

RE: Disaster Recovery

**Minutes-Vermillion County Commissioners Special Meeting. April 28, 2009.
6:00 pm**

The Vermillion County Commissioners met in the Commissioners Courtroom, Courthouse, Newport, Indiana.

President, Tim Wilson called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge to the Flag.

Roll call was taken: Present were President Tim Wilson, and Harry Crossley. Also present were Attorney Jon Spurr, Auditor Phyllis Orman and First Deputy Amy Tolbert. Kim Hawkins was absent.

Kristy and Jerrell and Terry Jones of the West Central Indiana Economic Development District (WCIEDD) were present to discuss planning for projects that could be eligible for disaster recover money. Also present were County Council President John Cheesewright, Economic Development Council President Tom Milligan, Clinton Mayor Art Lindsay, and city councilman Robert Lindsey.

Jerrell explained that the money is being paid out through the Economic Development Administration and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, and that WCIEDD had been assigned the task of developing a recovery plan for the flood. She said the money is available to help the county recover from the June 08 flood, but the money does not necessarily go to projects related to the flood. She said the purpose of the meeting was to establish goals, objectives and strategies for long term recovery.

Jones said that any project that might be funded with federal disaster recovery money will need to be included in the plan. He said that even though the money is for disaster recovery, officials should not limit themselves to thinking about damage done by the flood. The county as a whole is eligible, even areas that were not hit directly. Jones opened the floor for suggestions.

Wilson asked about a buyout program for residents in flood zones. Jones explained that this would need to be a county-wide project for residents who do not live in cities or towns, or a municipal project for those who do. He suggested that it be run through the EOC on the county level. Lindsay asked that if such a program was done, would the city be stuck with the maintenance. He said the program would not be feasible for Clinton. Jones said the grant money would cover the demolition of the homes. He added that the property must be maintained as "green space." Lindsay suggested building holding ponds. He said that FEMA had told him that it wasn't allowed. Jones agreed and said that the idea was to create more "green areas." Jones said he would look into it.

Wilson asked if water could be re-routing in the areas where people had built homes and were now prone to flooding. Jones said that such a plan could be funded under the program, if it was identified as a stormwater infrastructure plan. He added that the money is geared to lower income areas, so if this is a higher income area, they might be denied.

Wilson also asked about tile work in farmer's fields in Gessie. Jones said private property could not be funded unless the county was willing to take on the responsibility of maintaining it as part of the county's drainage system.

Milligan suggested cleaning out Dana ditches and the sewer system in Dana. Lindsay said Feather Creek is full of sediment and needs cleaned out. Wilson asked if the drainage issues could be handled county-wide instead of being run by each community. Jones said that could be done if everyone could agree to it. Crossley suggested forming a board with one person from each community.

Milligan said a water study needed to be done on the Newport Chemical Depot property. Jones said such a study could be done if the Army agreed to it. Milligan also suggested a railroad study for the same property. He said there would be more potential for future development if the rail system was still in place. Jones said that could also be funded by this program.

Fairview Resident Leonard Akers asked if the fund were 80/20. Jones said any entity can try for 100 percent funding but may or may not be successful.

Milligan said that water and sewer lines need to be ran from Clinton to White Construction and the proposed ethanol plant. Jones said those projects would be eligible for funding.

Jones said that funds could be available to repave the main roads in and out of smaller towns, if they connect to a state highway, and that INDOT would cover 80 percent of the cost of paving those roads.

A second meeting will be held within the next 30-45 days.

Adjourn

Read in full and approved by the Vermillion County Commissioners on the 2nd day of June, 2009.

Tim Wilson

Harry Crossley

Kim Hawkins

Attest: _____
Phyllis Orman, Auditor