

LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET HEARING
August 14, 2007

The LaPorte County Council met in budget hearing on August 14, 2007, at 8:00 a.m. in the Assembly Room, main floor, LaPorte County Government Complex, LaPorte, Indiana. President Cooley asked that those present stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Council Members present were Jerry Cooley, Rich Mrozinski, Earl Cunningham, Terry Garner, Mark Ludlow and John Jones and Mark Yagelski. Also present were Auditor Teresa Shuter and Chief Deputy Auditor, Rita Layton.

VOTER REGISTRATION (132)

Georgiana Wolff and Jeana Blake, Co-Directors, presented the budget.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **132 budget** as submitted. Mr. Yagelski seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

RECORDER (104)

Reathel Noveroske, Chief Deputy Recorder, presented the budget.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the 104 budget as submitted. Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

SURVEYOR/DRAINAGE BOARD/WEIGHTS & MEASURES (106/136/138)

Bob Przybylinski, Surveyor, and Diane Allen, Secretary, presented the Surveyor and Drainage Board budgets.

Mr. Jones reported that a reclassification has been request to move the Party Chief positions in the Surveyor's budget and the Drainage Board budget from Unclassified to a COMOT V. Waggoner, Irwin & Scheele (WIS) has been asked for a recommendation but clarification is needed. Mrs. Shuter has put a call in to WIS. There was discussion regarding the history of the Party Chief position and a Chief Deputy position.

Mrs. Allen stated that Gas & Oil was increased \$500.00 in the Surveyor's budget and \$300.00 in the Drainage Board budget. Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **106 budget** as submitted and Mr. Yagelski seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **136 budget** as submitted. Mr. Jones seconded and the motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Mike Quinn was present to answer any questions regarding the 138 budget. Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **138 budget** as submitted. Mr. Jones stated that a new scale is needed for Weights & Measures. Mr. Quinn commented that the current scale used can't be used for Category "A" Package Checking, used mostly at Christmas and Easter, and it doesn't meet the State requirements; he is checking with scale companies for pricing. Mr. Quinn stated that rather than put the scale in his budget, he thought

that he would ask for an additional appropriation but this is up to the Council. Mr. Cunningham seconded Mr. Ludlow's motion. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE (142)

Al Ott, Stationary Engineer, presented this budget.

Mr. Jones reported that Building Maintenance has requested two (2) additional janitors and one (1) maintenance person. The Personnel Committee recommended to Al Ott that he get together with Commissioner President Huston, Council President Cooley and the County Attorney to look at reorganization of the department to cross train, etc. A conclusion on the new hires has not been made until after those parties meet.

Mr. Yagelski asked Mr. Ott if his department had hired someone to design the remodeling in Judge Baldoni's area. Mr. Ott responded that he has Judge Baldoni's signature on the contract with Meyers Glass; Mr. Ott told the Judge that Building Maintenance did not have the money in their budget. Mr. Ott believes that Judge Baldoni went to the Commission to ask for approval and as long as Judge Baldoni had money to pay for the project, the Commission didn't have any objections. Mr. Ott stated that this project wasn't authorized by him.

Mr. Cunningham questioned the \$85,000.00 requested for Janitorial Services. Mr. Ott explained that this line item is used for supplies for all of the County buildings; paper supply costs are increasing and the Jail uses lots of toilet paper. Mr. Cunningham suggested that a new line item description be created so that it doesn't imply services.

There was further discussion regarding the budget requests. Mr. Ott reported that Commissioner Mike Bohacek had asked him to get costs to replace windows at the Michigan City Courthouse but he doesn't think that Mr. Bohacek realizes that there are fifty-seven (57) windows. Mr. Cooley commented that wheels are needed on the desks since they are moved around so much moving the offices around all of the time; he asked where the remodeling money is coming from. Mr. Ludlow commented that this isn't Mr. Ott's fault but the only way the Council can control this is through the dollars. Mr. Ott stated that the remodeling money is coming from his budget from any account they can pay for it out of. It was the consensus of the Council that the Commissioners should be keeping the Council informed regarding the remodeling projects.

Mr. Yagelski made a motion to approve the 2007 figures, before CCD, for the 200 and 300 accounts in the **142 budget**. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

JUVENILE SERVICES CENTER (176)

Judge Tom Alevizos presented this budget and explained 337, the fund where money is generated from the kitchen; he explained that the Council has been approving for food and cooks at the Juvenile Center from the County General Fund. Judge Alevizos stated that almost all of the kids there are eligible for free breakfast and lunch; the Department of Education each year reimburses the County and that money is receipted into Fund 337. Judge Alevizos stated that tax dollars are being spent for the process but the reimbursement doesn't come back to the General Fund. Therefore, Judge Alevizos believes that \$70,000.00 for food should be cut

from the General Fund budget and paid from Fund 337. Krista MacLennan further explained that in the past, once the \$70,000.00 has run out then they have taken what is needed for the remainder of the year from Fund 337. Judge Alevizos commented that the General Fund still pays for the cooks, etc.

