

Judge Smith promises council a mandate

By Debbie Lowe
 Staff writer



Smith Currie

Things were looking up for Carroll County Council through most of its Tuesday morning meeting. It seemed the latest communication with the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) would solidify the 2008 budget after making drastic reductions for the past several months in the first draft. However, council members learned at the very end of the meeting that Carroll Superior Judge Jeffrey Smith and Carroll Circuit Court Judge Donald Currie would issue a mandate to reinstate the latest budget reductions for their courts and the joint courts.

Council reduced the three courts' budgets by \$90,000 earlier in the year. Salaries for the chief probation officer and the probation secretary were transferred from the general fund to the probation account. Using figures

from budget worksheets prepared during the reductions session, the cost of the mandate to county general could be at least \$143,130.86.

"Judge Currie and I will be proceeding as indicated," Smith told council members from the back of the commissioners meeting room at the end of the meeting. "We will all incur attorney fees."

"I wasn't surprised, but I was disappointed because we will probably have to make further budget reduc-

tions now," council president Nancy S. Cripe said after the meeting. "It seems like we take one step forward and feel good about our accomplishments. Then something devastating like this happens."

Earlier in the meeting, council members did not agree about replacement of a sheriff's deputy, who retired from the department as of May 3, and replacement of a full-time secretary in the prosecutor's office. Sheriff Tony Burns' and prosecutor Tricia Thompson's requests were approved in separate four-to-three votes. Members of the council finance committee, Steve Ashby, Ann Brown and Ron Slavens, voted against the measures.

"We could be looking at less money than we've been told (by DLGF) we have," Ashby warned. "We've always been told to reduce our 2008 budget to \$5 million and now they say \$5.5 million is okay...and we have interest (on a loan) to pay."

"If an emergency arises, we have no money," Brown added, warning that the budget had yet to be approved by DLGF.

Slavens said he expected the county to have to make additional budget reductions. He said it would be better to let that happen naturally when someone left county employment rather than hire a replacement and then terminate the position at a later date.

"We had two opportunities to help stabilize our financial condition and we let them go this morning. We should take advantage of any opportunity to cut our expenses," he said in a follow-up interview. "We have to bite the bullet."

Carl Abbott made the motion to approve the requests stating, "We have safeguards in place."

"We have to function," Rob Baker added.

Cripe provided the tie-breaker for both votes.

"Had we had that information (the judges' decision) earlier, we probably wouldn't have made the decisions we made," Cripe said. "It feels like we're back at square one."

Smith said in a follow-up interview Tuesday afternoon he and Currie intended to "make sure the courts will have what they needed to function." Smith would not state when the judges intended to file the petition and refused to comment further about the matter.

"I'm terribly disappointed with the judges," Abbott said Tuesday afternoon. (He was not present in the meeting when Smith announced the intention to file a mandate.) "For them to exercise the right to mandate just because they can doesn't make it right. I know it's not a perfect system, but at this time they should work with us."

"They get to hide behind their pow-

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Polls are open 6 a.m. Tuesday

Comet staff report

Indiana's Primary Election will be held Tuesday. Voters will be choosing candidates for the November General Election and electing school board members who begin four-year terms July 1.

On the local level, Patrick F. Clawson of Delphi is challenging George Mears of Delphi for the District 2 Republican Commissioner's nomination.

For Councilman-At-Large, three Republicans are seeking the nomination - Carl Abbott of Delphi, Scott W. Ayres of Flora and Jay B. Bordner of Bringhurst - and two Democrats - Richard N. DePoy of Monticello. Marion C. Huffer of Cutler, and Rolland "Dick" Roe of Delphi.

Democrats running unopposed are: Recorder - Mary Ann Burton of Delphi, and Surveyor - Dale M. Snipes, Flora.

Republicans running unopposed are: Judge of the Superior Court, 74th Judicial - Jeffrey R. Smith of Delphi; Clerk of the Circuit Court - Nancy S. Mattox of Delphi; Recorder - Barbara Ann Chapman of Flora; Coroner - Jay Dee Cree of Camden; and Surveyor - Wayne E. Chapman of Delphi.

Vacancies on each party's ticket for the Fall General Election may be filled by the party at a later time.

School board elections are being held in the Carroll, Delphi Rossville and Twin Lakes school districts.

