

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 Budgets for the Year 2017, 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 Ted Bilski, President, David Hamm, Elsie Franklin, Jamal Washington, Daniel Dernulc, and Eldon Strong, County Councilpersons, together with Ray Szarmach, County Council Attorney. Councilwoman Christine Cid was absent.

OPEN: County Council Recommendations, Discussions, and Actions

Dante said you are essentially balanced in the 16-line statement, collections are above 95.6 So essentially, you are balanced, as of today.

Bilski said we have some minor items that we want to get cleared up today, some are minor increases in rent, that came in late.

Hamm said they weren't late. Center Township Assessor had submitted it that way, but we rolled it back to 2016, so...

Hamm said there are 4 line items, and he would like to make a motion with regards to Center Township Assessor.

**Hamm made the motion, seconded by Strong to approve for Center Township Assessor, Dept 1200, general fund 001, that the Assessor's Certification be raised from \$6,000 to \$6,500, that's total. Telephone be increased from \$1,630, to \$2,940, Utilities be increased from \$2,265 to \$3,000, and Rent be increased from \$12,185 to \$12,785, a \$600 dollars increase.**

**The majority voted "Yes". Franklin and Cid were "absent". Motion carried 5-yes, 2-absent.**

Bilski said that he reviewed the Parks, and everything else is done with them. He asked that Juvenile come up today, because there has been a hefty request in there. Bilski said this is Department 4200, and this is almost a \$1 million dollars increase, that's been put into the budget. Bilski said that there are 13 new positions that were asked to be filled. He said we are at a balanced budget right now, countywide. This is an excess of \$750,000, and he doesn't know if that figure included all the benefits. Bilski said that is really going to be difficult, we are going to have to cut somewhere, in order... we are being told that these are critical positions, and that's why Bilski asked Juvenile to come here today, to discuss those positions because it's huge.

Chief Deputy Timothy Gericke read the job description of the Housekeeping Supervisor.

Bilski asked, if there is a way, as opposed to hiring a new person in there, that a person can be upgraded to that position, and a smaller salary adjusted made, so that we don't have an increase to defined benefits, if the law requires us to have that?

Mr. Gericke said he will look into that.

Bilski asked, what was the next one?

Mr. Gericke said a Housekeeper, then read the job description for that position.

Bilski said, on these positions, when we spoke about mid-year, we never received a response back from the Judge, because we said that there is a possibility that we could contract with the Co-Op, and there may be something that we could do, as opposed to putting them on, but contract those positions out, the General Education Teacher, the Special Education Teachers. Bilski said the Special Education Teachers, through the Co-Op are also licensed full teachers, in the State of Indiana, usually from K to 12, with an additional degree, or a masters degree in Special Education. That is something that Bilski said, needs to be looked at, as a cost savings measure. That was asked, but not returned back to us, so we, at this point, we don't... the only option that was given was to hire teachers, as opposed to looking at our local school system, and Bilski said he knows that Judge Stefaniak did say the Superintendent in Merrillville, since we're on 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, is Merrillville School system, that using teachers and being part in incorporating a substitute teaching program, that that would give us a cost savings, and what that increase would be, so Bilski said, we would ask to have that more defined.

Mr Gericke said I know we don't get a lot of response from the School districts, in fact, we've been meeting, and trying to solve the whole education thing, for quite a while, even to the extent of having legislators from the State, and trying to talk about it. It's one of those things that, it's at that point, of talking about it.

Bilski said, I would defer to our Attorney, I know that we have a great Judge, and my understanding under Title I, regardless of where that child is at, he is guaranteed education, and Bilski said, I'm not so sure, under that law that it would be guaranteed to be paid for by the County, but the school district in which he is being held. So I think, they have no choice but to pay for that.

Mr. Gericke said, I think some of the standards have changed, and that's what's increased this educational thing.

Bilski said, the Co-Op also works through Merrillville Special Education Program, he believes has an obligation, and those dollars follow that child now, that they would have an obligation to pay for that.

Mr. Gericke said they will look into that.

