

WHEREAS, in the opinion of the County Auditor, the public interests required that the Lake County Council, should be called to meet in special session at this time, for the purpose of considering County 2% Circuit Breaker, County Option Income Tax, Food & Beverage Tax, a written notice was sent to each member of the Council, and proper advertisement made, and all other acts performed in accordance with the laws governing such matters.

And now in obedience to such call, come Will A. Smith, Jr., President, Donald Potrebic, Ron Tabaczynski, Elsie Franklin, Christine Cid, Thomas O'Donnell, and Larry Blanchard, County Councilpersons, together with Ray Szarmach, County Council Attorney.

Dante gave an overview of where the tax dollars go. He said that for the City of East Chicago, the County portion accounts for 7%. He said the County portion for the City of Gary is approximately 7% of the tax bill, for the City of Hammond, the County portion is 11%, and the City of Whiting, the County portion is 9%. These are for the 2003/2004 tax bills.

Dante said that 64% is for Criminal Justice, plus the Mandates, approximately 75% goes to Law Enforcement, Sheriff, Prosecutor's Office.

Dante said that he has heard on the radio that it's 80%, the only thing that he can say is that every new incremental dollar that we get, all units of government get incremental dollars. We get miscellaneous revenues, investment incomes, that new money that comes in, goes to Criminal Justice, maybe that's where the 80% comes from. Dante said the rest of your money is spread out between professional services, Health Department, Drains, Surveyor, Elections, things that are mandated and controlled by law that we have to provide. Administrative, which are County Council, County Commissioners, Auditor, Treasurer, Recorder, those folks are on there. The County Assessor is in there. Parks and Fairgrounds, 8%, which is high, normally it's about 4%, but last year we didn't get any property tax collections, we have a bond issue to pay. Since we didn't have any property tax collections, a bond issue to pay, we obviously had to take out loans and we didn't make that payment, what we did, is we had to dump it all on the tax levy this year, so that 8% includes that doubling up of the Parks' tax rate so that's a high number, but it is 8% of your 2004 tax bill.

Dante went through examples of tax statements from East Chicago, Gary, and Hammond and explained how the amount that is owed is calculated. He explained about the two types of credit, which are the Homestead and the PTRC, or Property Tax Replacement Credit.

Smith said that there are sign-up sheets, which would allow those who want to speak an opportunity to voice their opinions. This also means that everyone here will have input before the Council, in terms of what your feelings are. Smith asked that everyone limit their remarks to four minutes.

Commissioner Rudy Clay said that the big question is how did we get into this mess? He said that the State of Indiana mandated a reassessment on Lake County taxpayers. Commissioner Clay said that we don't really need a taxpayer tax. If you look at the Casino monies that have come into Lake County, Indiana, Gary, East Chicago, and Hammond, and of course the County itself over the last 10 years, you are looking at approximately \$820 million dollars in Casino money. What he is saying is the Casino money should be used to fund the 2% Property Tax Cap so the people in the communities will not have to fear losing their homes. Mr. Clay contends that if the City of Hammond, IN, which has opted into using their Casino funds to pay the property tax cap, and the City of East Chicago is using Casino funds to fund the \$1,000 across the board for people that filed Homestead Exemptions, the City of Gary, of course the Administration is saying, "tax them, tax them, tax them". Commissioner Clay said that the City of Gary has received \$241 million dollars and they should join and do what the City of Hammond is doing for their citizens. If it is good enough for Hammond citizens, it should be good enough for the citizens in the City of Gary, and the County itself, should also fund the 2% Property Cap with Casino money. Commissioner Clay said that as soon as the assessment was over, County bashing began. Lay the people off, fire the people in the County, get rid of the people in the County. Commissioner Clay said if we lay off and fire everybody in this County, except Law Enforcement, your tax bill would only go down \$8 dollars per year, per \$1,000. Only eight dollars, that's all. So the County is doing their job. We've spent almost \$70 million dollars with the Jail, mandated by the Federal Government, the Juvenile Detention Center, mandated by the Federal Government. The State of Indiana, we are paying right now, \$20 million dollars, and only getting \$4 million dollars back. We are funding the Welfare bills, so we are doing our job here in the County, and we need to stop the County bashing look where the culprits are. Go for that Casino money, \$820 million dollars, and not a penny for property tax. Clay said he thinks we need to go for the Casino money, we don't need to tax these people anymore.

