

**MEETING MINUTES**  
***Monroe County Income Tax Council***  
***Public Safety Option Income Tax Committee***

***Nat U. Hill Meeting Room***  
**Monroe County Courthouse, 100 West Kirkwood, Bloomington, Indiana**  
**June 15, 2017**  
**5:30pm**

Susan Sandberg called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Committee Members Present: Allison Chopra (Bloomington Common Council), Susan Sandberg (Bloomington Common Council), Isabel Piedmont-Smith (Bloomington Common Council), Dorothy Granger (Bloomington Common Council), Ryan Cobine (Monroe County Council), Cheryl Munson (Monroe County Council), Scott Oldham (Ellettsville Town Council), Lois Purcell (Stinesville Town Council)

Staff Present: Thomas Cameron (Assistant City Attorney, City of Bloomington), Dan Sherman (Council Attorney/Administrator, City of Bloomington), Michael Flory (Council Attorney, Monroe County)

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Ms. Piedmont-Smith moved and it was seconded to elect Ms. Chopra as chair of the committee. The motion was approved by voice vote.

3. MINUTES – Meetings on August 8, 2016 and August 10, 2016

Ms. Sandberg moved and it was seconded to approve the minutes of August 8, 2016 and August 10, 2016 as previously amended. The motion was approved by voice vote.

4. GUIDELINES

The committee began consideration of the eligibility and proposed guidelines for applications.

Ms. Chopra asked whether the guidelines were the same as those used in the previous year. Mr. Sherman said that statutory references had been updated.

Ms. Chopra asked for feedback from the committee regarding the proposed guidelines.

Ms. Piedmont-Smith asked whether the guidelines would state that the committee would consider how funds previously allocated to the applicant had been used in the year prior. Mr. Sherman said such a question appeared in the application form, but was not included as part of the criteria to use in judging whether or not the applicant would receive funds. The committee discussed whether that information should be added to the criteria included in the guidelines as information that would be considered by the committee in making allocation decisions. Ms. Piedmont-Smith moved and it was seconded to add the following to the criteria: "If the requesting agency received funds in the previous year, whether the funds were used for the purposes proposed." The motion was approved by voice vote.

## 5. SCHEDULE

Mr. Sherman reviewed possible dates, times, and locations for future meetings of the committee. The committee members discussed their availability. The following meetings were scheduled: July 25, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. and July 27, 2017 at 5:30 p.m., with both meetings to be held in the Nat U. Hill meeting room of the Monroe County Courthouse.

## 6. APPLICATION FORM

The committee discussed potential amendments to the application form, along with possible deadline dates for both electronic applications and hardcopy applications.

Ms. Munson noted the size of the boxes on the application form were not indicative of anything and should not dictate the length of responses.

Mr. Sherman suggested that the committee approve the application but also give the chair of the committee the authority to revise the form and approve a cover letter to applicants.

Ms. Chopra asked when applications were due. Mr. Sherman explained the deadlines for both hardcopy applications and electronic applications on June 30. Ms. Chopra expressed concerns about amending the application form so close to the deadline.

Ms. Piedmont-Smith suggested that "items of personnel" be clarified in Category 1 of the application. The committee discussed how best to make the amendments. Ms. Piedmont-Smith also noted a change to a date on page six of the application.

Ms. Piedmont-Smith moved approval of the application form as amended. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Mr. Sherman asked if the committee wished to allow the chair of the committee to approve amendments and any cover message. Ms. Chopra said such a motion had not been made. Mr. Sherman asked whether the deadlines previously mentioned were acceptable to the committee. The committee indicated the deadlines were acceptable but asked that the applications be made available as soon as possible.

7. OVERVIEW OF LOCAL INCOME TAX RATES, REVENUES, AND DISTRIBUTIONS (Handout prepared by Jeffrey Underwood, City Controller)

Thomas Cameron, Assistant City Attorney, City of Bloomington, introduced himself and said he would be explaining a spreadsheet distributed to the committee members entitled 2018 PS LIT Analysis (attached hereto). He said the spreadsheet attempted to show the 2017 public safety local income tax (PS LIT) distribution amounts and what the 2018 PS LIT distributions might look like. He explained how the tax funds were distributed in 2017 between the public safety answering point (PSAP) and various incorporated entities within the county. He then explained how distributions might look assuming no increase in tax revenue and how distributions might look assuming a 4% increase in tax revenue, while also assuming that the funding request submitted by the dispatch center would be fully funded.

Ms. Munson noted that the committee would not learn from the state the amount of revenue available for distribution before August 1, 2017. She pointed out that the committee had just approved a schedule that would involve making decisions before that date. She asked if such a schedule was wise. Mr. Sherman said the committee was statutorily required to review timely applications and could do so in July with the understanding that better information would be available in August. Ms. Sandberg pointed out that the committee members often dealt with projections and ranges of funds and could do so with the PS Lit revenue. Ms. Chopra asked if the committee should schedule a tentative meeting in August in case the committee needed to meet again. The committee and Sherman had discussion about when it would be most convenient to schedule a tentative meeting. The committee scheduled a tentative meeting for August 10, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Nat U. Hill meeting room of the Monroe County Courthouse.

