

VIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
Sunshine Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.
Council Chambers, Vigo County Government Center

Pledge of Allegiance

President Todd Thacker called the meeting to order at 5:00.

Calling of the roll

Aaron Loudermilk – present; Nancy Allsup – present; Vicki Weger – present; Marie Theisz – present; Travis Norris – present; David Thompson – present; and Todd Thacker – present.

Communications from elected officials, other officials or agencies of the County

Emily Owens, Chief of Clinical Outreach at Hamilton Center, gave a brief review of their 2023 annual report. They have provided mental health and/or addiction services to a little over 6,000 residents. Primary referral source is other behavioral health providers, the legal system, Department of Child Services as well as the hospitals and the school corporation. Most of their services are provided to Medicaid population while also providing to Medicare, private insurance, and self pay population. The largest numbers served are between 25-64 years old. Ages 0-12 are increasing yearly with their school-based services. She talked about their community outreach efforts and all that it entails. They also participate in many community activities. They have expanded their 24-hour access mobile crisis unit. They serve 11 counties within the region with Vigo County being the main corporate county. There was a short discussion with Council members. It was also noted that they are certified to treat gambling addiction which may be needed with the opening of the casino later this year.

First reading by summary reference of proposed ordinances and resolutions

After talking with Counsel, it was decided to forego this reading and move ahead.

Reports from committees

The Annual Budget Committee met earlier today and the results will be announced under Old Business.

Resolutions and Ordinances other than appropriations.

There were none.

Ordinances relating to appropriations.

OLD BUSINESS:

i. Salary Ordinance 2024-21A: Courts – Budget Adjustment

This Salary Ordinance had been tabled at last month's meeting until the Budget Committee could meet and make a recommendation. Chairperson Vicki Weger said the Budget Committee met just prior to this meeting to consider the request from the Courts

to move an IT employee from the County Commissioners' budget back to the Courts' budget and it was decided to grant that request. Marie Theisz commented that it was hoped the partnership and working together would continue moving ahead.

NEW BUSINESS:

i. Additional Appropriation 2024-025: Veterans Assistance – Copy Machine Rental

Vickie Albright, Veterans Service Officer, said that with two offices now operating full time, they see about 110 veterans per week which has increased the number of copies of paperwork that have to be made. Their current copier is about 12 years old and cannot handle the numbers being made. They are asking for an additional appropriation for a 5-year lease for a new copier with \$58.16 per month lease payments for a total additional appropriation of \$750.00.

ii. Additional Appropriation 2024-26: LIT/Special Purpose – Contractual Services

Commissioner Mark Clinkenbeard made an opening statement. He comes from a construction background and had toured the old jail upon taking office as a Commissioner with the thought that it could be repurposed for other uses. He thoroughly inspected the facility. It was falling apart. It was also made of concrete throughout instead of studs and drywall making repairs/repurposing much harder, more extensive, and expensive. Try as he might, his only conclusion was that the building was a lost cause. He said he is very conservative and putting taxpayer dollars to good use is his priority but he cannot in good conscience advocate for repurposing the building. Chris Switzer then gave a brief history of the building. DLZ was commissioned in 2022 to do a study on the building which was made available to the Council and on the website for the public to view. Multiple tours were conducted for public officials to view the state of the building. There was a public information meeting in February of 2023 with 18 of the 23 speakers in favor of demolishing the building. The relocation of E911 out of that building was finally accomplished after that. The basement of the building still holds all the equipment and technology for all the entities on the tower which will need to be relocated and was addressed later in the meeting. Utility costs for the building in 2023 were \$125,000 and the insurance premium was \$45,000. What would and would not be covered by insurance was provided to the Council. Utilities cannot be turned off to the building for insurance reasons. This ask also includes a road extension/access road to the City parking lot to get inmates safely dropped off when they have to appear in Court. This will provide security for both the inmates and the staff, along with a few additional handicap parking spots for City Hall. It will also make it easier for emergency vehicle access. Tyler Claypool of Garmong Construction reviewed the budget for the project and everything it would include. A copy of the budget had been provided to Council members. Officer Jeff Fox with the Vigo County Sheriff's Department, explained in detail the necessity of moving the location of the current tower, the cost of same (approximately \$420,000), and options that are available in getting that accomplished, including adding additional towers. Several Council members had questions and there was lengthy discussion. It was clarified that relocating the current tower and adding a third site was about a 3-year process at a cost of \$35 million. There was also lengthy