Rick Neimeyer, West Creek Township Assessor said we have the highest tax rates in the State and asked how could we create new taxes on top of the highest taxes in the State. He said the timing is very bad on the Food & Beverage Tax, and the Income Tax. He supported the 2% Circuit Breaker but he ask that it be funded within the entity where it's at.

St John Township Assessor, Hank Adams said that he has been contacted by a lot of people within his Township, which include Schererville, Dyer, St. John, the St. John unincorporated, who he spoke with are 100% not in favor of these taxes. They don't want any of these taxes. He urges the Council to vote no on all three of these taxes.

Ray Ban, Schneider Clerk Treasurer said they do not benefit from the 2%, and urges the Council not to support any of these taxes because Schneider will not benefit from them.

Michael Griffin, Highland Clerk Treasurer said that the recent legislation put the County and some of the policy makers in a profoundly precarious position. He said that their community was not as affected as some of the older communities; nevertheless, taxes did go up. He said they ask to vote the option income taxes down is because the option income taxes create a significant shift in horizontal equity where you have levies basically taking the "lion's share" of the money and the income tax base to support that isn't necessarily correlated to that.

Senator Frank Mrvan spoke on behalf of the 2% Circuit Breaker. He said the 2% is a beginning of a tax reform. He said helping with the 2% is a step forward. It's the humane thing to do. He said the State says we have to help ourselves, and this is the first step. He said that property tax is a local tax. Property tax is what the local entities spend, the County, the Cities, the Schools. What you spend, is what all of us have to pay. He said what government spends in Lake County, is what the Lake County property people have to pay. Senator Mrvan said you have to either cut, pass the tax, or use the Casino monies, that's the only way out.

Wes Miller Taxpayer Organization said that one thing they need to do is revisit House Bill 1858. He said stop spending now, pay debts without adding additional debt. Use Casino money for tax relief for all Hammond taxpayers.

Some of the comments from other citizens were as follows:

Gail Cook, who serves as President of the Greater Northwest Indiana Association of Realtors said that sent to the Councilmen a resolution, on behalf of the Board of Directors, supporting the establishment operations of Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority. She said that she applauds the Council for the efforts of the Northwest Indiana Legislation Delegation. She said this year's legislation has given you the opportunity to take action necessary to enable and fund the 2% Cap for Lake County. She said that Realtors from today from our property tax task force will get realtor position regarding the extension of the 2% Cap on property taxes.

Buford Eddy asked that you at least give a 1-year extension on the 2% tax cap for the homestead, not doing so would displace low income homeowners and senior citizens and threaten the stability of their communities. They also encourage you to extend the 2% Circuit Breaker to the tax year 2011/2012 so that when the next tax assessment mandated by SDA 227 comes along, we will have the knowledge that we need to use any other tax circuit breakers at that time.

Also present to speak were George Rogge, MCC, said we asked the Council to pass, for now 33,500 homeowners who would otherwise pay more than 2% of their assessed valuation. He said they passed Section 62 of House Bill 1001, known as the 2% Property Tax Credit. That means there is no need for any of the proposed new taxes upon this county. He asked the Council to pass the 2% Circuit Breaker.

Diane Kominsky, representing UCA(United Citizens Association), said that in regards to the proposed Option Income Tax, it is their position that the tax could prove beneficial to the entire county, if applied appropriately and judiciously. The income tax could be used to help fund the tax with other dollars applied to reduce the overall county tax levy. By doing so, every resident of Lake County receives benefit from the tax. They also believe the option income tax could be adopted at less than the maximum 1%. She said they believe that adopting a minimum tax is necessary. She said we are one whole county, but unfortunately the ugly tax issue is dividing the North against the South, wealthy against the less wealthy. She said that the Council members were elected to make tough decisions, and this is a tough decision to make. There is a crisis right now, and we know we haven't felt the effects yet of House Bill 1858, there is going to be a cap on the PRTC, there's cuts to educational funding, we know taxes are going to increase. Ms. Kominsky asked to please use the 2% property tax cap as a way to fund it.

