

# ***Vermillion County Commissioners & Council***

## ***Joint Meeting Minutes***

July 30, 2018

6:30 p.m. (Immediately following Executive Session)

Commissioners Courtroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Courthouse

- I. **Call to order.** The Vermillion County Council and Commissioners convened in a joint meeting on July 30, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.
- II. **Roll call.** Members present were President of the Council Michael Carty, William Brent Bush, Ashley James, Randy Dreher, James McLain, John Michael Major, Robert Spence, Council Attorney Scott Craig, President of the Commissioners Tim Wilson, Harry Crossley, Tim Yocum, County Attorney Jon Spurr, Auditor Amy Tolbert and First Deputy Auditor Stephanie Simpson.
- III. **Local Income Tax Considerations.** Carty opened the meeting with stating they need to discuss what needs to be done with the jail, whether that be renovating, expanding, or replacing the current jail. Carty said we need to be looking at the Local Income Tax rates to decide if we want to make any changes. Craig stated that in order for any changes to take effect at the end of the year, it must be approved by October 1, 2018 otherwise it wouldn't take effect until 2020.

Phelps said the jail committee met Friday, and even though the population has not been an issue lately that there are mechanical issues that are not going to go away. Phelps stated that every time they turn around they find another corner that was cut in '92 or '93. He said we've got one problem on top of another. He said the \$70,000.00 maintenance budget is eaten up each year by electrical and plumbing issues, just to fix things that should have been right on day one. He stated that when the jail was built there should have been a project manager, he said what's in the blueprints isn't what we've got. Phelps said the committee voted to pursue an expansion to a 100-bed jail, with renovations to existing facilities, at an estimated cost of \$16.5 to \$18.2. McLain asked how much a new jail would cost, and Phelps said it would start at \$24 million and go up. McLain said he felt some of the LIT money should be set back for the upcoming jail costs.

The Council discussed whether to lower or keep the Local Income Tax the same as it is. James stated she doesn't feel like we need to reduce public safety. She said we need to start putting some back for the jail renovation / expansion. James said she felt the discussion should be on whether to reduce the certified shares portion, Carty stated that any unspent certified shares funds could also be set aside for the jail renovation / expansion. Carty also stated that other taxing entities, such as cities, towns and libraries, also receive money from certified shares and would be affected if it was reduced. Dreher said can't we lower both and still put money aside? Carty said if we lower it that's less money we can put aside. Bush said he would hate to see us change anything right now.

James asked if, at the end of the year, any surplus Local Income Tax money could be used to reduce property tax rates. Carty said anything is possible and we would need to take a good look at it. James suggested using the surplus to help fund the next year's budget, so the overall tax rate needed would be lower. Craig said the City of Clinton has done this. Craig said if you put it in as revenue, it effectively lowers the rate. James said doing this would not hurt the city or towns, because it would not affect their budgets.

Clinton City Mayor Jack Gilfoxy said he felt increasing the Local Income Tax was a great thing and called it an investment in the county. He said they have been able to do some things with what they've received, if you take it away now, we're just falling backward. Gilfoxy said even after the increase Vermillion County is still in the bottom third of the state as far as its tax

rate.

John Moore of Clinton said that he personally appreciates the thought of lowering taxes, but suggested the county leave them alone for now and look at them again next year.

County Clerk Amy Griffin asked if the rate would be lowered once the jail was complete.

Carty said that it would be hard to look that far ahead yet, when the county is still having trouble deciding what to do about the jail issues.

James said you're always going to have increased costs for everything, so once the jail is finished there is still going to be maintenance and staffing to consider and eventually we're going to have this problem again. James stated she thinks it would be beneficial to the county to hold back money for the jail. Carty stated that we're not talking about reducing beyond what we are currently funding.

Clinton City Councilman Bob Alexander said he felt it would be a bad idea to reduce the taxes before knowing exactly what the jail is going to cost. He said he doesn't think we have enough figures to see if we're ready to reduce it. Alexander stated that we need to look at it a couple of years down the road, so we don't have to raise it again.

City Councilman Dean Strohm said he is seeing improvements all over the county. Strohm said he's been a frequent flyer on the ambulance service, three times now, and it's rewarding to know we have paramedics there. He said he feels more comfortable knowing we have moresheriffs on the road. Strohm said on behalf of the city, the fire departments and the emergency services, I hope you keep it the way it is. Carty stated that no action was going to be taken tonight, and that any changes would be made at a future Council meeting.

IV. **2019 Salary Considerations.**Carty asked if there were any salary considerations for 2019, if anyone had any suggestions on flat raises or percentage raises. No one gave any suggestions or had any comments.

V. **Adjourn.** A motion was made by Major and seconded by Spence to adjourn. All in favor, motion carried.

**AYENAY**

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Michael Carty, President	
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Randy Dreher	
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William Brent Bush	
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Ashley James	
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James McLain	
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Robert Spence	
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John Michael Major	
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Tim Wilson, President	

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Harry Crossley

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Tim Yocum

Attest:\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Tolbert, Auditor