Washington, said, he is looking at, for example are (2) Services Department Heads, and asked if this is pretty much stating that we are out of compliance because I was looking at the Indiana Department of Corrections Standard(inaudible). Currently, what you're saying here is we are out of compliance, so being out of compliance, what can happen to us, can we be assessed any fines? Washington said, I don't want to be in the same situation that we have in the Jail system?

Mr. Gericke said, I'm not sure of what the ramifications would be, but I can get that information for you.

Bilski said, we want to get through these issues. The Judges will be here on Monday, we will probably need to give you a couple of days, hopefully, if not Monday, then the following meeting, if you need more time, but I thought this important enough to be addressed, as quick as possible.

Bilski said under the position of new positions, as I reiterated to the Judge during the course of some of these have come up over the span of 2 or 3 years, that we look within our budget to make a reduction to fill those positions, and then, if there is an addition that's needed, to come for that additional appropriation. In the titles, if there is an increase, you are looking for that's strictly by title, and education, if that person needs to be there, then can we find a person that's in-house, and make an adjustment to that salary. We need to come underneath that \$1 million dollars a lot.

Bilski asked, did you have more? Like the Security/Surveillance Supervisor?

Mr. Giercke read the job description for that position.

Dernulc asked, we don't have that right now?

Tim said, no.

Dernulc said, I think, going back to what Jamal said, if you could put a spreadsheet together on what we are out of compliance on, and what are the ramifications, I think that would be good. Dernulc said, by Monday morning.

Dernulc asked, so you need this appropriation correct?

Kova said that in 2-10, they had to increase their line items because of that cut, since then they have not increased any of their line items, and everything has gone up, such as the phone service. The medical for the kids, they have institutional needs to maintain the building.

Dernulc said, so you will not be coming back for additional appropriations, as the year goes on, this should take care of everything correct?

The answer was, yes.

Strong asked, is this a request that you would like to have? Or is this just a "wish list" you would like?

Timothy said, it's not a wish list, like she said, everything has gone up. We have...

Bilski said the Councilman's question, is that right now, you are making multiple transfers, and you are moving money around in your budget to meet these service line supply and service line item requests. Is it coming out of your part-time money?

Kova said, we didn't have a Doctor on staff for the last 7 months because our Doctor passed away, and we couldn't replace him with \$31,000/yr. We finally got somebody, and we had accumulated over \$19,000 dollars, and was able to move around, last council meeting to appropriate some of the money for the other line items that we were short.

Washington asked, what are you going to do about the Doctor? You eventually have to replace him right?

Bilski asked, with this increase, will that allow you funds to replace the doctor?

Kova said in that line item, we have about \$45,000 dollars, increased that by about \$14,000, and hopefully that will cover him for his services next year.

Bilski said the line item on the doctor?

Kova said that's Hospital & Medical Services.

Bilski asked does part of this \$74,000 includes the Hospital & Medical?

Kova said it includes everything.

Strong asked, why wasn't this discussed with your Committee, prior to?

Bilski said, some of it was. We did discuss the education, and the teachers.

Strong said, you are absolutely right, the State is required to provide(inaudible).

Bilski said, I was not aware of the passing of the Doctor.

Timothy said, we need a dentist as well.

Washington said, there are a lot of positions that were mandated, that we haven't used in the past, how long have we been out of compliance?

With the Doctor, we were out of compliance for quite a while, we were trying to get a Doctor, but we couldn't get a Doctor for those numbers that we had to offer, so we just got a doctor now.

Bilski said so in emergency situations, they went to the clinic?

The answer was yes.

Bilski said, and that's what drove up the costs. Bilski said he would ask that they shop around for that, but he will talk to the Judges about. He said, some of this, inevitably, Judge Stefaniak is the one we need to discuss this with.

Dernulc asked, you are saying that it's a split? Bilski said 40/30 roughly.

Dante said their out in their 200 Series, as of today.

Dernulc said, so you're looking at a \$40,000 dollars appropriation on... Bilski said no.

Dante said, it's \$30,000 and 300 Series is \$44,000, approximately.

Dernulc said we are still going through the budgets, but the issue, we've always talked about, just put everything in the budget, as it relates to things, so people won't have to keep coming back for more appropriations.