Carolyn Marsh, LMCAC, said she is 1,000% in favor of the 2% Property Tax Cap. She said she doesn't want to pay for an RDA, she doesn't want to pay for a Gary Airport. She asked that the Council solve the problem by not increasing taxes anymore but help us solve this issue.

Leonard Tomaszewski, representing SOAR, said, "we don't need no income tax, we don't need no beverage tax, we don't need no other tax." What we need is downsizing. Downsizing the government, "they're too big for their britches". We need to downsize and bring the tax rate down in every community.

Joe Amarade, representing the E.C. Landlords spoke, as well as Wayne Wietbrock, representing Farm Bureau.

Some others who commented were:

DADO, representing "Can't Pay Won't Pay", said that if the County Council is sincere in its desire to keep people in their homes, they will do two things: they will issue a blanket statement saying that the County Council is against all foreclosures and evictions on behalf of Lake County residents caught in this crisis, it is not their fault. She said that even though it is a State Law, this act of solidarity demonstrates and proves to Lake County residents that the County Council is on their side.

She said the next thing is to issue a blanket statement that says that the County Council of Lake County is unequivocal against the devastating impact of industry House Bill 1858, and then we can cut and slash and change our budgets, and get rid of the corruption, and you will see real results, taxpayers in their homes.

Smith said that the Lake County Council has gone on record of allowing the citizens opportunity to speak their piece, as you are doing tonight. Smith said that they passed a resolution, during the General Assembly, asking for a referendum of these issues to allow you an opportunity for input. Smith said, because it was not passed, we are allowing you that opportunity, as a mini referendum, that you are here tonight on. Smith said please, at least give the Council the respect that the Council has afforded you..

Rev. Asher Harris, representing Interfaith Federation, said that the Interfaith Federation has always supported the 1% Food and Beverage Tax, and will continue to do so, to insure the most prosperous outcome for the whole region. He said the County Option Income Tax will allow the citizens of Lake County to stop subsidizing the salaries of those who work in our cities and towns, but do not live in them. He said if we want better access to jobs, if we want affordable housing, if we want to be at the table during the development of Northwest Indiana, we need to stop the insanity. He said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different outcome. Something has to change and passing the Food & Beverage Tax along with the County Option Income Tax, is a way to stop the insanity. He said we understand the frustration of the Council. This is not a perfect solution, but if the region does not move forward and support these two items, where will the property tax relief come from, and when will we begin to build a transportation system that will be inclusive of everyone. Rev. Harris said, "let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater", "let's just change the water". Rev. Harris said that you won't have to worry so much about the criminal justice system, because when young people can get to jobs, they won't have to do the things they are doing now.

Smith said that we started out the meeting by passing out sign in sheets. He said that this was done to allow everyone who showed up here the opportunity to voice your opinion. Smith said we are hoping that many of you who did sign the sheet would submit, to allow the Council to go into its actions of the issues on the agenda. Smith said that the Council is going to take action on the three issues on the agenda, so in doing so, we might answer some of the questions that you might have. Smith said, if you decide that you want us to move on, with actions, once your name is called, you can say so.

Joe Hero, St. John said this is about tax shifting. We don't need an income tax and we don't need a food & beverage tax because that taxes the poor. We don't need a 2% tax cap on the high end, because shifts it to the poor. He asked how do we get tax relief for the people that need it? He said the bottom line is simply this: you have to reject the food & beverage tax, you have to reject the county option income tax, but you should consider funding a 2% cap for the people that need it the most, Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago, the unincorporated areas financed by the County. You do that by making the people with the riverboats finance the 2% cap. You make them cut their levy, you make them cut their spending, and that's how you act responsibly.

