

**GRANT COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION
December 16, 2015**

The Grant County Council met in regular session on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

1. Call to order

President McWhirt called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Prayer

Auditor Bainbridge led in prayer.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilman Leming led the pledge of allegiance.

4. Roll Call

In attendance were Council members Jim McWhirt, Mike Scott, Shane Middlesworth and Mark Leming. Also present were Council Attorney Phil Stephenson, Auditor Roger Bainbridge, Chief Deputy Tammy Miller, Assistant Chief Deputy Chris Hancock and Executive Secretary Sharon Kirkwood.

5. Approval of Minutes

Councilman Middlesworth moved to approve the regular session minutes of November 18, 2015 as presented. Second by Councilman Leming; motion carried 4-0.

6. Auditor's Report

Auditor Bainbridge reported on the General Fund Balance Report. Auditor Bainbridge, "The report balances reflect December Settlement which is the earliest we have ever done so. We have received some thank you notes and emails from people that have expressed that we got them their money. The reports show both before and after payroll with a balance of \$1.4 million dollars." President McWhirt questioned if there was one more batch of claims to be paid. Auditor Bainbridge stated there one more left. The Health Insurance Report is up to date and is self-explanatory with one more transfer for December to yet be posted.

President McWhirt discussed the report reflecting tax levies versus monies collected showing the levy approved doesn't always become reality due to the circuit breaker or lack of revenue collection.

7. New Business

A. Gas City – Mill Township Public Library – board appointment

President McWhirt stated he spoke with Nancy Bryant of the Gas City-Mill Township Public Library requesting an appointment to the board. The library personnel are not ready yet for anyone to be appointed and asked to wait until the January meeting. There was an ad placed in the paper advertising for any interested persons to apply. As of yet, the county had not received any requests however Director Bryant had received a few applications.

B. County Area Plan Commission – board appointment

President McWhirt stated he received a letter from the Steve Niblick, Director of the Grant County Area Plan Department, to appoint a member to the board. Currently Bob Monroe was serving on the board. Director Niblick recommended Mr. Monroe be re-appointed to serve a 2 year term if the council so wished.

Councilman Middlesworth moved to appoint Bob Monroe as the council's appointment to serve a 2 year term ending January 1, 2018. Second by Councilman Scott; motion carried 4-0.

C. Gas City Development Commission – board appointment

President McWhirt stated he called Mayor Leach about the appointment. Mayor Leach did recommend re-appointing David Huffman for another 1 year term to the commission.

Councilman Middlesworth moved to re-appoint David Huffman for Gas City Development Commission for a 1 year term starting January 1, 2016. Second by Councilman Scott; motion carried 4-0.

D. Superior Court 2 – Judge Kenworthy – Transfers

Honorable Dana Kenworthy, Superior Court II Judge, requested a transfer from appeals & pauper counsel to transcripts and dues totaling \$4,350. At the end of the year the budget will be returning \$14,000 back to the County General Fund.

Councilman Scott moved to approve the following transfers:

1000-202-3000.12 Appeals & Pauper Counsel 1000-202-3000.12 Transcripts \$4,000
1000-202-3000.12 Appeals & Pauper Counsel 1000-202-3000.90 Dues \$ 350

Second by Councilman Middlesworth; there was no public input. Motion carried 4-0.

E. Superior Court 3 – Judge Haas – Transfers

Honorable Dana Kenworthy, Superior Court II Judge, filled in for the Honorable Warren Haas who was unable to attend. A pc used by Judge Haas’s employee failed. After speaking with IT the issue was resolved with a new computer and 2 monitors plus software. The total cost was \$897.04 with the transfer paying \$300 of the invoice.

Councilman Scott moved to approve the transfer from

1000-203-1000.15 Pro Tem 1000-203-4000.41 Equipment \$300

Second by Councilman Middlesworth; there was no public input. Motion carried 4-0.

F. Emergency Medical Services – Transfers

President McWhirt stated Duaine Ashcraft, Director of the Emergency Medical Services, was unable to attend. Transfers totaling \$14,200 are requested to cover damages to an ambulance. President McWhirt questioned why insurance wouldn’t cover the expenses. Chief Deputy Miller presented some paperwork for Director Ashcraft explaining break repairs and other fixes.

President McWhirt stated the transfers probably needed approved but the rules needed suspended due to his absence. Then maybe some answers could be provided concerning the damages to the ambulances.

Councilman Scott moved to suspend the rules for transferring and then approve the transfers from the following accounts:

1000-301-3000.91 Dues & Subscriptions 1000-301-3000.21 Communications \$ 200
1000-301.3000.04 ALS Reimbursement 1000-301-2000.20 Garage & Motors \$14,000

Second by Councilman Middlesworth; public input came from Seth Hutchins, Chronicle Tribune, reporting on the meeting questioned about suspending the rules. President McWhirt explained that in the absence of the elected official or department head transfers can be approved for transfers over \$500. Motion carried 4-0.

G. County Clerk – Additional – Clerk’s IV-D Incentive Fund

Chief Deputy Miller represented Clerk Carolyn Mowery in her absence. An employee retired this year that required payout of \$2,000 for time earned. The funds would come from the Incentive Fund.

