

**TIPPECANOE COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2004**

The Tippecanoe County Council held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, September 8, 2004 at 7:00 P.M. in the Tippecanoe Room in the County Office Building. Council members present were: President Kathy Vernon, Vice President Ronald L. Fruitt, Connie Basham, Jeffrey A. Kemper, Jeffrey Kessler, and Betty J. Michael. Others present were: Auditor Robert A. Plantenga, Attorney David W. Luhman, and Secretary Pauline E. Rohr. (Councilmember David S. Byers was absent.)

President Vernon called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

DFC PRESENTATION: Director Steve Vaughn

Mr. Vaughn reviewed the 2005 DFC Budget:

The \$7.3 million 2005 Budget is \$800,000 more than 2004.

Miscellaneous Costs decreased \$300,000 but Care of Wards in Institutions increased \$320,000.

Preservation Services, spent on parents before and, hopefully in lieu of, removing the child from the home, increased from \$755,000 to \$1.5 million.

Mr. Vaughn said keeping the child at home is far cheaper than other options.

He noted they are under the maximum tax levy for 2005.

Mr. Vaughn provided statistics as of August 31, 2004:

248 wards of DFC 165 out-of-home care 83 in own home supervised by DFC staff

37 are in institutional and group homes

128 are in foster care with licensed foster parent or relative who is licensed foster parent

8 Case Managers, each with average case load of 30, provide on-going services

5 CPS (Child Protective Service) Investigators, each with average case load of 36

In August 2004

116 investigations 43 for abuse 73 for neglect

At the end of August 2004, drug and alcohol problems caused 55% of all children to be removed from the home. This compares to 37% in 2003 and 12% in 2000. He said the drug problem, especially, causes the immediate removal of the child from the home and results in an out-of-home placement.

The DFC has an operating balance of \$2.3 million as of August 31, 2004.

Children's Psychiatric Residential Treatment Services Fund

Mr. Vaughn explained the Children's Psychiatric Residential Treatment Services Fund is a second budget available but its use is defined by the State Legislature. He said it is used for children in specific psychiatric or mental health facilities which have to meet the criteria. The 2003 budget of \$269,000 increased to \$315,314 for 2004.

Councilmember Kessler calculated that the DFC will have an approximate balance of \$130,000 at the end of 2004. Mr. Vaughn agreed but acknowledged they will spend more than was allocated in the budget last year and will need an additional appropriation from their operating cash balance of \$2.3 million. He said this should serve as a warning that, if they overspend for the next two or three years, they will have to borrow money to operate.

Councilmember Kessler asked about the recidivism rate for children in out-of-home placements. Mr. Vaughn responded that approximately 35% to 40% return to the system, mostly due to continued drug use by parents.

Councilmember Basham asked if we are saving money with increased home placements. Mr. Vaughn answered that some institutions are costly so it is cheaper to keep the child in the home if it is a safe environment.

Councilmember Basham asked Mr. Vaughn to explain how the \$7.3 million budget will be funded.

He said the tax levy will fund \$3,086,000. The remainder will be funded by State and Federal reimbursements, court ordered repayments to the DFC for services, recoupments from families, and grants. Auditor Plantenga interjected that the \$3,086,000 comes from Property Tax but they also get an Excise Tax distribution.

MENTAL RETARDATION PRESENTATION: Wabash Center President Jeff Darling, Board Chairperson Beth Stull and Board Member Dave Bathe.

Mr. Darling stated Wabash Center's mission is to optimize the quality of life for people with disabilities and special needs. Wabash Center is a State recognized Community Mental Retardation Center that has operated in the community for fifty years. In 1991, the County allowed Wabash Center a permissive tax levy that is currently 2/3rds of a cent. He said recent funding cutbacks from the State, resulting in closure of the Children's Center and staffing cuts, prompted him to ask the Commissioners to increase the tax levy to 1 cent. He said the Commissioners were amenable but suggested phasing it in. He reported that increasing the tax levy to 1 cent will amount to approximately \$290,000 and will impact the average homeowner approximately \$2 per year. Mr. Darling said Wabash Center thinks the dollars will be well spent on services for people who have no other options in the community.

Councilmember Basham stated her support of the request to increase the tax levy to 1 cent.

Responding to Councilmember Fruitt's question, Mr. Darling said their maximum levy is 3 cents.

Auditor Plantenga informed the Council that the Commissioners' budget request for Mental Retardation was approximately .8 cents. He explained that Wabash Center doesn't have a levy maximum like County General does. He said their budget is outside the levy because they don't want to limit their funding based on the County's needs. Increasing their budget is a property tax increase.

Councilmember Kessler asked how many children were affected when the Children's Center closed and what their options were for placements. Mr. Darling said they served approximately 110 children per year and tried to link them with other available services in the community.