He said that next year everyone is up for re-election and you know that everyone is going to remember what you did here tonight. You have an opportunity to give the 2% cap to the people that need it the most, to preserve your job and your salary.

He said the way to do it is you write the Ordinance that requires Hammond to fund their cap, Gary, to fund their cap, East Chicago to fund their cap, and the County to get everybody else in between. That is basically bottom line. Joe Hero said, to the right thing, do what your conscience and constituents say.

Kathryn Grochowski from Hammond said, please, no more taxes.

Joe Sturonas from Hammond said a way to get out of this "mess" that we've created? His answer is to put a hold on all economic development projects, especially the RDA. Use the casino money to get the tax levies down to 1½ to 2 percent where they belong until we can get out of this mess. He said tax relief should be extended to all property owners, homeowners, businesses, and yes, landlords.

Darnail Lyles of Gary said he wants to be able to live where he wants to live, and he wants to live in Gary. He doesn't want to live in Munster, Schererville, or Crown Point. He said whatever you do with this tax, benefits all of Lake County. He said the rest of the county benefits by what's in Gary. We can't divide ourselves and say well I live in Schererville, and I only pay this and say I don't care about you in Gary paying 8 times more. He said South County and North County have got to get together and get rid of the reliance on property taxes for funding. We have to find some way to give people relief. He said we should not be forced to move in order to pay reasonable taxes.

Jim Banach, Highland said the municipalities are broke, and the taxpayers are broke as well and can't pay anymore. He said the big expenses are our publicly funded economic development. He said we can't afford anymore \$40 million dollar golf courses, \$50 million dollar baseball stadiums, \$40 million dollar public housing projects, \$50 million dollar marinas, or TIF zones that are catering to the special interests. He said as if these projects weren't bad enough, we are now faced with yet another agency that has to authority to obligate we the taxpayers, for projects that feed the egos of our elected officials and the pockets of consultants. He said leave these projects out of the realm of politics. Economic development activities of our elected officials need to be restricted and encourage private developers to invest in our communities. Private developers are not backed by the taxpayers, and they are the only people in a position to make decisions based upon the tax not funded by political agendas. In order to get out of this mess, we need to put a hold on all economic development projects, especially the RDA.

Jerry Pickford, Gary, said he is retired and his taxes went from \$3,000 dollars to \$25,000 dollars. He used to pay ten times the average tax rate of person in Gary, he now pays sixty times more. His tax bill went up 800 per cent. He said he can't certainly can't handle it. He is a small business owner, but he will close his business, if he has to keep his house. He really doesn't think he should have to do this. He agrees with Mr. Lyles, he has lived in Gary for a lot of years, and he doesn't want to live anywhere else, and he doesn't think he should be forced to go anywhere else. He doesn't think that Gary can solve the problem by themselves, and he asked the Council to please pass the tax cap.

Others who were present and commented were: Judy Francis, East Chicago, Rose Alvarez, , Jim Premeske, Hammond, Florian Bilsego Sr, Hammond, Ron Keith, L'sana Djahspora, Gary, James Osborn Jr, Whiting, Cliff Willmeng, Leon Gamino, Whiting, Paulette Bandow, Hammond, Robert Schultz, Crown Point, Jim Bartos, Gary, and William Payonk, Gary.

Pat Werth, Hammond, said "give us help, give us hope, don't give us taxes".

Bob Farag, Gary, said he received his tax statement in January from his mortgage company. He said his monthly installment is \$4,950 dollars a month. He said that was to cover an escrow for his taxes, and that's almost \$60,000 a year. He said he owns a business in Griffith, a golf course. He said he pays taxes on the golf course. His question to the Council was, what were you thinking when you bought another golf course? He said his property taxes goes to that entity that manages that golf course, which is Cedar Creek . Mr. Farag said that he is basically supporting the competition. His taxes are competing against him. He said they have thousands of people who can't pay their taxes and you guys are spending like a "drunken sailor". He said as a result of that purchase, he is considering getting out of the business.