discussion about replacement of the generator and options available for that. Todd Thacker stated that his takeaway of all this is that we lack a strategic plan now. He felt like that there should have been a plan on what to do with the old jail as soon as shovel hit dirt for the new jail and such was not the case. Generally doing one improvement project leads to other costly projects created from the initial improvement. He felt like the order to get things accomplished needed to be reprioritized and there might be other priorities that should be considered before any of this. Officer Fox said he would continue to investigate the possibility and costs of adding a third tower and present his findings to the Council and Public Safety. Chris Switzer noted that if this project were broken into parts, there might be issues with being able to use the LIT/Public Safety money to pay for these as separate projects. The Commissioners have been informed if the building for the tower is included with the demolition of the jail, everything can be funded from that fund as proposed. There was also discussion about the generator replacement and that it cannot be included from this fund. Council Attorney Michael Wright said he will research whether or not LIT/Special Purpose can pay for certain items if they are done in separate phases rather than all at once. Discussion continued. Norm Loudermilk, not speaking in his capacity as Juvenile Center Director but as a taxpayer, said he had formerly been involved in fire protection business. He said there are ways you can enhance public communication without having to move the tower. There are ordinances that the County and City Councils can adopt to require new construction or certain buildings made of certain material to have repeaters in those buildings. The casino agreed to that but the battle has been ongoing since Wal-Mart was built on SR 46. If you require local ordinances, which the international fire code already has the language in there, but it has just not been adopted by the State. Locally, we adopted what the State did. The State didn't adopt it because they didn't want to upset contractors due to additional cost. The cost of putting a repeater in a building is much cheaper than moving a tower to a different location. He is not saying that the tower doesn't need to be moved but it needs to be considered that there are also other things that can be done. You can also enhance public safety communication by saying in an ordinance that is adopted in concert with the City that certain buildings made of certain material or certain metal roofing can have a repeater that will take that radio tower and repeat that signal throughout the building and the surrounding area. That would be paid for by the business, not tax dollars or an appropriation of the Council or anybody else.

iii. Additional Appropriation 2024-27: Parks Non Reverting – New Equipment

Brian Gilbert of the Parks Department said Vigo Parks will soon be taking over much of the maintenance on the Riley Spur Trail. They are also trying to grow the Riley Lock property into a park and also acquiring 38 parcels in Bicentennial Park. They have restructured their seasonal and part-time schedule to accommodate this. When they restructured, they made a position that is part time for trails and mowing with the autonomous mower they are now requesting funding to purchase. The requested funding will purchase a mower, trailer and a Kubota to make it possible for the part time trails guy and mower to be mobile and not have to take it away from Parks.

iv. Salary Ordinance 2024-28A: Parks – Add 1 Full Time Position

Brian Gilbert of the Parks Department explained that part of their restructuring of seasonal and part time employment had to do with the fact that it was getting harder and harder to get and retain seasonal employees. In doing so, they have saved enough time to pay for a half of a full time position for a maintenance/park ranger who will work the peak hours. He will have a flex schedule Wednesday through Sunday so he can oversee the seasonal workers in prime times and perform any maintenance needed in off hours. Most problems happen on weekends/evenings/holidays and they currently do not have a full time person for those time periods. There was a short discussion. Travis Norris asked about the autonomous mower. Mr. Gilbert said the proposed mower had been brought out to the dam and demonstrated. It would make mowing the dam areas a much safer job. It also sped up the mowing time.

v. Salary Ordinance 2024-29A: Adult Probation – Amend Receptionist Position to Secretary

Lee Ann Riesenbeck, Chief Adult Probation Officer, explained she is requesting a classification change for one of their employees. 2 administrative staff will be retiring this year. They will be eliminating the receptionist position. She would like to move the receptionist into a secretary position, which would be a change from a Grade 3 to a Grade 6. Due to the longevity of the employee, there would only be a cost difference of \$0.11 per hour. They would be eliminating the secretary position of Supplemental Adult Probation and adding a secretary to Adult Probation.

vi. Salary Ordinance 2024-30A: CASA – Amend Salary Ordinance and Correct Job Description

Judge Sarah Mullican, Judge Dan Kelly and Glenna Cheesman, Director of Vigo County CASA, presented this request. Judge Mullican gave the Council members charts and statutes explaining the CASA program. Glenna Cheesman said the first request is to simplify their job descriptions. She had been trying to accomplish this since 2017. She would like the newly submitted job descriptions she had created to become what is put on file and delete all the old ones to prevent confusion. The new ones will be used going forward and never need to be changed unless just updated by pay. She would also like to correct some positions. When the final salary ordinances were prepared, Baker Tilly had created jobs CASA did not even have, such as 5 supervisor positions and 3 other positions that were supposed to be staff advocates. President Thacker said drafts were sent to department heads and supervisors before things were made final and it should have been caught then. Ms. Cheesman said the last time she received a copy of the salary ordinance was May 23 and she was working with HR correcting what had been submitted. The salary ordinance that went into effect had not been fixed and the errors were still showing. Supervisors are graded correctly at 10 but there should be 4 supervisors. The 3 positions of staff advocate positions were graded incorrectly as one data administrator which they do not have, one at a volunteer coordinator monitor CASA which is also not a position that is justified that they have. They have a staff CASA that works at volunteer coordinating. They also have a Family Recovery Court staff CASA. That was a staff CASA that worked in FRC. The Family Recovery Court was graded at an 8 which is correct. But then they created another position and another person who is being paid at a 10. The job descriptions were all wrong and it caused one person to be