**Dernulc made the motion, seconded by Washington to appropriate for the Detention Center, the amount of \$74,146.00.**

(That is to be split between the 200 Series of \$30,000, and the \$44,000 in the 300 Series)

**The majority voted "Yes". Franklin and Cid were "absent". Motion carried 5-yes, 2-absent.**

Bilski said they will ask, those other issues, especially the education, and the others, and if there are positions that needed to be increased slightly to give that person certification, bring it back to us as quickly as possible, as others suggested that, we have that list of mandated items.

Dernulc said, if you can get that to us by Monday morning, that would be great, because we will have the Judges in front of us, and that would be good information to have.

Bilski asked, did we switch positions in Juvenile Court IV-D, Department 3950? Did that take place?

There were some title changes.

Dante said, 3950 is done.

Bilski said, with the teachers, and the additional... you've got to bring that back to us. You asked for 13 positions, and we are saying, what's mandated, what can be done with the title change, and increase, as opposed to hiring a new body, we need to see that, because we are not in a position to hire more people right now, financially, we're not prepared to do that. For right now, we've got to work through this.

Bilski said, in reference to the part-time positions in dept 4100, there was 3 part-time positions.

Washington said they want 3 Public Defenders, Human Resource Secretary, and a Bookkeeper.

Washington said that Councilwoman Cid wanted to have a meeting with you, have you had that meeting? They said, no, not for department 4100.

They said, they don't need a Bookkeeper, that was just a name change. They need 3 Public Defenders, @\$28,500 each, and 1 Human Resource Secretary @ \$26,468.

Strong asked what does the Human Resource Secretary do?

The duties were explained. The Human Resource Secretary is really needed.

Bilski said there are issues being addressed, through the county handbook/county policy, and the Board of County Commissioners. There was an Executive Session, and they had brief discussions on that today. Bilski said there are things taking place to where the Courts will have a place to go, to direct their human resource questions, to where it would be handled in-house, that we are working on.

Washington asked, are we out of compliance with the Public Defenders?

The answer was no, we are in compliance, however, in order to remain in compliance, we need that Secretary, if the Council would consider that.

Bilski said, with the human resource department, is there a reason why they are not utilizing the County approved human resource department, that's a Judge question, we will meet with the Judges Monday.

Bilski said the only thing we can act on today, would be the Public Defenders, and the question is why 3, and not 1?

The explanation of why they are requesting 3 Public Defenders is because their caseloads have increased.

Bilski said they are ready to approve 1 Public Defender right now.

She said they would possibly have to come back. Bilski said they should meet with Councilwoman Cid, to let her know that they have 1 Public Defender, and if that is not going to meet those needs, we are at the "wire" on a lot of cost right now.

**Washington made the motion, seconded by Hamm to approve 1 Public Defender, 19406 @ \$28,500 for Dept 4100, Juvenile Court.**

**The majority voted "Yes". Franklin and Cid were "absent". Motion carried 5-yes, 2-absent.**

They are also requesting that an EAP Program be established within the Juvenile Court, to help address issues that our employees face. The Probation Officers, and their CASA' deal with a lot of very difficult cases, and sometimes they come to the HR department with all of .....

Bilski asked, so your staff, under Federal Law are required to have an Employee Assistance Program?

The answer was, yes.

Bilski asked why isn't there one?

The answer was, according to their Assistant Director of Detention Services, he stated that currently they are using one of their therapist to assist employees, but there is a conflict there.

Bilski asked, Blanchard, with our staff, in our EAP Program, in our handbook, it states that we have an employee assistance program for all countywide. Bilski asked why would the Courts be excluded from our EAP Program? Bilski then said, that's another issue for the Judges.

Bilski said we can't take action on that. A lot of these scenarios should be handled through the Board of Commissioners, through a County HR Department, and the cost, why should it be borne just on your Court, when it should be shared throughout all county government. We are all county employees.

Timothy asked about 2 vehicles?

Dante said they are not included for vehicles in Cum Cap.

They said they have about 5 or 6 cars that are very old, and they need to replace them. 3 or 4 are drivable.

Bilski suggested, instead of budgeting for this, is it possible.

Hamm said the Judges are going to be here Monday.