Smith said, the Council did not buy a golf course. The Lake County Parks has that golf course.

Maurice Eisenstein, said that the Council has the opportunity to put a brake on an impossible situation, and you can do that by allowing for a 2% cap, but not passing the tax that is going in the opposite direction. You are giving relief on property tax, and telling those same people that now we are going to tax your income, and tax you when you go out to eat.

He said the Council has the opportunity to force the cap and make the cities and towns live within their means, and let the citizens of those towns force the elected officials to stop wasting money on basketball, or parks. He said the reality of it is, there is way too much overspending at the County level, at the Town level, at the City level, and at the township level. He said that's the main cause of the problem. He said the tax rates in the different Cities and Towns, is the difference of the money being spent by the Schools, the Townships, and the municipalities, and you are the ones who have the one opportunity, the last opportunity any of us depend on to put a stop to this.

Dennis Nolan said that he supports the 2%, or get to the national average of 1½% for the property taxes. He is against the Food & Beverage Tax, and the Income Tax.

George Janiec asked the Council to vote against the Option Income Tax, and the Food & Beverage Tax because they are nothing more than vehicles to fund the RDA. He said the RDA is a \$6 billion dollar economic venture that will not produce any kind of impact on this area for at least two generations. He said Porter County voted for it because they are going to profit from it. We are going to pay for it.

Jeremy Pri, Linda Simms, Glen Hannigan, Gary, Amy Wilson, Hammond, Megan Cecl,Gary, Michale Greenwald and Amy Wigsмоen, Hammond were present as well.

Smith said the now the Council is poised to make their decisions on the issues that are before us. He said that he has heard some great things tonight. He said he believes this County Council has made its' move, before now in terms of tax relief for you as taxpayers of Lake County. Smith said examples are: over \$60 to \$70 million dollars that we have paid prudently using our casino monies to keep things off of the heads of you as taxpayers. Smith said they have paid for the Jail expansion mandated by the Federal Government. The Juvenile Detention Center and its' courts, mandated by the Courts that we had to provide that, over \$25 million dollars project. Smith said, in addition, the \$25 million dollars or more that we were mandated to pay for the reassessment of Lake County. Smith said we are paying for that by using the

casino monies. He said legislation that was just passed, House Bill 1120 and some of the other pieces of legislation, put a dent in our casino money that we had held out to help defray the cost of property taxes.

Smith said, the Financial Director showed a chart at the beginning of the meeting showing what we receive, what we spend, and what we are mandated to subsidize. These are true hard facts. We are at the low end of the totem pole, in terms of what impact County Government is on the tax levy and the tax rate. Smith said he believes that a 2% tax on cigarettes sold in Lake County is a way to go. A 2% tax on fireworks sold in Lake County is a way to go. The sales tax implement increment financing, the County should be allowed to implement those districts because that's another barometer in terms of economic revitalization without taxing. There are many other innovative things that he has heard tonight that make sense for us to do; however he thinks it is extremely important to have a tax policy summit after the Council' actions of the Governor' representatives, the State legislative representatives, and our local elected officials, in a tax summit to ameanably deal with these issues and make some amendments to the recent legislation that was just passed. He said we need to make some amendments on that.

Smith said the intent into the RDA to subsidize transportation for people who need it, demand public transportation, he doesn't have a problem with that; however, Smith said, the legislation is not the same for Lake County as it is for Indianapolis or Fort Wayne. Smith gave an example by saying, \$6 million dollars is what's needed to fund transportation, then let's put a cap on the \$6 million. If the 1% tax raises \$15 million dollars, then let that portion over \$6 million be reverted back to property tax relief. He said that money should not all be put into the RDA, there should be a cap.

Smith said those issues have to all be a part of the tax summit.

In the Matter of the County 2% Circuit Breaker.

Tabaczynski made a motion, seconded by Franklin to approve on First Reading.

Tabaczynski said that there is the desire to make this a long-term plan, but he thinks it needs some fixing there are other things that need to be brought into this, but for the problem at hand now which is the 2004/2005 tax bills, he thinks this is the solution.

