

Commissioners cooperate with funding plan

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Two formal requests made by Carroll County Council President Nancy S. Cripe were met with unanimous approval by Carroll County Commissioners at their Monday morning meeting. Commissioners agreed to cooperate with two funding mechanisms designed by the council to demonstrate enough county income to convince the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) to accept the newest version of the 2008 county budget.

"We request cooperation and hope both bodies of Carroll County government can work together to formulate a legal, workable financial plan," Cripe's prepared statement read.

The first request granted was for commissioners to defer repayment of \$350,000 of a \$675,000 inter-fund loan from the cumulative bridge account made at the beginning of the year. The \$350,000 was deferred for six years

and the first payment will be due in June of 2009.

"We have to work together," commissioner Bill Brown said. "We have no choice."

Brown said he decided to become a commissioner to stop needless spending for bridges. He congratulated the governing body for conservative bridge spending which made the money available for the council to utilize.

Brown said he wanted to be commissioner also to improve county roads, however he admitted he had not had as much success in that endeavor as he initially thought possible.

"We can't cut more ambulances," he said in making the motion to grant the council request. George Mears provided the second.

The second request was for the highway department to give \$150,000 from its budget to the general fund.

Highway superintendent Ron Francis expressed concern about using money from the operating budget.

"I want to be as supportive as I can," he said. "But I don't want to end up like county general."

Council member Rob Baker said the council gave the highway department \$500,000 for personnel in 2003. He said it appeared there was extra money in the county at that time.

"We helped them out when it was their time," he said. Auditor Beth Myers added, "We were told we had an extra \$8 million in surplus and we did not."

According to Cripe, the funds from the highway department will not be transferred into county general "until legal approval is received."

Carroll Manor

Superintendent Martha Lewis reported her budget was reduced to \$261,700 last Wednesday evening and she found out about it at the Thursday morning council meeting. She said although she was on the commissioners agenda to propose a graduated rate per day, she said she was undecided how to proceed.

Lewis said the only way she could make the revised budget work was for all employees' hours to be reduced.

"At that figure, we're probably going to have to go to part-time people," she said.

Although Lewis reported that her population decreased to 20 since last week, she said there were 13 who could pay the council-recommended \$56/day, five residents would only be able to pay less and one person was funded by state assistance, bringing the total population to 19. She said there was one adult day-care person who paid approximately \$150/month for day services only.

Cripe advised the facility spent at the 2007 level for the first three months of this year and that was taken into account when the current spending limitation was adopted. She reminded commissioners the council urged them to increase fees last November.

Commissioners' attorney Barry Emerson recommended parameters be established before adoption of a graduated rate scale is determined. He said

there was a need to "quantify" applicants. He offered assistance to Lewis to develop guidelines.

The matter was tabled until the April 21 meeting.

Flood damage costs

Cost to the county to remove debris and repair roads from the two January floods was increased from approximately \$280,000 to \$396,334.86 since the last report by Francis. He said he sent a letter to Congressman Joe Donnelly and State Senator Brandt Hershman urging them to support an appeal to FEMA for municipality reimbursement state-wide. He said Carroll County experienced the "lion's share of flood damage."

Francis said although he budgeted \$25,000 for stone in 2008, he has spent \$74,000 so far.

Francis requested guidance about going forth with the county dust control program this summer. He said the council transferred more than \$27,000

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Flora contracts for water rate study

By Susan Scholl
Editor

Council president Josh Ayres explained that the town's water plant will need upgrades and new filters in two to three years.

"We don't want to raise rates, but we may need to," said Ayres.

Umbaugh & Associates will be contracted at a cost of \$5,000 to do a water rate study to determine if a rate increase is warranted. The last increase was in December 2002.

Skate boarding park

Pastor Scott Gamel spoke on behalf of area youth who want a place to ride their skate boards. He was requesting a public/private cooperative effort

to construct a skate park, possibly at Flora Community Park.

Gamel said they are considering forming a not-for-profit group so that they can be eligible for matching grant funds.

Ayres indicated a skate park would be a nice addition to the town park and the town would be willing to work with the group toward that goal.

Marshal Paul Redmon said that he has received lots of complaints about the skateboarders and he is working to put together an ordinance that will prohibit skateboarding in the downtown area.

"Our concern is to keep the kids safe and minimize property

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City directed to proceed with animal ordinance enforcement

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

After hearing that a Monroe St. family was cited for harboring a dangerous canine and failed to respond appropriately to a letter from city attorney Kurtis Fouts, Delphi Board of Works voted to proceed with ordinance enforcement. Given that no city employee is trained, nor does the city own equipment to handle vicious animals, exactly how the animal would be seized and by whom went unanswered.