Bilski said this is Juvenile Corrections. He said the taxpayers are best served when co-op purchasing takes place, and that means whether it's the Surveyor, the Sheriff Department, if we purchase together, our buying power is greater. He asked him to have that request go through the Sheriff's Department for the purchase, to get his cost of the vehicle. Bilski asked are there any Grants available, to help us offset the cost?

It was explained that they purchased a vehicle, a couple of years ago, through a Grant, they have no new Grants.

Bilski asked, how much did they put in for the vehicles? \$30,000 dollars each, for two vehicles, therefore, \$60,000 for 2.

Bilski asked them to put that in writing, and get that to them, as well. Maybe with collective purchasing, maybe we can come out cheaper. He suggested they contact the Sheriff's Department to get a quote on the cost because they should have some discounts.

Tim said that they requested an increase in Office Supplies, line item 42110, from \$17,000 to \$23,000 Other Professional Services, from \$20,000 to \$30,000, and Other Services & Charges, from \$25,000 to \$35,000.

Hamm said he is prepared to wait on those. Hamm said, why don't you give us all of your requests, and we will take them under advisement.

Hamm wanted to make a motion, but he wanted to start out by saying that this is net neutral. It's a permanent transfer in Department 4070, which is Superior Court, County Division IV.

**Hamm made a motion, seconded by Washington, in Department 4070, which is Superior Court, County Div IV, to reduce Part-Time by \$3,500 dollars, and at the same time, increase Registration by \$400, Meals by \$200, Lodging by \$2,500, and Transportation increase by \$400.**

Strong said, it's completely net neutral, but are they going to be coming back to us for Part-Time?

Hamm said, he spoke to the Judge, and he said no, they submit this every year, and we roll it back, and we never plug it in. So Hamm said he is asking for a permanent transfer, rather than them having to come in the first of the year requesting the transfer.

Dernulc said that he hopes that people will not come in January for an appropriation, or a transfer, because this budget should be set, and that's what Dave is trying to do.

**The majority voted "Yes". Franklin and Cid were "absent". Motion carried 5-yes, 2-absent.**

Washington explained that County Court, Division III, years ago, had to reduce their part-time from \$25,000 to \$15,000. They are requesting to move that back up to \$25,000.

**Washington made the motion, seconded by Hamm to approve in Department 4050, Superior Court, County Div III, Part-Time, 41190 increase by \$10,000 dollars**

**The majority voted "Yes". Franklin and Cid were "absent". Motion carried 5-yes, 2-absent.**

Bilski wanted to look at the County Assessor's Department. He said that Mr. Prince has submitted a re-org, which includes a reduction, excluding the elected official's pay raise, and is there a reason why we wouldn't approve his re-org. There are reductions in that re-org.

Dernulc said we've always said that re-orgs should be done.

Bilski asked Dante, could he make a motion to approve the re-org, excluding the elected official's pay raise, for 2017?

Dante said, sure.

**Bilski made the motion, seconded by Washington to approve the County Assessor's reorganization for 2017 excluding the elected official. Department 0900.**

Washington said, my only concern is, for the elected official, he has a buffer in there for his raise, and we don't give it to him, we are in essence taking away money because he took it away from something else, so say his raise was for...

Bilski said I did discuss that with Mr. Prince. Bilski said I have no reason on why not to take a re-org, and reduction. This Council has not made a decision on what the pay raise, or if there will be, for the sake of media, a pay raise. Bilski said his intention was to discuss a 5% pay raise for the County Elected Officials. The reason why he said 5% was because there is a potential of rank in file got 3%, Police got 5%, the action taken by this Council would be effective January 1, 2017 for 5% for county elected officials. Bilski said he thinks that's a reasonable request, that's not on the table today. He thinks that is very close to what, Mr. Prince may have been asking for more, but he has shared with Bilski that he was more concerned about the re-org, and taking care of his rank in file, than himself, which is honorable.

Washington asked, what if the raise that he requested is like \$10,000, if we do \$5,000, and approve everything else, that's a \$5,000.... Bilski said, he is aware of that, and he would suggest that Washington follow up with him.

Strong asked, in this re-org, was he eliminating positions, and distributing salary raises to other employees?

Bilski said, yes.