In the Carroll corporation there is representation on the board from five districts. The positions in three of those districts - Burlington, Democrat and Monroe townships - are up for election.

Even though candidates seek the position from a particular district, all voters in the corporation vote on all candidates, not just those in the district in which they re-

side.

In District 1, Burlington Township, Michael L. Eikenberry of Bringhurst is being challenged by Richard W. "Rick" Eller and Jeffrey Richardson, both of Bringhurst. In District 3, Democrat Township, contenders are C. David Bordner and Shawn Wickersham, both of Cutler, and Michelle Simmons of Bringhurst. In District 4, Monroe Township, Samuel L. Zook of Flora is being challenged by Robert J. Kauffman of Bringhurst.

In the Delphi school corporation, voters only vote for the candidates in the district in which they reside. DCSC has seven districts and voters in Liberty, Madison and Rock Creek townships will be electing an individual from their respective district.

In District 4, Liberty Township, Michael Shoemaker of Camden is being challenged by William Ray Trueblood of Camden. Vying for the District 6, Rock Creek Township, position are Paul B. Brown of Delphi and Chris W. Nipple of Rockfield. Seeking re-election in District 5, Madison Township, Robert R. Resler of Delphi is the lone candidate.

In the TLSC, candidates are also voted on by their district only. Two Carroll County townships are part of the Twin Lakes corporation, Adams and Jefferson.

In District 1 which includes Adams Township, three candidates seek the position - Terry Howe, Don L. Hurd and David C. Reiff, all of Burnettsville. Mark D. Mills of Delphi is unopposed in District 2, Jefferson Township.

All voters in the corporation vote on all candidates in the Rossville school corporation. There are three open positions and all three races are unopposed - Clay Township, Mark A. Cripe of Delphi; Owen Township, John H. Spear of Frankfort; and Ross Township, Billie Roth of Rossville.

Voters must present a valid state-issued photo I.D. that includes an expiration date. Most state or U.S. government forms of identification are acceptable, according to Carroll County Clerk Laura Sterrett.

An Indiana photo I.D. may be obtained free of charge at the license branch.

Questions may be directed to the Carroll County Clerk's office at 765-564-4485.

Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

What if every day could be Earth Day?



Great horned owl
 Kim Hoover presented the program "Hoots to Howls" at the second grade Earth Day last week at the Flora Community Park. She is pictured holding "Ottumwa," a great horned owl who was rescued and rehabilitated. The Earth Day event was sponsored by Carroll County Soil and Water Conservation District. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

Comet staff report

Carroll Elementary and Delphi Community Elementary second grade students celebrated Earth Day last week at the Flora Community Park.

Students enjoyed the sunny days playing recycling games, sifting soils, planting flowers, traveling the path of a water drop, reading stories,

creating nature art, studying their energy habits, creating recycling crafts, and consuming "edible landfills."

A special program this year was presented by Kim Hoover of Star City. She is a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. She brought three friends with her - "Hobbs," a box turtle; "Orcy," a short eared owl, and "Ottumwa," a great horned owl.

Orcy was rescued after being shot by hunters, and Ottumwa had been hit by a car. Ottumwa's leg and hip were broken, and a wing was shattered. The driver didn't stop, but someone else found the injured owl. Both owls have been rehabilitated.

This is the eighth year for the annual event. Evidence of past years events are visible in the park with numer-

ous tree plantings and the donation of several park benches and picnic tables made from recycled plastic milk jugs.

The event, sponsored by the Carroll County Soil and Water Conservation District, offers students hands-on learning to understand the conservation and wise utilization of resources in our environment.



Mailing label goes here

FEMA grants appeal

Comet staff report

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will grant public assistance to 13 northern Indiana counties, including Carroll, hit hard by severe flooding that began Jan.

7. Public assistance provides funding to local governments for infrastructure repair costs and debris removal.

Other counties include Benton, Cass, DeKalb, Elkhart, Jasper, Kosciusko, Marshall,

Newton, Noble, Pulaski, Starke and White.

On March 20, FEMA denied a request to assist state, county and local governments to repair damage and reimburse emergency costs. The governor ap-

pealed the original decision, saying that damage was much more severe than originally recognized. Additional damage was discovered and verified in several counties after flood water receded.

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