Mr. Cameron explained why the spreadsheet reflected two projected scenarios, one with no increase in tax revenue available for distribution and one with a 4% increase in tax revenue available for distribution. He said that the 4% increase in distribution was included to show the committee what revenue would be required to fully fund the budget request submitted by the Dispatch Policy Board without reducing the amount allocated to the incorporated entities. Ms. Piedmont-Smith noted that the committee had the option to increase the tax rate. Mr. Cameron confirmed that the maximum rate for local income tax that the income tax council could impose was 2.5%. He said the current rate imposed was 1.345%, so the rate was not yet at the cap. Ms. Chopra asked if raising the rate would involve an additional process. Mr. Cameron explained the process for approving or increasing the tax rate, and also explained an ambiguity regarding the process for approving the portion of the distribution going to the dispatch center. He said that he had been in contact with the Department of Local Government Finance and was awaiting a response to clarify the process for the distribution to the dispatch center.

8. REPORT FROM UNIFIED CENTRAL DISPATCH POLICY BOARD  
(Jeff Schemmer, Manager)

Jeff Schemmer, Communications Manager, Monroe County Central Emergency Dispatch, introduced himself and explained he would be providing details about a proposed project that had been approved by the Dispatch Policy Board regarding a township communications plan. He said the purpose of the plan was to accomplish two things. First, the plan would move all fire department radios to an 800 MHz platform. He explained that there were two different radio platforms, VHF and 800 MHz, which different fire departments used. Moving to a single platform would allow responders to carry only one radio that would then operate on the single platform. Second, the proposal would provide funding for the installation of mobile data terminals into the township fire departments. The laptops would help relay information to those fire departments and help them better track information and equipment. Mr. Schemmer noted that the dispatch center was transitioning to new dispatch software called Locution and he said the requested laptops would help make use of that new software. He explained how the laptops would help automate much of what dispatch had to do. He said the total cost for the proposal would be \$1.2 million, which the Dispatch Policy Board acknowledged might be cost prohibitive. He said the Board was requesting to split the cost into two years. He referred the committee to a spreadsheet entitled Township Communications Breakdown (attached hereto). He said we would prefer to first fund the purchase of the laptops because it would be less costly, costing approximately \$435,600. He said the Dispatch Policy Board intended to ask for \$800,000 in 2018 distributions and the same amount in 2019. If the \$800,000 was granted for 2018, any money left over after purchasing the laptops would be used to help offset the cost of new radios. He explained that dispatch was still waiting for bids for the radios, but that portion would cost around \$730,000. He said that cost would include mobile radios for fire departments that did not have those for their vehicles. He said the total project would be about \$1.2 million.

Ms. Piedmont-Smith asked for clarification as to the total cost of the project and what amount was being requested, pointing out that Mr. Schemmer said dispatch was requesting \$800,000 for 2018 and \$800,000 in 2019 for a total of \$1.6 million, but he had also stated the project cost was \$1.2 million. Mr. Schemmer said the \$400,000 difference was being made up for through other funding.

Ms. Chopra asked whether the total request for PS LIT money was \$800,000 for 2018. Mr. Schemmer said yes. Ms. Chopra asked what amount would be requested in 2019. Mr. Schemmer said the amount would be \$800,000 or the balance needed to complete the purchase of the radios. Ms. Chopra asked whether granting the funds requested for 2018 would commit the committee to providing PS LIT money two years in a row. Mr. Schemmer said yes, which was why leftover funds would be rolled over to help offset the cost.

Mr. Cobine clarified that the \$800,000 requested for each of the next two years was an estimate, and the numbers on the Township Communications Breakdown spreadsheet reflected the estimated minimum cost for the purchases. Mr. Cobine asked what the \$800,000 was composed of. Mr. Schemmer explained the 9-1-1 fund was restricted to certain uses and could not be used to fund the proposed project. He said dispatch was using money from the 9-1-1 fund to pay for other things.

Ms. Munson asked about capital expenditures approved in the dispatch budget. Mr. Schemmer explained that those expenditure were approved for 2017 and were not relevant to the budget requests for 2018 and 2019. He said the proposed projects did build upon one another though, so dispatch wanted to explain the proposals to the committee members to give them advanced notice. Ms. Munson noted it was unusual for a fiscal body to approve money two years in advance and asked whether the laptops would work independent of the radios. Mr. Schemmer said yes, the laptops alone would be a needed upgrade.

Mr. Oldham asked how dispatch had come up with the estimate for how many laptops were needed. Mr. Schemmer said he had asked fire departments how many they would need for their front line equipment. Mr. Oldham suggested that the fire departments should reexamine their need for laptops, as the numbers presented were perhaps higher than they should be for the equipment needs of the departments. Ms. Chopra suggested that could be addressed in future meetings.

