? The Washington County Council met in regular session on Monday, November 3 with all members present. The minutes of previous meetings were approved unanimously.

Council President, John Fultz, read a letter from the Washington County Board of Commissioners outlining a plan to create a position as full time assistant to the Veterans' Affairs Officer and an explanation of how to fund that position.

After yet another hostile and rambling exchange between Fultz and members of the public supporting Madge Lyles, Council Attorney, Mark Clark explained to both the Council members and the audience that according to state statute, no changes could be made to the budget until it is either approved by the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (IDLGF) or is implemented on January 1, 2009.

Lyles supporters attempted to coerce Council members into approving a motion for Lyles to be hired effective January 1; the issue died for lack of a motion. Lyles supporters filed out of the meeting room making angry accusations and remarks directed towards Council members.

In other business, the Council heard from Steve Anderson and Kathleen Zelivetz. Anderson and Zelivetz represented a group of township assessors who plan to organize a company to bid on the property assessment job for the county. According to Washington County Assessor, Jason Cockerill, the bids will be taken from any assessing company meeting state guidelines to bid. Clark interjected that since the IDLGF is involved in the contract award, it is uncertain as to what criteria will be used to determine the winning bid.

According to Clark, it could be lowest bid, familiarity with local properties or any number of other issues that tip the scales for the winning bidder. Clark also said that with the IDLGF involvement in the new assessment program, it is effectively out of the county's hands.

The Council next approved various motions to transfer monies between funds to deal with a variety of issues from funding depositions through the Public Defender's Office to paying for repairs to Cemetery monuments.

Rick Graves, Washington County Highway Superintendent, informed the Council that 4,030 man/hours were used for clean up efforts resulting from the September 14 hurricane damage. According to Graves the total cost of the clean up for his department will be approximately $187,000 of which FEMA will reimburse 75 percent.

With no further business to conduct, the Council adjourned until its next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 1.