Councilman Scott moved to approve the additional appropriation in the Clerk’s IV-D Incentive Fund in the amount of \$2,000 as presented. Second by Councilman Middlesworth; there was no public input. Motion carried 4-0.

H. Commissioners – Transfers/ General Fund and COIT Fund

Commissioner Burton requested transfers from Merit Pension to cover Workmen’s Compensation account in the amount of \$60,000. We are self-funded and the expense is claim driven. Also in Data Processing, overtime has been overdrawn due to work being done for the courts. A transfer of \$3,000 can be moved from salaries. Telephone repairs have increased in the amount of \$2,000 which can be transferred from copier expense. Repair to buildings & structures are in the red by \$4,000 which is very hard to estimate.

Councilman Scott moved to approve the following transfers from:

COIT Fund:

1121-104-1000.06 Merit Pension 1121-104-1000.76 Workmen’s Comp \$60,000

County General Fund:

Data Processing:

1000-106-1000.11 Salaries 1000-106-1000.12 Overtime \$ 3,000

Commissioners:

1000-068-2000.43 Copier/Printer Ex	1000-068-3000.26 Telephone Rep	\$ 2,000
1000-068-3000.28 Pictometry	1000-068-3000.64 Rep Building	\$ 1,900
1000-068-3000.84 Animal Health	1000-068-3000.64 Rep Building	\$ 1,000
1000-068-2000.43 Copier Expense	1000-068-3000.64 Rep Building	\$ 1,100

Second by Councilman Middlesworth; there was no public input. Motion carried 4-0.

I. County Assessor – Transfers in Reassessment Fund/Discussion and Consideration of Business Personal Property Tax Exemption and Associated Fee

Gary Landrum, Grant County Assessor, requested a transfer from salaries to overtime in the Reassessment Fund.

Councilman Scott moved to approve the following transfer:

1224-008-1000.11 Salaries	1224-008-1000.14 Overtime	\$865.92
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Second by Councilman Middlesworth; there was no public input. Motion carried 4-0.

Assessor Landrum presented a packet of information. Assessor Landrum, “The State of Indiana General Assembly has decided beginning in January 2016 for tax bills 16 payable 17 to make personal property returns reporting acquisition costs of less than \$20,000 exempt. There is a large spreadsheet of information for your review. There are about 1,800 different taxpayers. The acquisition costs are in the last column. Then the column of what they would have been taxed on for 2016. Our personal property team edited the data to remove churches and the like from the total numbers on your report. We work from the previous year on people who hadn’t filed a return and then they have a chance to appeal or come in and discuss the amount. The taxpayer does have to file a notarized document stating their acquisition costs are under \$20,000. There are about 1,500 that will probably qualify for that mark. We have for convenience sake, made a couple of our employee’s notaries. The assessed value is about \$3.5 million. The amount we may lose due to this less than \$20,000 rule will be about \$91,000 which is about \$6.00 per taxpayer. The ruling change also allows the county to adopt a fee of up to \$50. The exempt taxpayers that have less than \$20,000 in acquisition fees would have to pay the adopted fee. If you are under the \$20,000 then the taxpayer files the notarized exempted document with the county assessor.”

President McWhirt questioned if the fee would cost more to charge or not to charge. Would there need to be more staff to process the fees? The fees collected would be distributed like property taxes which would be a headache for the auditor and treasurer’s offices. There are not huge amounts of money involved.

Assessor Landrum stated there are 8 other counties and of those 3 are not going to have a fee. One is charging a \$50 fee then changed their mind to a \$5.00 dollar fee liken to the minimum fee of a standard real estate bill of \$5. Less than half of the counties said no fee.

Brian Middlesworth (public inquiry) questioned if there is a fee it would seem to be better that it’s paid at the time of filing instead of a tax. President McWhirt stated the county was not given much of a choice to choose because the process is determined by the state.

Discussion ensued between the council and the county assessor. The time line for a decision about the fee was unknown during the time of discussion. President McWhirt suggested the council continue to stay informed on the topic and decide about the fee at a later meeting. President McWhirt thanked Assessor Landrum for the information.

J. Auditor – Additional Appropriation / Plat Book Fund

Roger Bainbridge, Grant County Auditor, requested transfers of funds for overtime and benefits out of the Plat Book Fund. Auditor Bainbridge explained that some employees cash out some or all of their accumulated compensation time. There have also been some health insurance expenses due to ACA (Obamacare) requirements. The amount to appropriate has been reduced from the original request from \$7,000 to \$3,121 for overtime and part time. The FICA can be reduced from \$535.50 to \$239. The PERF can be reduced from \$994 to \$244.

Councilman Leming moved to approve the additional appropriation from the Auditor’s Plat Book Fund in the amounts of \$3,121 for Overtime/Part time, \$239 for FICA and \$244 for PERF as amended. Second by Councilman Middlesworth; there was no public input. Motion carried 4-0.

8. Reports, Resolutions, Communications and General Discussion

There were no reports.

The next regular meeting will be held on January 20th, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment

President McWhirt adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.