

BROWNSBURG



SENTINEL

A News / Commentary Publication

Informative / Insightful

May 6th, 2014

The Town Council Is Playing With Fire

The Town is Playing with Fire
 In the month of April, the single most important topic for the Town Council was the Funding of the Brownsburg Fire Territory. This issue started back in July of 2013 when the Fire Territory first proposed the notion of a fixed percentage of CAGIT revenues from the Town of Brownsburg and after much negotiation a seemingly fair recommendation based on 7 years of data that the parties involved had all agreed to honor was presented the Council. You would think that if the people closest to the problem all agree that getting a "yes" vote at Town Council would be easy not so in Brownsburg.

Let's turn the clocks back to when it all began, April 10th Town council meeting, Council member Dave Richardson who also served on the Fire Territory Executive Board brought Resolution #2014-10 - A Resolution Establishing a Fixed Percentage Distribution of County Adjusted Gross Income Tax (CAGIT) Revenues to the Brownsburg Fire Territory before the Town Council for their consideration and approval.

(A little history: In 1995, the Brownsburg Fire Department

was converted to the Brownsburg Fire Territory picking up responsibility for the unincorporated areas of Brown and Lincoln Township as well as serving the Town. Up until 1995, the Town was responsible for 100% funding of the Fire Department. After the change, portion of the property taxes for all property owners in Brownsburg and Brown and Lincoln Townships goes to the Territory. However, these funds do not cover the entire budget, so the State allows the Fire Territory to receive a portion of the CAGIT revenues that are given to Brownsburg each year. Historically, these funds have covered approximately 30% of the Territory's budget.-ed.)

Dave Richardson read a well thought out prepared statement which in layman's terms laid out the reasoning for the resolution. Dave said that everyone pays the county tax, sent to the state, then returned in some portion back to the taxing entities for distribution. Currently, the amount of CAGIT revenues given to the Fire Territory is a very complex calculation based on property size and values that

is completed in about January and February each year. Because it is not a set amount, it makes it difficult to make an accurate

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

They who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety - Benjamin Franklin

Brownsburg Sentinel Readers--

Over the last couple of years, there has been a lack of accountability by our public officials in Brownsburg born out of the absence of an independent investigative press. Lacking accountability emboldens our government servants to believe they are beyond reproach, free to follow their own agendas, leading them to believe the public cares little for "details of the inter-workings of government".

Nothing is further from the truth.

A prime example was at the Town Council meeting on April 10, 2014:

Brownsburg Town Council members Ashley Hobbs, Rob Kendall, and Gary Hood are literally "playing with fire" potentially placing public safety in a precarious position.... In brief, Rob, Ashley, and Gary voted to table a proposal tendered by Town Council member David Richardson (unanimously agreed to by all parties closest to the issues up to this point) , to stabilize a revenue stream directed to pay a portion of the operating expenses of the Brownsburg Fire Territory. Nine months have passed since this issue was brought before the Brownsburg town council, even those who voted to table the ordinance, were unable to explain how they would use the two week delay to resolve the matter. My speech given to the Brownsburg Town Council Thursday April 10th, 2014 says it all.

The lack of decisive government action on a matter as important as the stabilizing of funding public safety is significant. The town's one-sided public communications on many matters breeds suspicion of our officials, and distrust of other media outlets charged with the duty of public oversight. Inaction by area residents has resulted in the misguided conduct of town government everyone witnessed April 10th, 2014.

This newspaper was born out of necessity, please help the Brownsburg Sentinel hold our elected, hired, and appointed government officials to account. Unchecked, their ineffectiveness has boiled over to the point of potentially weakening delivery of public safety services.

I invite every reader to join us, united we must demand changes which return government goals and actions back to their charter.

David Weyant
Owner/Editor - Brownsburg Sentinel

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04/24 Town Council Citizen Comments

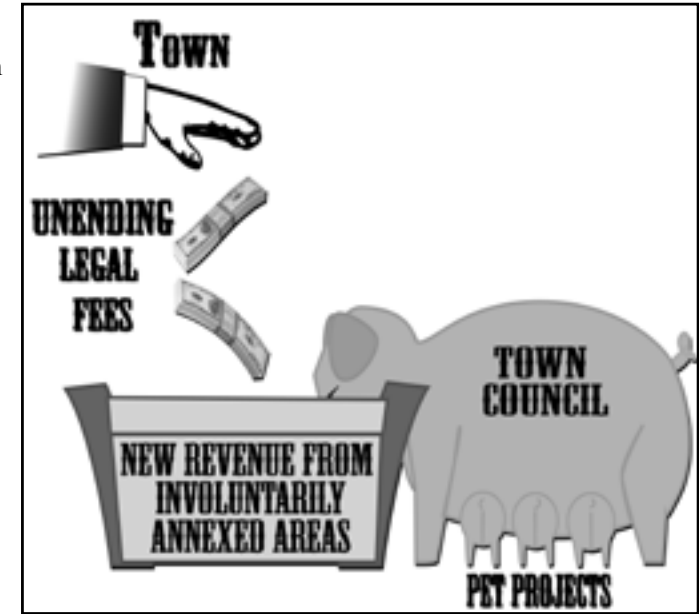
Kurt Disser provided a Fight Against Brownsburg Annexation update. Kurt brought to the council's attention the expenses noted in agenda item 05.03 - Consent Items Claims Docket 04-24-2013 Claims page 7.

