



President Donald Trump addresses his supporters at a campaign rally at the Ford Center in August. The visit will end up costing the City of Evansville about \$100,000 in overtime pay. DENNY SIMMONS / COURIER & PRESS,

Who foots bill for Trump's visit?

Evansville taxpayers will pay \$100,000 bill for overtime pay

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President Donald Trump's visit to Evansville cost the area taxpayers around \$100,000 in overtime pay, officials say.

In total, Evansville accrued around \$90,000, the county more than \$13,000 in staffing overtime related to the president's Aug. 30 campaign appearance at the Ford Center.

City Controller Russ Lloyd Jr. said the City will have to foot the bill and that it was just "understood" the City would not get reimbursed for security.

"I assumed they (Trump Campaign) paid for the Ford Center and SMG for the auditorium," Lloyd Jr., said. "But working with police and security — they just normally don't (pay for it). And law enforcement does look at it as an important job."

The bulk of the overtime costs — associated with the rally — came from the Evansville Police Department, according to Chief Billy Bolin. EPD will pay out approximately \$80,000 in overtime pay to officers, with \$57,445 of that incurred on the day of the



Police separate protesters from Trump supporters at his rally in August. MACABE BROWN/COURIER & PRESS

campaign event.

The remaining \$22,555 stemmed from the week-long preparations prior to Air Force One landing at Evansville Regional Airport.

Evansville Fire spent between \$8,000 and \$10,000 and the Vanderburgh Sheriff's Office spent

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about \$13,000 in overtime expenses for the visit.

“My stance is that — it’s the President of the United States,” Bolin explained. “If I’m still Chief and they (future presidents or candidates) come to Evansville, they’re going to get whatever we have. Just because it’s the President.”

Bolin said his department wasn’t required to help prior or during the sitting president’s visit but chose to.

“We knew they needed it (security,) and it’s the President. So you do what you can to help,” he said. “There was a lot of stuff leading up to that week, where we had officers coming in that normally didn’t work those hours.”

Bolin said he didn’t request reimbursement from the Trump Campaign or Federal government.

“We don’t have to do it,” he said. “We can say ‘No, we’re not giving you anything.’ I felt we had a duty to. We did the same thing when it was Presidential candidates coming a few years ago. The Campaign didn’t ask us for anything, it was the secret service who needed

stuff.”

Funding for the overtime would come from the Local Income Tax and Public Safety Local Income tax, as discussed during Council’s Monday night meeting.

Council was presented with a \$925,000 appropriation request to help cover overtime expenses related to EPD and EFD.

■ A total of \$450,000 designated for overtime related to police

■ A total of \$250,000 designated for overtime for fire department

■ A total of \$225,000 designated for “other” salary in police department

As of Nov. 14, the LIT cash balance is \$5.6 million and the PSLIT cash balance is nearly \$4.1 million, according to the City Controller’s office.

A few Council members questioned why the overtime numbers were high and why it would be funded from the LIT and PSLIT accounts.

Councilwoman Missy Mosby said she was a strong proponent for implementing the PSLIT fund. She said her constituents supported the tax under the idea that it would be used for public safety equipment and items needed.

“I’m really not in favor of taking the public safety money and using it for things like this personally,” Mosby said

to the Council Monday.

At-Large Councilman Dr. H. Dan Adams said this was an extra expense that could’ve funded other things.

“Whether you’re a Republican or Democrat — I don’t think we can afford it,” Adams said. “That (PSLIT) is supposed to be spent on new cars and fire trucks, and better pay for (police and firefighters).”

Lloyd Jr., said the PSLIT can legally be used for anything related to public safety, and the regular Local Income Tax can be used for any appropriate government expense.

“We don’t have any excess money in the general fund — we just don’t have \$900,000,” Lloyd Jr. said. “That’s why we took the request to Council to get money from those other funds.”

Adams suggested tabling the appropriation, while some Council members didn’t see a point in pushing it back and potentially taking a risk.

In addition to the police department, the City’s fire department and Vanderburgh County Sheriffs Office put in a large amount of overtime to accommodate the president.

Vanderburgh County Sheriff Dave Wedding said, “most employees were on the clock and (on) a regular assignment.”

“Any time you spend more than \$10,000 for a day-long event — that’s a hit,” Wedding said.

Wedding said his office encounters many unexpected expenses annually and is able to adjust line items accordingly.

This has happened in other cities too.

Trump and Pence’s visit to Indianapolis during Oct. 27, Nov. 2 and Nov. 3 resulted in a little over \$141,000 in personnel overtime for the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, according to the Indianapolis Star.

Duluth, Minnesota, taxpayers had to pay out around \$90,000 after Trump’s visit in June, according to an article published by the Duluth News Tribune. This figure consists of City and County costs.

Overtime isn’t new for EPD

For the last three years, EPD has budgeted \$860,000 for overtime hours, Bolin said. Since 2016, the department has gone over their budgeted overtime. In year’s past Bolin was able to shift money from within his own department for overages.

This year is different.

■ 2018 overtime cost: \$1.19 million (as of November 8, 2018)

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