

COUNTY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - JUNE 30, 2022

The meeting was called to order by President, Jim Ison.

A. Call the Meeting to Order

1. Roll Call

The following members were present: Melinda Griesemer, Pete Ketchum, Jonathan T. Myers, Rob Henderson, John Myers and Ron Deer.

2. Invocation

Mr. Ketchum gave the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Ison led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Discussion on Local Option Income Tax (LIT) for Economic Development

Mr. Ison explained the purpose of this Special Meeting of the Council was to discuss different avenues of funding for upcoming infrastructural projects throughout the county. He further explained the option of an Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT) as well as some other funds available to the county.

Mr. Henderson introduced the data compiled by Highway Supervisor, Luke Mastin, and how the Council would be using this information to enhance their discussion. Mr. Henderson explained the need for infrastructural work in the county as well as the proposed 0.2% EDIT tax that would generate a little under \$4 million for the County and flow revenue to the cities and towns as well. He noted the earliest the tax could be adopted would be September 1st, with a beginning collection date of October 1 of 2022.

Mr. Ison asked for input from each Council member on their current opinion of the presented infrastructural funding avenues.

Mr. Jonathan T. Myers stated the pandemic has caused many to feel pressed and the White-River Township area is being greatly affected by the I-69 project that has continued moving forward through these stressful times. He stated his opposition to utilizing the Jail LIT funds for the roads as he felt there is too much responsibility for that money to be used towards health and mental health at this time.

Mr. Ketchum stated he would like to see minimal use of the Jail LIT and the Rainy Day funds that were proposed. He stated his understanding of the tough times on many taxpayers currently, but explained the need to sustain the infrastructure and pay the County's bills.

Ms. Griesemer proposed questions on other ways to impose a tax on all residents opposed to just an income tax, as she would like to make it as fair as possible for all.

Mr. John Myers expressed his agreement to doing something to move the projects forward.

Mr. Deer urged his fellow Council members to take action and begin somewhere on this project. He explained the long term rising costs if they were to push off the tax further.

Mr. Ison agreed there is a need to start somewhere and he believed it would be in the best interest of all to begin with the highest priority projects. He stated he would like to tax the citizens as little as possible and would rather use the Jail LIT that citizens have already been taxed for.

Jeff Peters, Financial Consultant, was present to offer more information about the EDIT tax. He informed the Council 73 out of 92 counties in Indiana have an EDIT tax for similar uses.

Mr. Mastin approached the Council to answer their questions about the current county budget for the Highway Department and the ability to continue funding projects with the rising costs caused by current inflation. He explained the department will struggle to fund Federal-Aid Projects for the upcoming year while trying to cover the normal budget as fuel and material costs continue to rise. Mr. Mastin also aided in the discussion held amongst the Council of the timeline and funding needed to complete the pressing Smith Valley Road Project.

Mr. Jonathan T. Myers noted that if the Council were to move forward with an EDIT tax, the cities and towns would receive income from the tax as well.

Mr. Henderson stated he would like to get the infrastructural projects started for the remainder of this year by utilizing the Rainy Day funds and well at the Jail LIT funds. He explained the process to appropriate Jail operating expenses back out of the General Fund to create more funding to get through the year. Mr. Henderson also explained how the EDIT tax at 0.2% could be used next year to help the Criminal Justice Fund revenue use under 50%.

Mr. Ison stated it is the goal of the Council to come to a decision of how to approach the needed infrastructural projects so they can hold a vote at the upcoming meeting. He stated he would like to put 0.2% EDIT tax up for a vote on the July meeting agenda.

C. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Henderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jonathan T. Myers seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

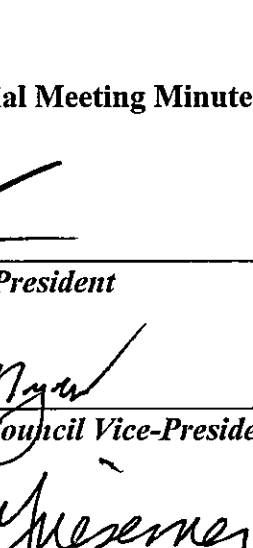
June 30, 2022 – Special Meeting Minutes



Jaynes Ison, Council President



Jonathan T. Myers, Council Vice-President



Melinda Griesemer, Council Member



Pete Ketchum, Council Member




Rob Henderson, Council Member



John Myers, Council Member



Ron Deer, Council Member

Attest:


Pamela J. Burton, Johnson County Auditor