Dernulc asked, is it revenue neutral?

Hamm said there is a reduction.

Dernulc said, then, that's what I want to hear, and it's taking his increase out?

Bilski said, whatever he put in for a pay raise, would not be included.

Bilski said there are reductions, Dernulc said, and it's going to save on the Insurance, any PERF and so on.

Bilski said my motion was to approve that, and my next motion is going to be the Plan Commission. Strong said, if we want to reduce some positions, I think that's great, but why do we take the money, and give it back out in raises? Why even have the positions to begin with? Hamm said, it's a re-org, that's why.

Strong said why are they even there in the beginning?

Dernulc said because they're having taken on more responsibilities. Bilski said this is the time that they ask for that, so I'd ask to call for the vote.

**The majority voted "Yes". Strong voted "No". Franklin and Cid were "absent". Motion carried 4-yes, 1-no, 2-absent.**

Bilski wanted to discuss the Plan Commission, Ned submitted a re-org plan. Bilski asked, why wouldn't we take action on his re-org, as submitted? He is a non-elected official.

**Dernulc made the motion, seconded by Bilski to accept the re-org for the Plan Commission, Department 2400.**

Dernulc said this is a reduction in salaries too.

Dante said that's where the money is coming from, it's coming from a permanent source.

Strong said he wanted to make it clear that as much as he supports reductions, as much as he appreciates, and supports saving the county money, he just don't like it being done like this. It's just something about it that bothers him, we are eliminating positions, and then we are giving raises, he just has a terrible feeling that somewhere down the line, we are going to be approached again, to add the position back, that's what bothers him about this. He thinks both Jerome, and Ned both, do a good job, he just doesn't like the way this is being done.

Dernulc asked, when is it a good time to talk about this? Strong said he has no problem talking about it, this, he is just saying that this is his belief. Why are these positions even there?

Bilski said I can't speak for every re-org out there, but I can speak for the Assessor's Office, because he was part of it. When North Twp Assessor's Office shut down, they were voted out to absorb North Twp into county, several years, North Twp got rolled into County, everything got moved up here, things were moved, positions were created. There was less cross training, in that, over the years. The previous Assessor was moving towards that goal of cross-training, I believe, in his demise, the next Assessor moved towards cross-training, and being able to eliminate and I think we are finally there with this Assessor, but this is started roughly, since Hank Adams started, and what has been done is, the department is a different department now. It took that attrition to get there. When it comes to Ned's department, there is just movement, and assignments, and they found the money within. Bilski said, that's my answer for the Assessor, but I can't speak...

Strong said, my point is, if we have these positions that are not needed, let's take that money, let's put it back into the general fund, and handle some of these other issues that we have, rather than distribute money out in salary increases, and let those employees get their salary raises, along with all of the other, when the Council takes action on them, that's my thought.

**The majority voted "Yes". Strong voted "No". Franklin and Cid were "absent". Motion carried 4-yes, 1-no, 2-absent.**

Dante reminded the Council, that if they are going to change Merit Retirement, it has to go before that Board. McCready and Keene, and Chris Dilts will have to come back, at budget time, so either do it now, whatever this man was talking about, or do it next year for 2018.

Bilski said he wanted to have discussion on Monday, with the full Council present. He mentioned that at the end of the regular Council meeting, the gentleman, Ostrowski came forward asking about the Police Retirement, and the increases in the budget. Bilski said that he had a brief conversation with Dan Murchek, and Dante today about that. There is a Commission that sets that in actuary, there would be responsibility on our behalf, that we would have to take action, if in fact they come to us, and ask for an increase, but it is not this Council's position that we would seek them out to say, "hey, how big of a raise do you want"?

Bilski said, so they need to come to us, and explain to us why, and what will the fund sustain. You have to maintain a certain amount of fundability. It can't be underfunded, in the yellow or red zone.

Dante said McCready and Keene will take whatever you approve, once it comes through the system, and look at it and say, your contribution is X amount of dollars, and I will say then it's an extra \$25,000 dollars for that, and then you build it in your budget.

Bilski said, we are the fiduciaries for the taxpayers, they are the fiduciaries for the retirees, and their advocacy group should be the FOP, and their Union contract, that's my opinion.