KROGER, GARDIS & 4405 2013 ANNEXATION MATTERS	\$82,371.51	4/10/2014	444.01.31	4/24/2014
KROGER, GARDIS & 4330 LEGAL FEES THROUGH 3/31/2014	\$29,931.27	4/10/2014	177.07.31	4/24/2014 *18

Kurt questioned the payment in full of a bill submitted by the Town attorney's KGR totaling 82,371.51 described as 2013 Annexation Matters. Legal fees which occurred in 2013, yet were accepted and paid from funds budgeted for use in the second quarter of 2014. Why was this expense not questioned, he asked, how many more billings of this type is the town willing to pay? Is someone monitoring and questioning these expenses?

More alarming were his statement that "the total amount budgeted for 444.01.31 fund is \$30,000 for the entire year of 2014, you are now over budget in this fund by greater than \$50,000. This is only April, how many other funds are you going planning to go over budget?"

Lastly, he noted the mysterious disappearance of this very information from the town's website, as at onetime it was available to the public and now has vanished without a trace. It was his opinion this was an attempt by the town to hide the budget overages from the residents of Brownsburg. Kurt asked the town for an explanation regarding these matters. The reader can visit their website www.noannexbrownsburg.com for more details.



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Police Department Monthly Report – Highlights by Chief Mike Dove



Sgt. Andy Watts - Achieves Master Instructor Designation

On Monday, October 28th, 2013 Sgt. Andy Watts and Major Grimes were notified that Sgt. Watts had been selected by the ILETB Master Instructor Committee to receive the distinction of Master Instructor. This process had been going for almost two years and included various aspects of instruction under an assigned mentor. Major Grimes was advised that on November 6th Sgt. Watts was to be presented the distinction at the annual Trainers Meeting held at ILEA. Currently, Sgt. Watts has joined the ranks of 53 others in the State of Indiana who hold the title of Master Instructor. To Sgt. Watts, this distinction is personally humbling, and to the Brownsburg Police Department this distinction will be invaluable to BPD’s training program in terms of documentation and credibility. Over half of ILETB Master Instructors are working at the Indiana law enforcement academy or other police academy. He is an invaluable asset to BPD.

Please take a moment to visit the BPD Facebook page and thank Andy for obtaining this difficult certification and thank all members of BPD for their tireless efforts to keep our community safe.

Officer Jennifer Pyatt-Barrett promoted to Captain

During Mike Dove's monthly police report to the Town Council on April 24, 2014, he announced Jennifer Pyatt-Barrett's promotion to the rank of Captain and the Commander of the Investigations Division. Captain Barrett began her employment with the Brownsburg Police Department in 2000. She has developed into an outstanding investigator. Captain Barrett has focused on developing new techniques for apprehending criminals who commit crimes against children. Using her techniques, she has worked with the Indiana Attorney General Office, the United States Attorney General Office and several other local prosecutors to put child predators in prison. She has also developed protocols on how to conduct prostitution investigations which have been adopted by Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department. She is definitely leading the way not only with the County but the State and also several parts of the Midwest on how we do conduct proper investigations in both child crimes and prostitution rings.

Chief Dove said he recently attended a national crime against children conference, in San Jose, California, to an audience composed of Deputy Attorney Generals and United States Attorney Generals. The Attorney General of the United States highlighted five cases across the country as best practice studies showing the effectiveness of new techniques, networking and working together, and the results. One of those five cases showcased our own Captain Barrett. Using her own techniques, she identified an online predator which resulted in arrests in over fifteen states and a couple of other countries.

Since the formation of Chief Dove's administration, Captain Barrett has been the Brownsburg Police Department’s Public Information Officer. Chief Dove stated that she does a great job networking with local media and does an outstanding job putting the information out for our Department, making the department look good. More importantly Chief Dove said she makes him look good as well. She represents the Department and the Town of Brownsburg in an outstanding way.

Don Spencer joined in and said “I think it’s obvious the job you’ve done for the Department was exemplary and unparalleled. For those in the room may not know how she got to where she is, it was good, hard work, exemplary performance, noticed by not only the Chief and his executive staff but the Police Commission as a whole. Jennifer, we all really appreciate all that you do”.