Tabaczynski said he heard some from South County say that 2% is not a problem there and they shouldn't have to pay for it. Tabaczynski said he agrees that they shouldn't have to pay for it, but he will disagree with them that it is not a problem. He said, if you haven't felt it yet, you are going to because there are things coming as a result of legislative changes and as a result of a number of things that if the 2% problem hasn't ended up on your doorstep yet, it is going to. It is good for us to work together as a county to find a solution to the problem.

Tabaczynski said he thinks there is a contradiction when you talk about creating a 2% cap, and funding it. If you want to cap something, why would you fund it? He that this simply extends the 2% credit to the taxpayers who will receive that benefit, it then advises the units of government that they should anticipate a reduction of that same amount in their collections.

Tabaczynski then read what was in the proposed ordinance from Section Three which reads as follows:

"Each governmental unit experiencing a reduced collection resulting from the adoption of this credit shall endeavor to absorb the reduction through prudent fiscal management of the unit's remaining tax revenue, reducing expenses, and by reevaluating and prioritizing the execution of existing budgetary line items."

Tabaczynski said he can't speak for the other units, but for this government, for the County Council, this means we are going to be looking at using last year's figures at at least \$1.2 million dollars in budget cuts. If the figures on this circuit breaker are the same as they were last year, and Tabaczynski said he has reason to believe they may be somewhat higher, he said if had been in effect last year, it would have resulted in not in borrowing \$14 million dollars, but in budget reductions. He said the units of government that are driving those bills up collectively would have shared \$14 million dollars in budget cuts, that's what this proposal would do. It does not require a any governmental unit to take actions to help another unit. The problem needs to be resolved where the problem was created. Tabaczynski said, he thinks this is the fairest way to go.

Tabaczynski said he would like to extend the 2% credit to a property that consist of more than one unit, but no more than four, where the owner occupies at least one unit.

Potrebic said that he is against the county tax and the Food & Beverage Tax, but he feels comfortable with a First Reading on this.

Dante said that he believes that this is going to be applied to the 2003/2004 tax bills, which is really the current budget that we're in right now. Dante said that every unit of government has to now take inventory as a result of this, and cut their budget by their share, including the County budgets, as well, or find money, whether it's riverboat, they are going to have to find money in their budgets to accommodate this.

He said the message has to go out to the department heads that there is going to be some belt tightening on the County's part effective upon the passage of this, as well as the other units of government, so the consequence to that, Dante believes are favorable to the taxpayers here, but we have some internal issues that we have to work out too, as well.

O'Donnell said he thinks it is important to have forums like this. He said the problem is this, we don't have a lobby. BP has a lobby, Ispat Inland has a lobby and you guys became a lobby to go down to the legislature. He said the Lake County Delegation authored 1858. The kowtowed to the interest of the big industry here, and a quarter after that law went into effect, Ispat Inland, declared a \$25 million dollar profit. That's because we all paid it.

O'Donnell said he would like to have a first and second reading on this tonight.

Smith said that if we are able to pass this motion on first reading, procedurally, we would have to have suspension of the rules, which would require all seven members of the council to vote for it.

Blanchard said he is not going to vote for this 2% Circuit Breaker. He said that he voted against the last one, it did not contain any type of cost attainment. Blanchard said he thinks businesses should be brought into this as well.

Cid said she thinks we need to be united and fight this together because it does seem like the North is fighting the South.

Cid said that she would like to see, at some point, rental properties and small businesses getting some relief also.

Smith said he would like to move through the First Reading of this Ordinance.

All voted "Yes", except Blanchard "No". Motion to approve on First Reading carried 6-yes, 1-no.

Smith said this item will be on the June 28th Special meeting as well.

In the Matter of Ordinance for County Option Income Tax.

Franklin made a motion, seconded by Potrebic to deny. All voted "Yes". Motion to deny the ordinance for County Option Income Tax carried 7-0.

In the Matter of Ordinance for Food & Beverage Tax.

Potrebic made a motion, seconded by Blanchard to deny.

