

Tipton County Council Meeting

5-17-2022

Present: Jim Ashley, Jim Purvis, Brad Nichols, Jan Smith, Butch Harpel, Mike Terry

Absent: Kirk Rutherford

Others Present: Bob Edinger

The Council meeting was opened by Jim Ashley with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes for May 19, 2022

Brad Nichols stated that he wanted to see an explanation for the Library's need for additional appropriations.

Motion to table by Mike Terry. Second by Jan Smith. Motion carried.

Minutes for May 26, 2022

Brad Nichols stated that he would like to see a narrative concerning the presentation by the utility consulting company.

Motion to table by Brad Nichols. Second by Jan Smith. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Jim Ashley stated that he would like to get started on the 2023 budget as soon as possible, but many of the reports that we need will not be available until late June or July. Auditor Townsend stated that we need to wait for the June 30 cash balances and that the budget forms will be sent to the Departments soon. He also commented that a growth quotient of five percent would not keep up with eight and one-half percent inflation.

Brad Nichols asked the Council to authorize a 10 full-time dispatcher. Auditor Townsend stated that there are sufficient funds in Dispatch to proceed. We can transfer appropriations into the appropriate lines and pursue additional appropriations for those lines for the rest of the year. Jim Purvis stated that we should not take hiring lightly, as those tend to become permanent and the cost lasts. Mike Terry stated that we are paying for the same scheduled hours, but this allows dispatchers to actually use their personal time off instead of being paid out.

Motion by Brad Nichols to approve the tenth full-time position in Dispatch. Second by Butch Harpel. Motion carried.

Brad Nichols brought up the Sheriff's pension that was tabled in April. He stated that he was not sure of the issue that was tabled. He stated that the Council was waiting for more members to be present.

Jim Ashley stated that the presentation was not as forthright as it could be. It did not give enough information. The motion came up quickly. There was a motion to make the change, but subsequently we had more information and another presentation from their representative. He stated that he would like to have another vote. He stated that he is still getting questions that he cannot answer. He asked, "What happens if we get to the point where we can't fund that, the pension plan? Are we obligated to fund the pension plan eternally?" Auditor Townsend stated that state law requires pensions for merit officers. Brad Nichols stated that procedurally, we voted and the motion passed. He stated that he thought that, technically, the way the document reads, it is done; the Merit Board approved it, the Sheriff did, and the Council voted for it.

Jim Ashley stated that it takes the signature of the President of the Council and he would not sign anything without a vote. It was tabled. The floor is open if someone wants to take it from the table. He stated that the information given was less than complete and this is a significant cost to the County and it creates a situation of a revolving door of sheriffs, where we could be funding a lifetime pension every eight years. We know the immediate expense, from the second presentation, is \$16,000 per year.

Brad Nichols stated that all merit officers contribute four per cent of salaries and the calculation that the county receives at budget time has always included the Sheriff's salary. For the last eight years we have been paying in using the sheriff's salary in the calculation. He stated that, if we leave it at 10 years, the pension fund would benefit from eight years of contributions, but there would be no individual benefiting. He said that this applies to all deputies that leave before vesting. The county has contributed based on

their salaries, as well. He stated that it is money that won't be used, because the deputies left before being vested.

Jim Ashley stated that the money would be used to fund the pensions of vested officers.

Jim Purvis stated that he finds himself in a dilemma, because the first presentation was voted on and he agreed with it. Since then, he has gotten more phone calls on this than any other topic from the public, present and former deputies stating that it is not needed and should stay at ten years. He stated that many had suggested that this looked like an effort to benefit the current sheriff. He stated, that one option would be to enact the change, effective January 1, 2023. He stated that the sheriff has indicated his support for the 8-year vesting, even if he did not get it. He also stated that a dilemma for his is that it appears that the president can veto the actions of the Council.

Jim Ashley stated that we have additional information and everyone has the right to fully understand the information and vote.

Brad Nichols asked how we would classify the vote that the Council did first: void, non-valid?

Jim Ashley stated that it would have to be rescinded, in order to move in a different direction.

Jim Purvis stated that, in the future, if the council wanted to change the plan, it would take the sheriff, the merit board, and the council. He stated that it would be hard for a sheriff to go against his own interest. He stated that, even after the second presentation, he thought that "the County can afford it and that it is a good tool to have in the toolbox." He stated that he would be the first to admit that he was a little hasty and that he wished that he had said that we need a little time to dwell on it. He stated that he wished that the council had tabled it at that time and given it thirty days and gotten some questions answered, but we didn't. He stated that even with the second presentation, he was comfortable enough to think that the county had the funds available and a trust of the merit board and any future sheriff, if we can't fund it, that we can change the parameters so that we can fund it.

Jim Ashley thanked the Council for their comments. He stated, "had there not been so many questions and had there been more information..."

Jim Purvis stated that he thought that the council had all learned a lesson, that on something like this, there should be a cooling-off period. He stated that he knew that he would be that way, next time. He stated that he would like to see some sort of resolution on this. He stated that this is type of thing that is going to fester.

Mike Terry state that he agreed with what Jim Purvis had said. He stated that he understood the additional information and that this is something that the county can fund. He stated that he did not disagree, that the Council should have tabled it back when the motion was made and the Council voted. He stated that he is not personally in favor of going back on something that they had already voted on. Motion by Mike Terry that the Council stand behind the vote that they took originally on the pension. Second by Butch Harpel. Votes in favor: Brad Nichols, Butch Harpel, Mike Terry, and Jim Purvis. Votes in opposition: Jim Ashley and Jan Smith. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Jim Purvis stated that the Goodwill Committee will meet, tomorrow, but that he would not be able to attend. Jan Smith will attend.

Motion by Jim Purvis to adjourn the meeting. Second by Jan Smith. Motion carried.

Approved this 21st day of June, 2022

Tipton County Council

James D. Ashley, President

Jim Purvis, Vice President

Kirk Retherford, member

Brad Nichols, member

Jan Smith, member

Butch Harpel, member

Michael Terry, member

Attest:

Gregg A. Townsend, Tipton County Auditor
Secretary to the Tipton County Council