Councilmember Kessler asked Attorney Luhman if the Council is the only body that determines the rate. Attorney Luhman responded that the Statute says the Commissioners request the Council to approve the rate increase so both Commissioners and Council have to be satisfied. He said the Council has the final determination because the Council approves the levy.

Councilmember Michael asked if the Statute says the Commissioners "shall" or "may" request the rate increase. Attorney Luhman responded it says "may". He said they are not required to increase the levy but do have the authority to approve a rate up to 3 1/3 cents for Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Due to a formula change for Mental Health calculations, a change effectively becomes a dollar amount, not a tax rate. The information the Council received shows that an estimated .79 levy for Mental Retardation won't raise taxes substantially so the impact to the taxpayer will be approximately the same as last year.

President Vernon asked if this increase is not approved what services would have to be cut. Mr. Darling responded the most immediate cuts might be their Day Services that serve approximately 85 individuals in the Workshop Program and 36 individuals in an Adult Day Program who are too severely challenged to participate in the Workshop activities. He said there will be no other place for those 36 individuals to go.

Councilmember Kessler requested to see their administrative and operating budgets for 2005. Mr. Darling indicated that he will comply with that request.

Councilmember Basham suggested they add a County Council appointment to their Board. Mr. Darling said they were agreeable to that suggestion and he has asked current board member Jerry Withered if he would fill that role unless the Council has another choice.

President Vernon asked Mr. Darling to submit his budget to the Council prior to the meeting on September 14th when they will consider his request.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT: Chief Probation Officer Kipp Scott

The SHOCAP (Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program) Case Supervisor is currently paid from a JAIBG Grant that Mr. Scott said is scheduled to expire at the beginning of 2005. Because of this, he requested \$40,120 to fund this position in the Probation Department's Budget in the General Fund for 2005. To support this request, he explained that the Case Supervisor works with juveniles who would be in the DOC (Department of Corrections) if his position were eliminated. Since 2001, The Case Supervisor has worked with approximately 52 juveniles with a 79% success rate. Eleven (11) of those were sent to the DOC at an average daily cost of \$95 or a yearly cost of \$35,000 per child. Mr. Scott pointed out that the cost savings for one child will almost pay the Case Manager's annual salary.

Councilmember Kemper reported he spoke with Mr. Scott and explained that the Council was under the impression during the 2005 Budget Hearings that funding for this position was in the budget in two places and therefore cut it from the General Fund Budget. Councilmember Kemper stated he explained to Mr. Scott that the Council's past position has been that, if funding from a grant is no longer available, funding may not be available from the General Fund. He also stated the Council might be willing to maintain the position for at least a year if Probation User Fees could fund the position after that. Mr. Scott said he is already using \$255,000 of Probation User Fees to fund 3 Probation Officers, 1 Secretary, Benefits, Office Supplies, and Travel & Training for 2005. He said if he funds this position from User Fees in 2005 and maintains the current income from Probation Adult and Juvenile User Fees he predicts they will be in the red by about \$95,000 because their expenses are exceeding their revenue. He said they are using more than they are taking in and his projections show they could be broke by 2007 and the General Fund will have to fund the entire department.

Councilmember Kemper asked if any grant funds will become available for this position. Mr. Scott said he asked Judge Rush and she is not aware of any. Deputy Chief Probation Office Diane Kerns interjected they won't be able to get grant money for this position because the program already exists. She said the JAIBG Grant was seed money for this program.

Councilmember Kessler asked where it will put us with the General Fund Budget if this position is added. Auditor Plantenga said we still don't know our COIT revenue for 2005 but there is \$24,000 that could be put back in. He said the Council would probably have to cut \$20,000 from other departments or add revenue to keep the assumption of the COIT amount at 90% of the 2004 certified amount. Auditor Plantenga said he has learned that the large pool of money coming to Tippecanoe county is 92% of our 2004 certified amount but he doesn't know how much is the County's portion. He thinks we're on target so if we can find another \$20,000 he thinks we will be ok.

Councilmember Basham asked Mr. Scott if Probation User Fees are at their limit. Mr. Scott said they have collected all back fees plus a large number have already paid their fees even though they are still on Probation. He said they are allowed by Statute to only collect so much money.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Proposed 2005 Budget

President Vernon invited members of the public to speak regarding the 2005 Budget. She asked them to sign their names and addresses and limit their remarks to five (5) minutes. She informed them that copies of the entire 2005 Budget are available as well as copies of only the 2005 Highway Department Budget.

Van Marshall, 4451 New Castle Rd.: Mr. Marshall wondered how he could compare budget increases from 2004 to 2005 since his copy contained only numbers for 2005. Auditor Plantenga responded that the Council is only considering the 2005 Budget at this point, but he provided Mr. Marshall with a copy that contains both years.

