

**CASS COUNTY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
October 29, 2018**

The Cass County Council met at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioner Hearing Room in Special Session. Present were Brian Reed, Phil Rains, Mike Stajduhar, George Stebbins, Tracy Williamson, Grover Bishop, Attorney Jeff Stanton, and Auditor Cheryl Alcorn. Stacey Donato was absent. George Stebbins opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC HEARING – CORRECTIONAL & REHABILITATION FACILITIES TAX –**

George Stebbins introduced the proposal to adopt a county jail tax signed into law last March by Governor Eric Holcomb. The new law allows a maximum amount of .2000 local income tax for correctional and rehabilitation facilities.

Council opened the floor to public comment.

**PUBLIC COMMENT-**

Rick Lee, PO Box 439, Walton – public needs to be informed of the purpose for new tax rate.

Leslie Murray, 8288 E 450 N, Logansport – disagrees with the need for a new jail and the council can manage the budget to provide the cost without raising income taxes.

Randy Pryor, Cass County Sheriff – concerns of a potential lawsuit against the county for overcrowding of inmates. The passing of House Bill 1006 has created overcrowding in all counties lowering the incarceration of level 6 felonies at the county level. Cass County has attempted to alleviate the situation with the addition of 18 extra beds and a Pre-Trial Release Program. However, the numbers of inmates continue to increase.

Lora Redweik – 5524 N CR 600 E, Twelve Mile – what is the plan for the new jail, how large of a facility, will be completed in phases and how many phases?

George Stebbins responded the project is an expansion of the existing building, not the construction of a new jail.

Sheriff Pryor added the expansion includes 150 additional beds, construction expanding into the current parking lot area. Juvenile housing will be added for temporary stay until court recommendations are made. This will remedy the situation of housing juveniles being charged as adults.

Sheryl Pherson, 530 E Broadway, Logansport – concerns of additional cost involved with a larger facility. Suggest expanding the Community Corrections Programs, and Pre-Trial Release Program.

Dave Wegner, Cass County Community Corrections Director – Community Corrections is working on ways to help alleviate the increasing number of inmates. Pre-Trial Release Program and Case Managers work to help break the cycle of repeated offenders.

Councilman Tracy Williamson reiterated the project is not the construction of a “new” jail it is an expansion of the existing facility.

Lora Redweik additional concern – how many additional officers will be needed for jail expansion and has the county considered expanding up instead of expanding out?

George Stebbins responded, the expansion will require additional officers and the Commissioners are currently considering options for the project.

Mike Sailors, 186 PO Box, Walton – not in favor of using CEDIT Funds for the project. The imposed income tax increase is minimal; if you need a larger jail build it.

Jim Sailors, County Commissioner President – expanding the jail into the parking lot area is more feasible than expanding up over the current facility. The jail staff would need to be doubled to monitor inmates for an expansion going up. If we do not provide more space for inmates the county will be facing \$10 million fine for overcrowding.

Councilman Phil Rains reminded everyone of a situation that occurred years ago, when the inmates stopped up the plumbing and water flooded the records room; another good reason why the expansion should not go up over the current facility.


Ralph Anderson, County Commissioner – We are currently 85% over capacity in our jail. The state created this problem with the 1006 House Bill. The state has given us a remedy to alleviate the problem by imposing an income tax rate. It's up to council to exercise that remedy.

Phil Rains added there were ways we could have paid for the jail project, but a few selfish people in the county took care of that and we are left with a financial burden that there is no good way to pay for it now.

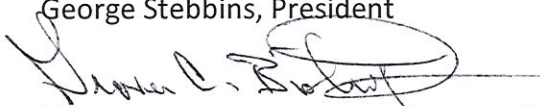
Grover Bishop added the council's responsibility is the public safety of the people in this county.

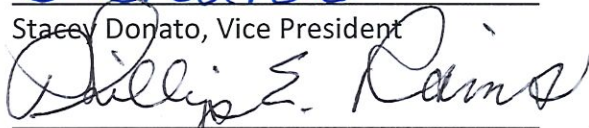
**ORD. 18-09 MODIFYING LOCAL INCOME TAX RATES** – Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve the adoption of the Correctional/Rehabilitation Facilities at .2000 and reduce the Economic Development rate from .2500 to .1500, Grover Bishop seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Grover Bishop made a motion to adjourn, Phil Rains seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

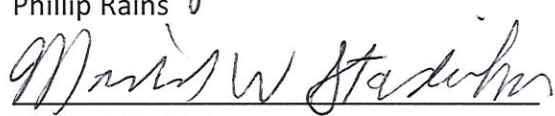
  
George Stebbins, President

Abstained  
Stacey Donato, Vice President

  
Grover Bishop

  
Phillip Rains

  
Brian Reed

  
Michael Stajduhar

  
Tracy Williamson

ATTEST:  
  
Cheryl Alcorn, Auditor