paid at a supervisor rate, one person being paid at a grade 4 doing the same work and another person being paid at grade 8. So there is a discrepancy of over \$13,000 between the three positions. They should all be graded at 8 for a difference of \$34,063 to the county per year. They could keep the person being paid at a supervisor rate the same and increase her duties to give her supervisory capacities. But the one position would still need to be brought up to an 8 and the title changes would need to be corrected. Chief Deputy Auditor Cheryl Loudermilk explained that these requests had been separated out. Amended Salary Ordinance 2024-32A will change the title from Volunteer Coordinator/Monitor to Staff Advocate Supervisor at a grade 10. Amended Salary Ordinance 2024-30A changes the position title to Staff Advocate and pay grade and shows the pay difference. 2024-32A is to change the titles with no change in salary. 2024-30A is taking the other three and making the salary the same and change their title. There was a short discussion.

vii. Salary Ordinance 2024-31A: CASA – Add 3 Full Time Positions

Judges Kelly and Mullican explained how CASA and guardian ad litem worked and said this program was crucial to the County. There was discussion about the program. It was noted that they have no wait list. They have one person who is the assessment person and she takes every single case that comes in. She goes out and does all the investigative work and she is currently doing that as a part-time position. Her position is in jeopardy of being lost. Marie Theisz asked if these are new positions being requested or are they part time being asked to be taken to full time. Ms. Cheesman responded that they are all currently employed and working 29 hours weekly. These are critical positions used to maintain the wait list. Their program has been rewritten so they have an assessment structure, a staff structure, a volunteer structure, and then their FRC Court. Current number of employees is 17...8 full time and the rest are part time. There was lengthy discussion. If this is approved, these full time positions would not start until October. Discussion continued.

Public Comments

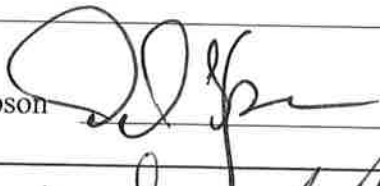
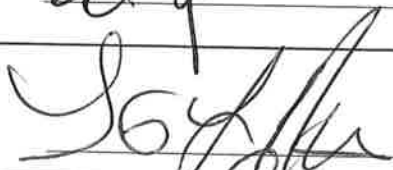
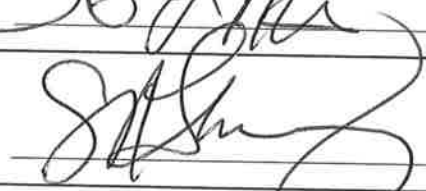

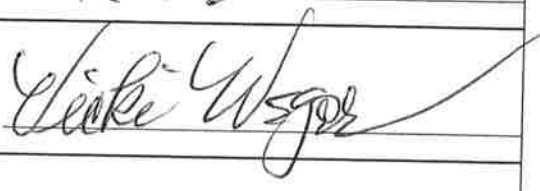

Jan Hoff, a CASA supervisor, commented that over the last 2-3 years the difficulty and darkness of the cases they are getting have exploded. Each case takes longer to work. They are experiencing a lot of stress. She stressed that they need full time people in order to distribute the caseload and maintain the zero waitlist.

Allie Midgley, Director of Art Spaces Wabash Valley Outdoor Sculpture Collection, expressed her organization's support of demolition of the old jail and explained the reasoning behind it.

Travis Norris made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. David Thompson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

MINUTES OF THE VIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
SUNSHINE MEETING
MARCH 5, 2024

Presented to the Vigo County Council, read in full and adopted as written this 9th day of April, 2024.

Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>				
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>		David Thompson		
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		Travis Norris		
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>		Marie Theisz		
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		R. Todd Thacker, President		
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>		Vicki Weger		
Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input type="checkbox"/>		Nancy Allsup		
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>		Aaron Loudermilk		
Aye <input type="checkbox"/>	Absent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>				

Attest:



James W. Bramble
Vigo Auditor