

**MIAMI COUNTY COUNCIL
25 NORTH BROADWAY
PERU, INDIANA 46970
October 16, 2007**

President Click called the October meeting of the Miami County Council to order. It is noted that Councilman Duckwall is absent.

Councilman Wiles opened the meeting with prayer and all recited the pledge to the flag.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

Councilperson Mull reported that she attended the AIC meetings and attended several workshops. She found the experience to be beneficial and encouraged others on the Council to attend any of the meetings they can in the future.

PTABOA BOARD

Councilman Click said the committee to recommend the Council's appointments to the PTBOA Board had interviewed two people who declined the appointment. There are two others that are interested. It is noted that the qualifications are that one has to be a level 2 certified appraiser and the other knowledgeable in real estate. No further action taken.

EMERGENCY TRANSFERS

The need to transfer funds to cover the shortfall in County General was brought to the Council by Auditor, Brenda Weaver. The request was to transfer \$197,393 from the Rainy Day Fund to County General and \$512,023 from the River Boat Fund to County General. A motion was made by Councilperson Mull to allow the transfer from the Rainy Day Fund to the County General Fund. The motion was 2nd by Councilman Kendall and passed 6-0.

A motion was made by Councilman Hunt to allow the transfer from the River Boat Fund to the County General Fund. The motion was 2nd by Councilman Kendall and passed 6-0.

It was also brought to the attention of the Council that the Health Fund is in the red as well and funds need to be transferred from the Health Maintenance Fund to the Health Fund to cover the shortfall until taxes are collected. The amount to be transferred is \$30,000. A motion to allow the transfer was made by Councilman Wiles and 2nd by Councilman Kendall. The motion passed 6-0.

RESOLUTION OF COOPERATION

Commissioner Hawley explained the Resolution presented to the Council for signing. This is just explaining the delivery of the petitions sign and the recognition of the need to continue with the building of a new jail. A motion to sign the Resolution was made by Councilperson Mull and 2nd by Councilman Kendall. The motion passed 6-0.

TOURISM

Alicia Mohr Babcock gave a presentation to the Council requesting a uniform Innkeepers tax of 5% for Miami County. Mrs. Babcock explained that this tax is collected by each business and the proceeds are used to promote Peru and Miami County. As the funds increase this allows her office to increase the marketing of our County. Councilman Click asked if this includes campsites. Mrs. Babcock said no they are exempt by statute.

The budget she is requesting for 2008 is \$124,000. She expects the tax to raise \$78,292.50 a year. CREDIT Funds from the City and County will supplement these funds in 2008 in the amount of \$25,000 each.

It is noted that no action can be taken this evening because a process must be gone through to adopt a new tax. Bruce Embry told the Council that in 1990 they attempted to pass an innkeepers tax along with a restaurant tax. He said the restaurants were against this and it failed. He sees no downside to adopting an Innkeeper's tax. He said everyone pays it when they stay in hotels across the Country and think nothing of it.

Ken Frierson, manager of the Skyview Motel told the Council he feels there needs to be more study of the impact before this is adopted. He said rumor has it that two of our motel/hotels are closing and this will impact the numbers Mrs. Babcock has presented. Mr. Charles Gray from Best Western said he believes in tourism but he knows the impact it will have on his business. He explained that when the West Main Project was bid the cost of hotel stays was built into the bid process. He said if there is a 60 -cent difference a mile, workers will stay in Kokomo and their money will be spent there. He said without a long- term commitment from matching funds from CEDIT he does not see how an Innkeepers tax can support Tourism in this County. It is his understanding that the City will discontinue their support after 2008. He said he had to raise his rate 8% due to a raise in utility costs already. He stated that he feels CEDIT is the best source of funding because all pay and all benefit.

He said this tax will cause an undo burden on his industry. He also stated that he hoped the Council will read the statute very carefully concerning the forming of the Tourism Commission. He said there are things in the statute that creates issues he feels the County needs to understand. County Attorney David Grund will review the statute and discuss the concerns with Mr. Gray.

Mrs. Babcock said that two members of the Commission must be representatives of his industry.

Tom Dunwitty from the Circus Hall of Fame stated that Miami County has so much to offer and the need to market through Tourism is very much needed. We have national attractions in the CHF and the Air Force Museum along with Cole Porter. He supports this effort.

Commissioner Hawley said there are a lot of things to promote that we take for granted by living here. He also stated that a few Counties have placed Tourism under the Economic Development group as an oversight to the Commission. He believes this could alleviate some of Mr. Gray's concern over the forming of a Commission.

Jim Tidd from MCEDA told the Council that their goal is to work out a process to bundle all of the Economic Development issues into a marketable package and to work with all parties involved.

City Councilperson Phyllis Torrence stated that she has lived in Peru for 74 years and we seem to think small. She feels it is time we think BIG when it comes to promoting our community.

A motion was made by Councilman Wiles to direct County Attorney David Grund to draft an Innkeepers tax Ordinance and have the Auditor advertise it for the November meeting. The motion was 2nd by Councilperson Mull and passed 6-0.

LOIT

Council President Click said he sent an e mail to all the Council concerning the meeting with Umbaugh & Associates.

He stated that he and Commissioner Greg Deeds attended a meeting with Umbaugh and they offered to do a study to find out the impact on Miami County. A study would be helpful but the County has no funds at this time to hire them to do one. Councilman Wiles has a problem with the State putting the Counties in this position. He is not sold on the LOIT and cannot support it at this time. Commissioner Craig Boyer asked the Council not to just dismiss this opportunity. They have a window next year to consider adoption from April through July.

Ron Bowland asked how many Counties have adopted this tax. It is noted that 10 of the 92 Counties have adopted LOIT. A motion was made by Councilperson Mull to table this issue to a future date. The motion was 2nd by Councilman Wiles and passed 5-1

GOVERNMENTAL CONSULTING SERVICES

Auditor Brenda Weaver explained the services offered by Melissa K. Ambre the former Executive Director of the DLGF. She has started a consulting service to assist local governments in a variety of financial issues. It was noted that our operating balance has dwindled throughout the last few years and we need to assess what is happening and develop a corrective action plan to bring back financial health to Miami County government. It is noted by the Auditor that this would be a wonderful opportunity for the County when we have funds to use the services of Mrs. Ambre and her associates.

**A motion was made to adjourn by Councilperson Mull. The motion was 2nd by Councilman McAuliffe and passed 6-0.
Adjourned**

**Respectfully Submitted,
Brenda Weaver, Auditor**