There was discussion regarding the purchase of a freezer in order to buy more food on sale. Judge Alevizos reported that the freezer expense isn't in the budget; they would come back for an additional appropriation from Fund 337.

There was discussion regarding the residential side and the secure side and the way the Juvenile Center is operated. Judge Alevizos commented that once changes are made and the Center is running up to speed, one position could be eliminated.

Mr. Ludlow asked Judge Alevizos if he wanted all of Krista MacLennan's salary in the Juvenile Detention Center or will her salary be split between the Juvenile Center and the Circuit Court budgets; both budgets are in the County General Fund. Judge Alevizos commented that Mrs. MacLennan will eventually be coming back to Circuit Court full time and there will be only one upper-level position at the Juvenile Center.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **176 budget** with the exception of reducing the 20039 account for food to \$40,000.00 and to supplement this account with funds from 337. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

CIRCUIT COURT (148)

There was discussion between the Council and Judge Alevizos regarding the combined use of law books. Judge Alevizos commented that the Prosecutor is making up stories about the Court; the Prosecutor is choosing not to use in-home detention electronic monitoring services. Judge Alevizos stated that he will not use Work Release and explained why. Mr. Cooley suggested that a meeting be setup with Council Attorney Don Baugher when he returns next week to address these issues.

Judge Alevizos stated that certain expenses are shared by all of the Courts. He commented that one of the positions in Personal Services that is a COMOT IV this year will be eliminated and replaced by a COMOT VI. Judge Alevizos explained that when Magistrate Ankony resigns at the end of the year, all of her duties will be assumed by the Juvenile Magistrate as was the original vision; Magistrate Ankony's position is not a Circuit Court position but it is a position that by statute belongs to all of the Courts. Therefore, the position Judge Alevizos is referring to will be shared by the Juvenile Magistrate and classified as a Court Reporter.

Judge Alevizos reported that the 30074 account, Care of Inmates in Institutions, is a big line item at \$800,000.00; with revamping Juvenile Probation completely and diagnosis of kids early, Judge Alevizos commented that he anticipates that this amount will go down on the juvenile side through graduated sanctions.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **148 budget** as submitted. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

CIRCUIT COURT PROBATION L.P. & M.C. (147/154)

Judge Alevizos reported that there are no changes in these budgets. Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **147 budget** as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded and the motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **154 budget** as presented. Mr. Jones seconded and the motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

WELFARE FAMILY & CHILDREN/CHILDRENS PSYCH (234/267)

Terry Ciboch, Director, reported that the total appropriation requested in the Welfare Family & Children's budget is \$6.645 million and last year approved was \$6.5 million. There was discussion about the care of children in foster homers, institutions, etc. and the State possibly taking over the welfare programs.

Mr. Ciboch reported that there is no operating balance in the Children's Psychiatric Treatment Fund 267, which has a separate tax levy. Mr. Ciboch commented that he told the State that the County Council's preference would be to pay the bills as money is collected; this is a reimbursement back to the State.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve budget 234 and 267 without the operating balance. Mr. Garner seconded. Mr. Ludlow asked if the Council is approving what is presented which is the State's or what Mr. Ciboch recommended which would be the higher operating balance. Mr. Ciboch recommended approving appropriation of \$6.6 million. Mr. Ciboch stated that the State cut the operating to \$1.2 million from what he had at \$2.4 million; he said that he is opposed to borrowing and paying interest. Mr. Ludlow commented that he prefers to have an operating balance. Mr. Cunningham withdrew his motion. Mr. Cunningham then made a motion to approve \$6.6 million with an operating balance in the **234 budget**. Mr. Ludlow seconded and the motion carried 7 – 0.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the Children's Psych Treatment **Budget 267** as presented and Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

PIONEER CEMETERY (260)

Ken Baker and Dale Ellis presented this budget; basically the only change was in Repairs & Maintenance. Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the **260 budget** as submitted. Mr. Garner seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Regarding donations to the Pioneer Cemetery, it was suggested setting up a fund through the County for deposit of this money instead of keeping it in a separate bank account.

There was a short break.

