

COMMISSIONERS & COUNCIL MEETING
JOINT SESSION
January 7, 2022 at 3:30 PM

ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS:	Rick Woodall, President Thomas Helmer, Vice President David Berry
COUNCIL:	Dave Fuhrman, President Stephanie Campbell, Vice President Phillip Gick Keith Berry Danny Wallace Larry Parker
ATTORNEY:	James Ensley Trudy Selvia
AUDITOR'S OFFICE:	Kristina Berish
AUDIENCE:	3 Individuals

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners and Council met in Joint Session on January 7, 2022, at 3:30 PM at the Putnam County Courthouse. Rick Woodall opened the meeting and the pledge to the flag was given.

ARP FUNDING

Rick Hall with Barnes and Thornburg along with Jason Semler from Baker Tilly attended the meeting. Both firms have been advising counties and helping them through the process from beginning to end.

Rick Woodall stated after attending the Indiana Association of County Commissioners conference the Commissioners felt it was in everyone's best interest to hire a firm to manage the ARP money.

Rick Hall said anything under 10M you can spend for any governmental purpose due to loss of income. Jason Semler said streamline reporting would be the best way to go. Barnes and Thornburg fees are \$2,500 per month. Baker Tilly charges for time and expense. The fees would be paid from the ARP funds.

Hall and Semler cautioned the county spending any of the funds until they had the proper paperwork done. The process needs to be put in place before you make any expenditure. They realize there are some entities with time sensitive projects. Jim Ensley will send a copy of the plan draft to Rick Hall to review.

Rick Woodall said the premium pay still needed to be determined as well as funding to the fire departments.

Hall and Semler will get contracts to Jim Ensley for review.

ANNEX

Rick Woodall said the county owned property in town. The Commissioners have the continued growing concern of the overweight problem in the courthouse. It is causing structural issues. They are also faced with the problem of the current storage facility. It is becoming increasingly unsafe for the records, and we have run out of room.

Woodall said the county currently has 1.5M in a fund for an annex. The Commissioners had asked two firms to give them an estimate for a storage building. It would cost approximately \$400,000. Does the county spend \$400,000 for a storage building or put that money towards a new annex that would have storage area in it?

Woodall asked what would be the best option for financing an annex? Do they use the 1.5M as a down payment, leave it in bank since interest rates are so low and finance all of it, bond, or a rolling bond?

Jason Semler said the county had several options, cash on hand interest rates are very low right now. Their company has the capacity to send it out and get the best rate. Interest on bonds is low right now too. They have seen counties keep back their cash on hand for future needs since the rate is so low.

Bond vs a bank loan, Rick Hall said it is procedurally the same. Minus the negotiation step of a bond. Bond fees are more than loan fees. However, the interest rates are typically lower. A bond you normally must wait 8-10 years before you can pay off early. Semler said they could work out both scenarios and see which would be best for the county.

Semler said a rolling bond allows counties a continuous flow of money for projects such as purchasing fleet of vehicles or bridges. The bond matures anywhere from every 2 to 5 years. It is a capital funding revenue source.

Consensus after discussion was to have the companies research and find what revenue the county has available for an annex. The county also needs to look at use of the building to see if they need storage or storage and office space.

Semler said the cost for their company could be wrapped into the bond/loan unless the county took say two years to decide then they would need to pay the company. Typically, their fees run around \$3-5,000. They charge for time and expense.

Phil Gick brought up how the county is looking into switching to a capital fund which would be outside the property tax levy instead of the current cumulative funds of jail, courthouse, and bridge. This would help the county's funding for an annex as well.

Keith Berry would like to see a 5-year plan for the county revenue. He was very concerned about using property tax as a revenue source. He does not want to deter people from moving to our county due to the amount of tax.

SOLAR & WIND

Rick Woodall made the motion to add to the agenda. Dave Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Rick Woodall questioned how counties should handle companies coming in for solar and wind. Rick Hall and Jason Semler said both their companies help counties navigate through this process as well. They negotiate an economic development payment to the counties to make it worth allowing the companies to come in with solar and wind.

Woodall said he asked because they have a company that has already approached and identified land they want for a solar project. Thirty percent of the project would be in Putnam County, the remaining part in an adjacent county. Typically, any fees paid to Baker Tilly and Barnes and Thornburg are paid by the company to negotiate a contract.

ADJOURN

Tom Helmer made the motion to adjourn. Dave Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Rick Woodall, President

Thomas Helmer, Vice President

David Berry

Dave Fuhrman, President

Stephanie Campbell, V. President

Phillip Gick

Keith Berry

Larry Parker

Danny Wallace

**Attest: Auditor's Office
Kristina Berish**