Bilski passed out a sheet that had the Elected Officials Revised Salary Options for 2017 w/o Reorg. Dernulc said the only thing that he had to bring up is the amounts for the salaries for the Councilmen, these are current with the 3%, and the other is current with the 5%, then said, I get it.

Bilski said, Dante prepared this, so we would have something to look at, when we are discussing. Bilski said he thinks this keeps things in line, and for the point of discussion, it gives us something to look at. Bilski said he will probably be making a motion, to follow through with some of this, and have more detailed discussion, at a later date, but this is what he will be proposing, something very similar to this, if not exactly this. Bilski said, within the next couple of meetings, he thinks that we will know exactly where we're at.

Dante said during his presentation last week was, on these salary ranges you can't defer to January, or February, you have to act on them now. You can't do it in January.

Bilski said, when we talk about the Merit Retirement, action has to be taken prior to the end of budget, or it doesn't come into place. So, they need to step up to the plate, and do what they need to do, if they are looking, or if there is a need for it, and we will have the decision to decide on whether or not we can afford to do it, otherwise anything they submit, would have to be taken into consideration for the 2018 budget.

Hamm said, this has gone on for a decade, and nobody has said a word?

Bilski said, I don't know. I am not involved in their pension, I'm not involved in anything that they do with them, I don't know if...to me, I think the Policemen meet on a regular basis, and there is more than one retiree, and if this was such an impact with them, and such an issue with them, that's something that they would work out together, and then present it to their Board. Every pension fund is founded by a Board of Trustees, and those folks work with their actuaries, and then a negotiated increase, if necessary, but once you retire, it's based on a benefit paid on your behalf. So to make an adjustment, is something beyond the scope, we don't know when they retired, we don't know how much money was paid on their behalf, so how do we make a decision, where they're at. None of that information is available. We're not paying them. Ajaz doesn't cut a check every month, in argument to what the gentleman said, they are not receiving a check, a pension check from us. Hamm said, right.

Bilski said, so if they were disabled, survivorship, what the percentage of survivorship is, what that person signed up for, for those of you that work with a pension, know that when you take it, you signed up for, either no survivor, so there's ....

Hamm said we knew what those benefits were, from the day we started the job, that's what I'm surprised at.. Hamm said, we knew the survivor's benefits, we knew everything the day we started. Now they are coming and saying...

Bilski said during the course of your working years, you negotiate, and ask, and put so much into your retirement to draw that pension, and come down and say, I don't have enough, it's tragic. Cost of living has increased, so it's very difficult to make that "bump". That fund had better have the means of giving that within, of what's been collected, and still being able to project out 30 years from now to what that person that is now actively working, is going to draw, because every "bump" that you give, it's trickled down the line, 30 years from now for that first year employee, it's a very complicated issue, that in my personal opinion, should be worked out by them, present us with a Plan for us to review, not us figuring out how to make an adjustment for their retirees.

Dante said Chris Dilts is the Administrator.

Bilski asked Attorney Szarmach do we have a legal obligation to...?

Attorney Szarmach answered, no.

Bilski asked does that person who solicited us, are we the proper course of action to take that?

Strong said, he came to see me last year, and we talked about this very thing. I said you are talking about something that I've never heard of, it seems to me, your starting point would be the Sheriff's Merit Board, somehow they've got to be involved with it. He needs to go before them, and get on their agenda, and discuss it with them.

Bilski said, and if there needs to be an increase to their defined benefits, that would be in their CBA. So when the Merit Police comes to us for their renewal of their Contract, and they say we need to increase their Pension Benefit by whatever percentage, that's to me, is where the percentage would come in, but Bilski said, not making that as a statement of fact, but for the record, I am making that as an opinion.

Hamm said, when I heard Mr. Ostrowski talk that day, I took it as though he wanted us to fund his disability, and widows survivorship benefits. That's how I took it.

Attorney Szarmach said, I've never heard of what he is talking about.

Bilski said, excluding the Township on that increase?

Dante said it would be in the area of about \$15,000.

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

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President, Lake County Council

ATTEST:

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John Petalas,  
Lake County Auditor