O'Donnell said he knows this is Chet Dobis' dream, but his dream is two generations away. O'Donnell said that this is the type of economy that we have to get into. We have to think regionally, not just "what's going to happen in my back yard" in Gary, Hammond or in Whiting. What's going to happen for all of us and O'Donnell said he thinks the Food & Beverage is a good way to do it. He also agrees with Smith, which is they need to revisit it with the legislature. O'Donnell said he is still committed to it, after they talk to the legislature, and get some ideas, like a cap for the RDA. O'Donnell said we are already committed. The State has told us "you've got to put \$3.5 million dollars into the RDA. Well, O'Donnell said, we've got to do it. Some say don't do it, well, O'Donnell said, that's illegal. We are all sworn not only to do our duty, but to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Indiana. He said that's what we have to do. He said some questioned what happened to the Casino money. He said as you leave here today, look across the street at that big white building that cost us all \$30 million dollars, that's where your casino money is. Look at this end of the building, a \$34 million dollar jail renovation. That's where your casino money is because we, as a group said "let's keep that off the taxpayer roll". "Let's pay for it with casino money, as we have done every single year, for he four or five years those bonds have been in existence. Now we are paying them off, but now we can't because the legislature said \$3.5 million dollars to the RDA, and O'Donnell said, by the way, that tax credit that we gave the Senior Citizens in Lake County 3 years ago, and we capped out your casino revenues at \$17 million dollars, and we said we were going to take the extra and pay for that, well we were just kidding, you've got to all pay for that now, so now there is a good possibility that that white building you see across the street, is going to show up on your tax bill because we don't have enough casino money anymore because they are taking it right off the top. O'Donnell said we need to think more about the regionality of this, and the Gary Airport could be our "crown jewel" in this puzzle.

Smith said we need to respect another person' view. Smith said he believes O'Donnell is on track.

Franklin said her concern is that all of that money that will be going into the RDA, she would like to see some of that money, come back to the citizens of this county in tax relief. She feels they need to go down State, with our representatives and let them know that we want the language changed that's going to benefit the citizens of this community at this time. She said we have got to do something about tax relief. We have to do something about the human side, and that is keep families together.

Smith said that once again he is proposing a tax policy summit, and we need your help, just as you need our help as well. Smith said there are some issues in the language of the legislation, and he has spoken with George Rogge about it, and some members of the MCC. Smith asked that you work with us. We need to sit all of these people down at the table.

He mentioned the issue of HCI and how we are paying a disproportionate amount, more than any other county in the State of Indiana. He said in fact, some of those dollars are helping to augment Marion County and some of the other counties. We are paying over \$20 million dollars in which the actual cost is probably in the area of \$3 to \$4 million dollars. Smith said we need that money back that we are unjustly paying out.

Smith said it is time now to challenge the legislators, the Governor, whether it's the former Governor, or the Governor now. Smith said this Council challenged the previous Governors. We challenged in a lawsuit setting, the HCI, the Council paid for it to be done in your behalf, and we believe that we are right. Smith said, those are the kinds of dollars that we can find to help augment this property tax rate that we are paying. Smith said once again he calls for your help and support in this and he thinks this will go a long way towards alleviating some of the problems that we have in our communities and we should not be about South against North, East against West. We are all Lake County, and we need to stand up in that mode, and we will be okay. God is great.

Ted Prettyman said that he thinks it is important for people to understand the authority that the County Council has, and that it doesn't have. He said the biggest power that our Council has is to challenge, and it only works when the people support you, and he is here to support you.

Smith said the reason why he made a special exception in allowing Mr. Prettyman to speak is because Ted and his wife Wendy attend all of our Council meetings, and we call them our "shadow Council people". They attend all of our meetings and they are representing you.

All voted "Yes" to deny the Ordinance for the Food & Beverage Tax. Motion to deny carried 7-0.

There being no further business to come before the Council, it was moved and seconded that the Council does now adjourn to meet again.

President, Lake County Council

ATTEST:

Stephen R. Stiglich,
Lake County Auditor