It was noted the attorney's letter provided seven stipulations for which the animal owner to comply, however he has not, although he was told by both Fouts and police chief Justin Darling to follow the directions given to him in the letter.

One-way street proposed

City leaders are considering making Summit St. one-way to the east, from Washington to Prince William streets, to ease parking and passing issues. Mayor Randy Strasser said one resident proposed the change stating many in the neighbor-

hood agreed with the plan.

"I think it's a good idea because it is dangerous," council member Kyle Germond said.

Germond asked the mayor to find out which way the school bus traveled on the road for future discussions.

Council member Brian Garrison asked the mayor to determine if any residents opposed the plan. Council member Nelson Smith said he needed to know why residents considered Summit St. east of Washington St. more dangerous than the west side.

Strasser said he would send a letter to each resident informing them of the possible action and encourage them to provide input.

Rainy Day Fund

Council members took the first step to establish a rainy day fund for the city by approving a necessary ordinance on first reading.

According to clerk-treasurer Janice Roe, the city could deposit up to 10 percent of the total budget each year, as well as some CAGIT funds, to save for projects and unexpected city needs.

Street department

Street commissioner Aaron Lyons reported streets in the downtown area will be swept each Monday after 3 a.m. He reminded residents who park in the vicinity of downtown to move cars located in marked spaces.

Police department

Darling announced increases from February to March in traffic summons (from 18 to 23), warnings (67 to 97), felony arrests (one to four), information reports (six to 24) and animal ordinance violations (two to 13).

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A clean feeling

Two members of Boy Scout Troop 155 sweep the Carroll County courthouse rotunda after finishing some dusting chores in the museum. The efforts of Trevor Peters (left) and Cameron Burns were two-fold according to troop committee member Theresa Peters, who chaperoned the scouts while they worked. "The boys came up with this good idea," Peters said. "The county could use volunteer help because of its financial problems, and the boys get project credit for volunteering. They were excited about helping out." Comet photo by Kevin Schnepf

NIPSCO submits dam analysis

Report states dams should remain run-of-river

By Kevin Schnepf
Staff writer

Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), which operates Norway and Oakdale dams, submitted a dam analysis to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Friday. FERC requested the report after local flood victims questioned whether the dams could have been operated to mitigate downstream damage during January floods.

According to information supplied to the Comet by NIPSCO, the study was prepared by engineering firm MWH Americas Inc. to "evaluate possible changes in the way the dams operate in order to eliminate or reduce downstream flooding that occurs under the current run-of-the-river operating procedures for floods ranging from a 10-year flood to a 500-year flood." The study also provided information about the January

2008 flood.

The study examined the impact of downstream flooding based on lowering both lakes below their normal operating levels in advance of a storm by one, three, six and 15 feet. The report stated results and figures assumed "perfect forecasting information and operation" would be available. It did not take into account impacts on structures around the lakes and on the shorelines, aquatic life or habitat, recreation, regulatory issues or jurisdictional agency concerns among others.

"The results of these studies show that lowering the lakes by as much as six feet does not reduce the maximum discharge or reduce the ultimate amount of downstream flooding for any flood from the 10-year flood to the 500-year flood, with one exception," the report stated. "The only case where any significant reduction was found was

for a 10-year flood event with Lake Freeman lowered by six feet."

Graphs in the report based on information from a gauge in the Tippecanoe River near Delphi and hydrology equipment operated under the FERC license demonstrated floods could be delayed up to nine hours, but the result would create a spike in the water level after that.

NIPSCO representative Jim Fitzer told the Comet Tuesday that outcome would be unacceptable to the company. He said downstream water levels could rise up to eight times faster than they did during the January flood.

"NIPSCO's number one priority is public safety," Fitzer said. "Residents who do not react because the river is not flooding could be trapped in a very unsafe situation when the dams must begin to release the excess. The risk and potential loss of life are unacceptable."

NIPSCO Vice President of Electrical Generation Jerome Weeden sent a letter to FERC Regional Engineer Peggy Harding along with the analysis. The letter echoed NIPSCO's study and concern for safety and stated the company would continue to mitigate floods by other means.

"For these reasons, it is NIPSCO's conclusion that the most responsible and safest way to operate the Norway and Oakdale Project is in run-of-river mode within the lake elevation limits contained the Project license," the letter concluded. "As we have in the past, NIPSCO will continue to work with the emergency management agencies and officials of White, Carroll and Tippecanoe counties to mitigate the effects of future floods through preparedness drills, Emergency Action Plan reviews and improvements, and strong communication."



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