail. We have to have longer sentencing. She feels there are other programs that could be used, instead of the hike.

Sheriff Terry Stoffel spoke regarding the overcrowding of the jail, and that the State has made it so that we have to now house the level 6 felons that the state used to house. Terry believes that adding on to the current jail makes more sense and it keeps it at the current location to have close proximity to the courthouse. Terry went over other issues that the overcrowding is causing. The Jail inspection (14 months ago) audit said overcrowding must be addressed.

Terry Miller asked Terry Stoffel if safety is an issue for the public and Terry Stoffel stated that it was.

Terry Stoffel stated that they currently have over 800 warrants out there but are not going out there looking for them.

Commissioner Rob Miller asked what level of crime are you comfortable with.

Richard Glassey – Wife and I moved here about 18 years ago and he has been a recovering alcoholic for 16 years. Richard stated that it is safe to say that our community wants zero tolerance out on the streets and we don't want any crime at all. Richard stated he is worried about someone breaking into his home and he lives in the middle of nowhere. So with that being said he wants Council to stop and think what the people in our community see. What they see is bike paths, businesses leaving, a park that has been totally renovated, he does not pretend to know where these appropriations came from, he doesn't know. Who keeps up the bike paths? .2% is not much, but that is going to be some peoples raises this year. He works at BF Goodrich and his wife is an RN, and they are scraping to get by. Where do our priorities come from? Could we look at a .1% instead of .2%.

Commissioner Tom Wall stated that he hates to raise taxes, and there are people in jail that can't raise bail. Tom has talked to legislators on this overcrowding issue. He has begged other Commissioners to take some of our prisoners to house for us. We have already spend 3.8 Million on past jail renovations.

Kendall asked Council for brief comments, then we will take a vote.

Ron Kline feels very strong for this but hates to raise taxes. Need to do something now. Or the State will tell us what we have to do.

Keith Eller – no comment

John Hacker wanted to remind everyone that economic development brings thousands of dollars to the county when we get new businesses. John has been a part of trying to bring in the ethanol plant and it was chased away because people thought it would be a health issue. Which has proved to not be a health issue? John was part of the wind turbine possibility which people chased that away because of the thought of health issues also, which we have not heard of any health issues. Randolph County took on the wind turbines and the company that was building the wind turbines brought 10 Million dollars and laid it on the table and said this is your money to do with whatever you want to do with it. It's hard to get people to look in Huntington County if people are against us coming there. John has been on Council for 18 years and something should have been done a long time ago.

Todd Landrum never wanted to raise taxes, but put the LOIT tax in and then the wheel tax to keep up the roads. State controls the inspections or fines.

Kendall Mickley stated that the State shows the overcrowding; he feels the need to band together to go and stand up to the state. Kendall will vote no on this tax.

Terry Miller feels this is a public safety issue. Terry is worried about having enough beds. He has talked with the officials @ state because he doesn't want to raise taxes. If it is put off for another year then the cost could go up 5-7 %. He also feels the need for communications with the public.

Shane Bickel has been with law enforcement for over 38 years and has seen other counties with overcrowding as well. Shane is against a new jail but feels we do need to add on to the current jail.

A vote was taken: Ron Kline – Yes, Keith Eller – Yes, John Hacker – Yes, Todd Landrum – Yes, Kendall Mickley - No, Terry Miller – Yes, Shane Bickel – Yes
Ordinance # 2018-29 was passed 6-1.

Kendall Mickley stated that the meeting was adjourned.

ADOPTED THIS 26th DAY OF NOVEMBER 2018

ATTEST: _____
CINDY YEITER, AUDITOR

KENDALL MICKLEY

TERRY MILLER

RON KLINE

SHANE BICKEL

JOHN HACKER

TODD LANDRUM

KEITH ELLER