SOIL & WATER (158)

Rick Brown was present to address the Council questions regarding MS4. Mr. Brown commented that what he has been able to find out is that the entities have not been paying the County; however, Lawson Fisher, as an engineering service has been sending bills to the entities based upon a percentage. It was decided that the MS4 Coordinator should do the billing and the money would be brought to the Auditor's Office to quietus.

Mr. Brown explained that he is a County employee and answers to the Advisory Board of the five (5) entities. Mr. Brown reported that an ordinance was passed a few months ago for storm water control and the MS4 program is certified with the State as of just ninety (90) days ago; a \$100.00 Plan Review Fee could be collected but a decision needs to be made as to how to set this up.

Mr. Brown stated that through the intergovernmental agreement, Soil & Water and MS4 partner off of each other because they do a lot of similar things. He stated that basically the agreement is that Soil & Water provide space to MS4.

There was discussion about establishing a new department for MS4 in the County General Fund. There was also discussion regarding the Lawson Fisher bill; it was discovered that Mr. Hamilton was taking the bill to the Commissioners and Mrs. Arnett was paying it from their budget. Mrs. Shuter stated that actually Lawson Fisher was to be paid through Professional Services in the Soil & Water Budget.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **158 budget** as submitted and to separate MS4 into a budget of their own. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 6 – 0 by voice vote. Mr. Yagelski was not present for this vote.

MICHIGAN TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR (130)

Terry Beckinger, Michigan Township Assessor, commented that there was a change on one of the service agreements and the dues line item has been increased. The number of appeals were discussed.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **130 budget** as submitted and Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 6 – 0. Mr. Jones was not present for this vote.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (153)

Paul Young, Director, reported an increase in fuel and computers need to be replaced. Mr. Young included computers in the Office Supply account. Mrs. Shuter commented that computers should be in the 400 account or paid for from the CCD Fund. Mr. Young also stated that his office furniture is old and needs to be replaced. Mr. Young reported that SEMA picks up half (1/2) of his department's wages and benefits.

Mr. Young commented that he does need \$10,000.00 for Part-time since when Jen Payne left there wasn't any money to pay anyone part-time until things were running smoothly again; this request is in order to cover the back door and have another layer of protection. Mr. Ludlow commented that Mr. Young could have used Ms. Payne's salary to hire someone part-time.

Mr. Ludlow suggested that Mr. Young go before the Commissioners for the furniture and computers requested to get it from the Win Tax or CCD Fund.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 2008 **budget (153)** at the 2007 level except to approve \$3,000.00 for Gas & Oil. Mr. Jones seconded and the motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Mr. Jones reported on behalf of the Personnel Committee; he stated that Mr. Young has requested that his position be full-time and also requested \$10,000.00 for Part-time. Mr. Jones reported that the Committee did approve on a 5 – 0 vote to make Mr. Young's position full-time; one of the recommendations was to put Mr. Young in the same category as Brent Soller, E-911 Director, which currently is a base of \$45,700.00.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (180)

Dave McCain presented this budget and commented that there is no administrative expense as that wing of it is handled by the Chief Public Defender and his office staff. All of the Public Defenders are private practicing attorneys and have their own offices, etc. Mr. McCain reported that the bulk of Litigation Expense is spent for verbatim transcripts; he stated that traditionally those expenses were paid from the Judges budget if they were pauper cases but we now pay a number of those from the Public Defender's budget because they are then eligible for reimbursement from the State.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the **180 budget** as presented. Mr. Garner seconded and the motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Mr. McCain stated that there is a slight increase in the Chief Public Defender's salary because this salary is tied to the Prosecutor's salary which increased July 1st.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (157)

Darlene Hale, IT Director, presented this budget and reported that they are just getting moved over to their 8th Street office in Michigan City; the air conditioning has just been fixed so they will be moving the rest of the servers to that location.

Mr. Ludlow asked if there is a generator. Ms. Hale responded that they asked for one at a workshop when they were first moved but it was going to cost around \$15,000.00. Mr. Yagelski stated that he doesn't see the necessity of a generator with back up capability. Ms. Hale explained that if power goes down, no one can work. Mr. Ludlow commented that he had an interesting conversation a while ago and the thought was that the IT Department should have been moved into the 911 Center where there is proper air conditioning and generator backup instead of to 8th Street.

Mr. Cooley asked why there are names included on accounts; they should say Contractual Services in case we want to fire someone. For instance, the Council budget has a line item that says Waggoner, Irwin, Scheele. Mrs. Shuter commented that this line item used to say Study Committee.