Susan Smith, President of Family Services, 731 Main St.: Ms Smith asked for an explanation of Family Counseling Fund 526 that has an approved amount of \$35,000. Auditor Plantenga explained that Family Counseling is a program administered by Superior Court II for the education of divorced families with children. He said he believes the revenue for this fund comes from court fees.

Ms Smith voiced her support of the direction the DFC is heading with the Family Preservation Fund and she commended their staff and the Council. She also expressed support for Wabash Center that she said provides services that are needed and unduplicated in the community.

Councilmember Fruitt asked if a report can be generated to show positions that are paid from grants and when those grants will expire. He said this would be helpful so the Council would know which positions might seek funding from the General Fund. Commissioners' Assistant Jennifer Weston said she and Grant Coordinator Christine Chapman are working on such a report that will soon be available to the Council.

COUNCIL REVIEW: Proposed 2005 Budget

President Vernon called attention to the handout titled "Tippecanoe County 2005 Budget Notes" in which Auditor Plantenga explains both verbally and graphically how Tippecanoe County's Property Tax Levy is divided among all taxing units of the County as well as how it is divided to operate County government. There were no comments.

Proposed Uses for Wheel Tax: Highway Executive Director Mark Albers

A handout was distributed showing current hard surface roads in need of widening and resurfacing with a cost estimate of \$852,000. Mr. Albers said additional right-of-way will need to be researched but we already have 40' right of ways on some of the higher traveled roads to address drainage as well as widening needs. He said they plan to offer 300' of dust control for property owners located on gravel roads with any additional footage paid by the property owner. Because they will be starting 2005 with a zero operating balance, he said they will only have 50% of the expected revenue the first year. He expects to have a full budget to work with during the second year in 2006.

<u>Road</u>	<u>Road Segment</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Ave/Req</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Width Est</u>
CR 500N	Old US 52-US 52	0.2			17'/20'
	CR 50W-CR 225W	1.7			19'/22'
	Morehouse Rd-CR 225W	0.3			18'/22'
CR 900S	SR 25-W County Line	1.1			15'/20'
CR 75E	CR 500N-CR 600N	1.0			20'/20'
CR 100E	CR 1000S-SR 28	1.0			17'/20'
CR 500E	CR 200N-CR 300N	1.0			18'/22'
CR 600E	CR 200N-CR 300N	1.0			21'/20'
CR 900E	CR 100S-CR 200S	1.0			22'/22'
	CR 400N-CR 700N	2.0			22'/22'
CR 975E	Railroad-CR 1300S	1.7			18'/22'
CR 700W	SR 25-Division Rd	4.5			22'/22'
CR 850W	US 52-CR 500N	0.1			18'/20'
CR 900W	CR 900S-SR 25	0.6			16'/20'
CR 925W	CR 350N-SR 26	1.5			16'/20'
Total					\$852,000

There were no questions or comments.

Coroner's Budget

President Vernon announced that, due to a miscalculation of the Coroner's salary, the Council will need to find an additional \$1,200 to bring the salary to \$24,600.

EDIT Fund 301 Budget

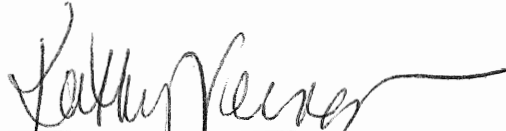
Auditor Plantenga informed the Council they will need to cut \$2,866 somewhere in the overall EDIT Budget because the total EDIT Fund Budget that totals \$5,402,966 is higher than the advertised amount of \$5,400,000. This occurred when the Council added \$4,500 to EDIT Drainage Board for a portion of the Surveyor's salary. He said the State will not approve a budget higher than the advertised amount.

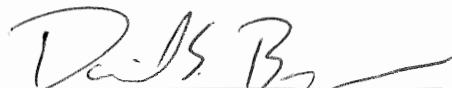
ADJOURNMENT

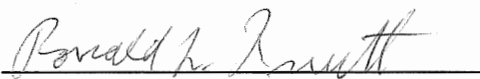
Councilmember Fruitt moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Kemper; motion carried.

The County Council will hold its regular meeting at 2:00 P.M., Tuesday, September 14, 2004 in the Tippecanoe Room in the County Office Building.


TIPPECANOE COUNTY COUNCIL

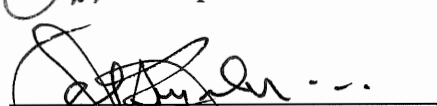

Kathy Vernon, President


David S. Byers


Ronald L. Fruitt, Vice President


Jeffrey A. Kemper


Connie Basham


Jeffrey Kessler

Attest: 
Robert A. Plantenga, Auditor


Betty J. Michael