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One would think a sense of balance and normalcy has returned to our little part of the world. However, if one looks past this rice paper thin veil, there are extenuating circumstances that upon analysis, may cast this love fest in a different light. How is it that Grant replied to a question from by Don Spencer said “ I used numbers available only to myself “ when Don Spencer asked why he used 5 years of data vs. Dave Richardson numbers which he referenced he partnered with recognized leader UMBAUGH to generate an accurate representation of the prior 7 years of history? Dave did quip “I did go back a few more years”. A plausible explanation is by using different numbers over a shorter time frame provides the evidence needed to support the 51/49 split by clearly desired by the town. Don Spencer eluded to this during his comments the way this matter was handled on April 24th.

What transparency into the process and negotiations were provided when the council asked the town manager Grant and Chief Bill Brown to work this out behind closed doors? Why not an up or down vote of 50/50 right then and there? or allow the town to express their reasoning for the 51/49 split in open forum after public discussion and debate, amend the original ordinance to 51/49 and vote on that?

By not doing so, the actions taken by Gary, Robbie, Ashley and Grant denies the fire territory executive board, the chairman of the fire Township Executive board (himself a fire fighter), Township Trustees and everyone else involved achieving one of their stated goals. This ordinance was to increase transparency and improve efficiencies between all parties involved. As evidenced by their own conduct members of the council town had no interest solving this issue in a transparent manner.

What did Grant say to Bill behind closed doors for Bill to change his position? On numerous occasions April 10th Bill spoke in favor of it; giving evidence which supported it’s in both parties interest to pass the 50/50 ordinance as recommended unanimously by all available experts?

If they were experts on the 24th per Gary Hood (in response to Don Spencer’s dissenting voice) why did the council not listen to a larger number of experts which had been working on the problem for greater than 9 months?

Many residents question, by removing any participation by the Fire Territory Executive Board, and replacing them with Grant, how one can rationalize this constitutes utilizing all available experts to solve the problem.

In conclusion is it unrealistic to expect these people must grasp the concepts which are obvious to the casual observer. Job one is to provide optimum funding to operate departments charged to ensure public safety. As noted by those closest to the situation, the steady decline in Fire Territory funding, combined with increasing service demands places not only those charged with the oversight and administration, indeed the very firemen and EMT’s themselves, of the Fire Territory in very precarious circumstances.

Those who closely monitor the actions of our elected government servants are unable to rationalize the motives of Gary, Ashley, Rob and Grant’s actions; as there is no higher priority than funding public safety. Many town residents would like an explanation from those who voted to table the 50/50 agreement, and those who later negotiated the 51/49 split. Why are cuts continuing to take place here, to the point funding levels are merely adequate, *we receive exemplary services from the men and women who serve the Fire Territory. why not provide them optimal funding...?*

BROWNSBURG SENTINEL -- MISSION STATEMENT

To foster a comprehensive community conversation, across multiple platforms, that will help readers, government officials, constituents understand the issues most relevant to them and encourage them to form and share their own opinions, and act to effect change if necessary within the bounds prescribed by law.

EDITORIAL APPROACH

This publication will maintain an unwavering commitment to serving the Brownsburg community and surrounding area. We will provide leadership in the form of intelligent reporting on information and issues of substance which effect the reader, and thought provoking editorial insights.

Frequently within our publications there will be opining and calls to action — arguments to support or change a policy or practice involving government, education, organizations of various types, or public and private civic leaders.

SPECIFICALLY, THIS PUBLICATION ADVOCATES FOR:

- First Amendment freedoms of speech, press, religion, petition and assembly, adamantly focusing on open government, freedom of information issues and being the watchdog for the Brownsburg community and surrounding area.
- Aggressive oversight and public examination to ensure open, effective, accountable government at every level, favoring collaboration and consolidation over growth in the size of government, and demanding transparent and responsible stewardship of tax dollars.
- Advocating for town budgets which adhere to the town’s articles of incorporation that reduce or eliminate deficits and pay down the town debt through a balanced strategy of reducing expenses and generating adequate revenue.
- Monitoring the actions of the Town of Brownsburg and Hendricks County regarding economic development, planning, zoning functions and other boards and committees to ensure those strategies, policies, and actions benefit the entire Brownsburg community and surrounding area resulting in more high-quality jobs for the city and region as a whole.
- Prudent reporting and oversight of Brownsburg School Corporation educational system to ensure that its policies, actions, and budgetary expenditures are directed to nurture the full potential of every child; Continuing to closely monitor, report, and challenge long-held assumptions about teaching and learning.
- Coverage of various community activities or human interest stories which instill a sense achievement and/or reinforce local, regional, state and national, pride and patriotism.

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