

AREA NEWS CONTINUED

COUNCIL NOTES

The Van Buren Town Council held a short meeting on Wednesday evening, Oct. 17. The meeting was held in the Council Room at Town Hall. President Tony Manry called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and all in attendance repeated the Pledge to the American Flag.

Students from Kings Academy were in attendance to learn about local Government.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted.

Officer Pat Collins gave the Police report. Both vehicles were running well. Officer Collins will be attending a required course.

Superintendent Jim Webb gave his report. All water meters had been read in September and October. Two water leaks were repaired and four water related calls answered. Water samples had tested ok.

Water lines are expected to be repaired for local businesses.

Town clean-up was reported to have gone well and two dumpsters had been filled.

Equipment was being made ready for winter.

Plans are to pave Fifth Street.

Bagged leaves will be picked up. There is to be no burning of leaves in the city limits.

The next Council meeting will be Nov. 7.

LIBRARY CONSOLIDATION IN INDIANA

What is library consolidation?

Consolidation refers to the combining or merging of independent libraries into a larger existing library system, such as a county library system. Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels has appointed the Indiana

Commission on Local Government Reform to research and then "recommend ways to reform and restructure local government in Indiana in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations and reduce its costs to Hoosier taxpayers." One of the four questions the governor asked the commission to answer is: "What local units of government (including schools and libraries) might be successfully consolidated to reduce overhead and administrative expenses?"

What are the dangers of library consolidation?

If an independent library is merged with a larger library system, the residents of the independent library district would lose all local control over their library. Their library board, composed of trustees appointed by local school boards and local units of government, would be dissolved and the library system would cease to exist. The larger library system would then make all decisions about the budget, staffing, facilities, programs, collections and services for the residents of the previously independent library district and cuts would be likely in all areas.

Are there any benefits to library consolidation?

In some cases, the residents of a very small library system might benefit from consolidating with a larger system, but this might come at the cost of losing their own local library building and might require them to travel a longer distance to receive library service. This would present a particular hardship for senior citizens and parents of preschool children and school students. Library boards should have the voluntary right to merge if they feel it is best for their residents,

but it should not be mandated by the state.

Are public libraries responsible for the current increase in Indiana property taxes?

No! Indiana libraries account for only 3.33% of all property taxes collected in Indiana.

Second, the estimated 24% increase in property taxes for Indiana homeowners is due to the elimination of the inventory tax on businesses (+4%), the cap on state tax relief (+4%), trending and change to fair market assessing (+10%), and increases in local government tax collections (+6%).

Third, public library tax levies (property tax collections) have been controlled by the state since 1973, allowing only small increases each year. Other state controls limit libraries' bonding ability and prevent libraries from taking advantage of large increases in assessed valuation. Still other controls exist to further limit increases in library funding.

Fourth, the public library world has drastically changed over the past 23 years, necessitating public library expenditures for computer automation and public Internet service and for the purchase of many new materials for circulation (DVDs, CDs, MP3 players, etc.). Growing populations also have required the construction of new buildings and the remodeling of older buildings, often requiring more staff as well as the opportunity to offer a wider range of public services.

Fifth, Public libraries do not have access to all funding sources available to other local units of government. Libraries do not usually benefit from gambling revenues, funds generated by the lease of the toll road, and the Community Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT). Cities, towns and counties may also capture revenue from new developments for their own

purposes at the expense of schools and public libraries through the establishment of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts.

Schools receive most of their funding from the state. Libraries receive no direct funding from the state. The public library state distribution (\$600,000 for all Indiana libraries in 2006) given to libraries in the past, was eliminated last year when the governor transferred those funds to the state library instead.

Are there many libraries in Indiana that could be affected by this change or are most of them part of larger library systems?

There are 238 independent library systems serving Indiana towns, cities, townships and counties. Most Indiana libraries are either small or mid-size libraries with only 10 serving populations over 100,000. Libraries in these communities were established by local residents and stand as proud reflections of their histories and cultures and of the choices their library boards have made for the programs, services, and circulating collections that are needed and preferred by each community.

Indiana residents will not know how the Commission on Local Government Reform's recommendation will affect their libraries until December, 2007 when the Commission's report is given to the Governor and the members of the General Assembly. Legislation generated by the recommendations is expected to be introduced in the General Assembly in January, 2008.

What can I do to stop mandatory consolidation of Indiana's Libraries?

Educate yourself about the issue and, before the Commission's October 31 deadline, contact the Commission on Local Government Reform at their website <http://indianalocalgovreform.iu.edu>, or

by e-mailing them at lgreform@iu.edu or by mail to Center on Urban Policy and the Environment, 334 N. Senate Ave., Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

In November, write your local legislators to urge them to vote against library consolidation. Tell them the personal stories of how having a local, independent library has affected the quality of your life. You can reach Representative Dan Leonard (District 50) by writing at the Indiana House of Representatives, 200 W. Washington St. Indianapolis, IN 46204-2756. Mail for Senator Gary Dillon (District 11) should be sent to the Indiana Senate, 200 W. Washington St. Indianapolis, IN 46204-2786. They can also be e-mailed using the www.IN.gov link. Go to General Assembly; Who's Your Legislator. When you click for more details, you can e-mail the legislator.

REQUEST MEMORABILIA

Girl Scouts of Central Indiana will have a "Girl Scouting in Indiana" 4000 sq. foot exhibit at the Indiana State Museum in fall 2008. Items are needed to complete the exhibit such as camping equipment, scrapbooks, home movies, and troop memorabilia from the 20's, 30's, 40's, 50's, and 60's. Items will be loaned to the museum and will be returned when the exhibition ends. A personal story of the item

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MT ETNA UMC • CORNER OF 9 & 124

CHURCH BAZAAR

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2007

9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

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HOMEMADE FOOD ITEMS NOODLES, PIES,
CANDIES, JAMS & SOUP.

FREE-WILL LUNCH WILL BE SERVED STARTING AT 10:30 A.M.

PLEASE TO COME AND ENJOY THE FUN, FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP.

Saturday
November 3
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Sunday
November 4
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.



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BENEFIT for TERESA THORNSBURY-SPEHEGER

Saturday, October 27 • 4:00 p.m.

at Duffy's Tavern in Markle

Auction • Hog Roast • Baked Goods • Crafts
• 50/50 Drawing • Mt Dew Boys from 9-1

Teresa is a single mother of 3 fighting Breast Cancer

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- Warren Pharmacy
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