



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

July 9, 2015

St. Joseph County commissioners reject hiking property taxes to fund bridge work

South Bend Tribune

Jeff Parrott

7/8/15

The St. Joseph County Commissioners Tuesday voted unanimously against increasing property tax bills to fund work on the county's larger bridges. The resolution would have raised the tax rate for the county's Major Cumulative Bridge Fund, which has dwindled since its creation in 1984. Auditor Mike Hamann said he felt obligated to present the commissioners with the option. "If we don't do something about it now, we'll have to do something about it down the road," Hamann said. "These rates will continue to drop." The fund, which builds year to year to generate money for the inspection and maintenance of bridges larger than 20 feet across, should contain multiple millions of dollars but now contains just \$680,000, said chief deputy auditor Teresa Shuter. Republican commissioner Andy Kostielney said he realizes the need for more major bridge funding, but he wants to complete a five- or 10-year capital projects plan soon and explore other ways to come up with the money. The county is now obligated to fund \$2.5 million as the local share match to reconstruct the Olive Street/Sample Street overpass, money it will pull from the County Economic Development Income Tax fund. That project is scheduled for bid letting in December.

[St. Joseph County commissioners reject hiking property taxes to fund bridge work - South Bend Tribune: Politics](#)

Lake council approves borrowing \$19M

NWI Times

Bill Dolan

7/7/15

CROWN POINT | Lake County Councilwoman Elsie Franklin, D-Gary, came back to work Tuesday just in time to help fellow county officials win initial approval for a new \$19 million borrowing program. The fiscal body voted 4-3 to approve on first reading an ordinance authorizing the county to issue a \$12 million bond for asbestos removal, roof repair and other upgrades to county government buildings and a \$7 million bond for county road repair. GOP councilmen Dan Dernulc, R-Highland, and Eldon Strong, R-Crown Point, opposed borrowing that amount, but failed to separate the two bonds to trim borrowing to support only the road work. Strong said he was informed by the council's financial director the county has \$28 million in an uncommitted reserve. "Lake County doesn't have a revenue problem. It has a spending problem," Strong said after the meeting. He said he also believes splitting the borrowing into two separate bonds is an attempt to skirt a state law requiring local government to put any borrowing over \$12 million before the voters in a referendum. Councilwoman Christine Cid, D-East Chicago, voted against the bond issue, saying she had reservations about borrowing again only six months after

having passed a \$12 million bond issue. "You must have known of these (repairs) before. I want a plan. Are we going to borrow again in six months?" Cid wondered aloud. [Lake council approves borrowing \\$19M](#)

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