Ms. Piedmont-Smith pointed out that the total requested for PSAP funding had increased by \$300,000 but the request for capital expenditures was \$400,000. She asked if PSAP's other needs had decreased. Mr. Schemmer said no and explained that when dispatch had come up with the original figure last year, they had enough to proceed because they did not rely solely on the PS LIT for funding. Ms. Piedmont-Smith said she did not understand why the increase on the 2018 PS LIT Analysis spreadsheet, prepared by Mr. Underwood, only reflected a \$300,000 increase in the PSAP budget when the request for the project was over \$400,000. Mr. Schemmer said he was not sure and that question might be better addressed by Mr. Underwood. Mr. Cameron said it was likely an incomplete budget picture as the 9-1-1 fund also played a role. He said that without seeing the numbers from that fund, it might be hard to see how the pieces moved together. Ms. Piedmont-Smith asked how dispatch was able to move expenses to the 9-1-1 fund and asked why they had not done that before. Mr. Cameron said that fund was controlled by the county. Mr. Schemmer said they also had money that they were rolling over from 2017 to 2018 to help.

Ms. Sandberg asked who served on the Dispatch Policy Board. Mr. Schemmer said there was one vacancy (reserved for a member of law enforcement), the deputy chief from Bloomington Police Department, the chief deputy from the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, the president of the county firefighter's association, and the deputy fire chief for Bloomington Fire Department. Ms. Sandberg asked whether the request was aimed at unifying practices and equipment for the various departments and responders. Mr. Schemmer said yes, that was the overarching goal. Ms. Sandberg asked whether anyone from the townships had attended the Dispatch Policy Board meetings to voice concerns.

Mr. Schemmer explained the Board's meetings were open to the public and said some township trustees had attended, but no one had voiced concerns during the public comment portion of the meeting. Ms. Sandberg asked whether people agreed that it was a good proposal. Mr. Schemmer said yes. Ms. Sandberg asked about the life span of the 800 MHz radios. Mr. Schemmer said they were sturdy radios with a shelf life of about ten years.

Ms. Munson said she had attended the Dispatch Policy Board meetings, and while she had not heard any questions at the meetings, she did receive questions afterward. She said she had heard some fire departments say they would rather have money for more staffing instead of radios. She explained she had heard support for the 800 MHz system but said some departments had other priorities simply because they had small budgets. She also noted that when the county council had previously approved \$325,000 for equipment, it had no idea that that money would be going into the enhanced communications systems. Mr. Schemmer explained how dispatch was able to shift funds around to help pay for things.

Ms. Chopra asked what percentage of the PS LIT money distributed in 2017 had been requested by the PSAP. Mr. Schemmer said 29%. Ms. Chopra asked what percentage of the PS LIT revenue was being requested by the PSAP for 2018, assuming no change in revenue. Mr. Schemmer said he was not sure, but thought dispatch was trying to structure its request so as to not increase that percentage. Ms. Chopra said she thought it was 38%. She wanted it to be clear that that was almost a 10% difference from year to year. She said that would impact how other people thought about distributions to the other entities.

Mr. Oldham said dispatch served everyone in the county, and the needs being addressed by the request were the biggest issues dispatch faced. He said it impacted dispatch's capabilities, which could, in turn, impact lives. He said the committee should not second guess the priorities of dispatch.

Ms. Chopra clarified that awarding \$800,000 to dispatch might limit funds available to award to the townships. Ms. Sandberg said the tax council had to look at the overall picture and make decisions based on what would do the most overall good.

Mr. Oldham said that was why he had suggested that dispatch look hard at how many laptops were really needed, and if dispatch did not need a laptop on every piece of equipment, it should rethink the request.

Mr. Cobine asked Mr. Oldham if he was familiar enough with the issues to know whether or not certain types of vehicles might be able to go without a laptop. Mr. Oldham said yes, and explained that it was unlikely that every piece of equipment needed a laptop or radio. He encouraged dispatch to look at the need versus the request.

Ms. Chopra asked who had prepared the Township Communication Breakdown spreadsheet. Mr. Schemmer said he had collected the information from the departments and prepared the figures quickly to give the committee an estimate. He said he would be able to provide more specific information if the committee members passed along any additional questions.

Ms. Piedmont-Smith noted that the amount allocated to dispatch for 2019 could be reduced if fewer laptops than predicted were necessary. She also noted that if fewer laptops were needed, it might enable dispatch to purchase radios faster. Mr. Schemmer agreed and said that the idea for the phase-in came about recently after realizing the two purchases would be too expensive for one year.

Ms. Granger asked if there were any problems with the funds reverting. Mr. Cameron said the funds could be structured to ensure the funds would not revert and would be earmarked for what they were intended.

Ms. Munson said she would like to see a reevaluation of the needs of the fire departments for laptops and radios, given the scarcity of funds.

Ms. Chopra said she was inclined to fund the entire request as she did not want to have any holes in the equipment.

Ms. Piedmont-Smith encouraged committee members to indicate what information they would need by the next meeting, as Ms. Munson had done.

Mr. Schemmer said that the proposal had been created in part to help out the townships receive the laptops and radios, as they might not be able to afford those things on their own.

Ms. Piedmont-Smith asked for information about whether the non-city fire departments were at their maximum levies.

## 9. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.