There was discussion regarding maintenance contracts and tech software support. Also discussed was the classification of Craig Lutz at a PAT IV. Mr. Yagelski asked why this position was not Unclassified. Mrs. Shuter reminded the Council that all of this department used to be unclassified and they were all given classifications approximately four (4) years ago at the request of the Director at that time, Ron Tulacz.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the 157 budget as presented. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0. Ms. Hale was instructed to come back the first of next year for \$8,000.00 for a server.

There was a break for lunch.

REASSESSMENT (247)

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to move the Dues line item from the Assessor's Budget in the County General Fund to the Assessor's Budget in the Reassessment Fund. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 6 – 0 by voice vote. Mr. Cooley was not back from lunch.

HEALTH & HEALTH MAINTENANCE (219/520)

Paul Trost, Administrator, explained that there were very few changes and with the increases and decreases, the overall amount comes out just about the same as last year. Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **219 budget** with the change of moving \$1,000.00 for the alarm system contract from the 400 account to the 300 account, 30135. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Mr. Trost reported that the 520 budget, with the exception of the 100 accounts, is identical to last year's budget. Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the **520 budget** as presented. Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

TOWNHIPS (ALL)

Sherry Morris, Union Township, was the only Trustee/Assessor present. Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve all Township Budgets at the 2007 level for Postage and Mileage and to address the salaries tomorrow. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

CLERK & ELECTION BOARD (101/131)

Bob Behler, Clerk, presented these budgets. Mr. Behler provided information as requested concerning what the cost would be to pay off the comp time; he stated that the comp time has built up over more than one year.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **101 budget** as presented and Mr. Yagelski seconded. The motion carried 7 - 0 by voice vote.

Mr. Yagelski made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **131 budget** as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

There was discussion regarding the voting machines. Mr. Behler commented that there is no one out there right now that does a receipt for the voter.

AUDITOR (102)

Mrs. Shuter reported that all line items remain the same with the exception of Personal Services. Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **102 budget** as presented and Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

MAJOR MOVES (223)

Mr. Yagelski stated that the investment interest from the Major Moves money should be put in the Major Moves Fund and not the General Fund; an ordinance will be prepared by Attorney Baugher for the August meeting of the Council regarding this matter. Mr. Ludlow wondered if money can be borrowed from the Major Moves Fund; Mrs. Shuter responded that she hadn't

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thought about that since the County has a lot of funds they could borrow from before we would be out of money but she will find out. There was discussion regarding the law pertaining to the appropriation of Major Moves monies. Mr. Yagelski then made a motion to budget the full amount in the **Major Moves Fund 223** and Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

**JAIL BOND/CCD/REGIONAL PLANNING (NIRPC) (205/216/218)
HCI/MAW/CHINS (856/858/859)**

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the budgets as presented by the Auditor for the **CCD 216, Jail Bond 205, Regional Planning 218, HCI 856, MAW 858 and CHINS 859** budgets. Mr. Mrozinski seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

REASSESSMENT LEVY/PERF PERCENTAGE

Mrs. Shuter reported that the State sets the levy for this fund; the levy for 2008 is 398,054 which are all of the money that we can generate for reassessment.

The PERF percentage for 2008 is 6.75%

SUPERIOR COURT NO. 1 (149)

Judge Kathleen Lang presented this budget and explained that the only new line item in Personal Services is the Law Clerk. She explained that Judge King and Judge Boklund have law clerks and this would be a valuable asset.

There was discussion regarding the vocational training grant. Judge Lang reported that the Urban Enterprise Zone is near the end of its existence due to the elimination of inventory tax; this explains the request for \$30,000.00 plus \$1,000.00 for equipment and tools. Judge Lang stated that hopefully the Prosecutor will be able to help out with this program. Mr. Ludlow suggested taking these requests out of the budget and Judge Lang can come back after the first of the year to ask an additional appropriation from Win Tax. Judge Lang commented that a lot of work for the County has been accomplished through this program and it is a definite benefit.

There was discussion concerning law books.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to move \$5,000.00 for Transcripts to the Public Defender Budget and to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented in the **149 budget** with the modification to cut the Transcript account (30037) to \$500.00. Mr. Yagelski seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

There was discussion regarding the Work Release program.

PUBLIC DEFENDER REVISITED (180)

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to modify the Public Defender Budget (180) and to add the \$5,000.00 removed from the Superior Court No. 1 Budget to the Litigation account for the cost of transcripts making the total line item \$25,500.00. Mr. Yagelski seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

ADJOURNMENT

After discussion regarding employee raises, the meeting was adjourned.

