

Benton County Commissioner Meeting January 17th, 2024

The Benton County Commissioners met at 8:15 a.m. in the Commissioners room at the Benton County Courthouse. Those in attendance were Commissioners Bryan Berry, Mike Freeland, John Fields and County Auditor, Audrey Freeland

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Derek Fuehrer, John Cox, Jasmine Bice, Karen Hurtubise, Phyllis Zickmund, Matt Hull, Daniel Caswell, Jason Fisher, John Dockery, Jim Jenness, Ryan Pike, Ben Ledo, Shawn Leuck, Kathy Sarault, Dave Fisher, Samantha Smith, Greg Vogel and Ed Geswein

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Roads – guys have been out checking on the conditions of them.
- Kubota quotes – the current lease is about up. Below are quotes received that are either purchase outright or lease options. The board reviewed and Commissioner Berry stated that the biggest difference in them is the transmission. Commissioner Freeland asked if the highway had the funds to cover the purchase. Mike replied that yes but some of it was set aside for the truck but that will not be available until 2025.
 - John Deere outright purchase – 104,477.40
 - John Deere (2) with lease option – 115,711.70
 - Kubota – 106,636.22
 - Kubota (2) – 134,900.00
 - Kubota (3) – 159,500.00
 - Kubota (4) – 113,132.22

Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to approve the outright purchase quote from John Deere in the amount of \$104,477.40, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. The purchase will be paid from the highway funds.

- BP – Commissioner Berry stated that BP will be send a check for the road damage done on 500N
- Dumpsters – last year they never placed the dumpsters in the towns. Michelle has called multiple times and has got nothing, but they are starting to get some phone calls. After some discussion Mike B. will call Steve Cox and see who his contact is/was.
- Dairy – Commissioner Fields asked if he was able to get a hold of the dairy regarding the road. Commissioner Berry said that they are willing to put some funding towards gravel. He continued by saying that he feels Bio-Town needs to have their own transportation agreement with the county, the board was in full agreement.

John Cox – Sheriff

- Job description – He would like the board's approval to reclassify his current jail correction officer job description to include both full and part-time. The pay rate will be the same at \$18.02 an hour. The job description amendment for the CO's was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.
- Vehicles – presented quotes both with and without police package (built for pursuit-bigger brakes and other items with a top speed of 114). The council approved one vehicle and outfitting up to \$51,000. The quote was for 58,401.00 plus 15,000.00 for outfitting. The motion to approve the purchase of the vehicle was made by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.
- Public safety tax – The Sheriff presented a total picture of where the department(s) need to be, where they are currently and what is needed to get there. The goal is to get the departments fully staffed with some additional personnel. He is also going to discuss with the Council about re-

Benton County Commissioner Meeting January 17th, 2024

establishing the Cum Jail fund and then if they add the public safety tax those funds will assist with that greatly. They discussed the salaries, positions, equipment and other operating expenses and will continue to discuss and see what they can do.

- Jail inspections – the state inspector came on site, and they passed. The inspector said the Sheriff and his staff did a great job

John Cox & Shawn Leuck – Fair board discussions

They have a brief discussion on the new fairground building and the quotes that they have received to date. The scissors trusses are killing the funding available, so if they change those to standard truss so do they raise the walls a foot (10ft) or do they leave it at 9 feet. Shawn said that adding the extra foot will make a difference in the drywall, he can have them price it out for the extra costs. Shawn said that the building overall has gotten bigger than when they first started talking about it. John suggested a 9ft ceiling with recessed lighting. Also, steel would be cheaper, but it would make it louder inside the building. John said they will stick with 9 feet and recessed lighting and then they will come back and discuss it further.

Jason Fisher – DHS / EMA Director

- Light duty – Jason presented a light duty standard operating similar to the one approved for the sheriff. Commissioner Berry asked what they would do during light duty and how it would affect his budget. Jason said that they would have to have tasks available for them in order for them to use the policy. The board tabled the discussion until the February meeting so Jacob could review the document.
- Cabinets – Jason presented a quote for cabinets from Dave's Carpentry. \$5634.40 and the 911 center
- Healthcare logistics – Jason would like to discuss getting something set up to cover the expenses for the drug disposal. Jason can cover the cost to get rid of what he has currently, but if it is not going to be funded then he will look into closing the program. Commissioner Freeland said that he feels Chief Klemme was planning on writing for a coalition grant to cover the funds. After further discussion a motion was made to pay for the drug disposal bins out of the solid waste district funds with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.
- ADA – Jason asked on behalf of ADA Coordinator, Bailey Finley if the board wanted to move forward with the ADA assessment on the jail or wait. The board said not at this time
- Cabinets – revisited and Jason plans on using the money from the sale of the trailer to cover expenses.
 - Denos – 11,200.15 (lowest grade/costs of the 3 styles provided in quote)
 - Daves carpentry – 5634,40

Commissioner, John Fields motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

- Credit card – Jason would like to request a credit card for his department to cover emergency expenses and meeting expenses, so he does not have to get a hold of one of the board members to use theirs. During the last storm he had to use his personal credit card to cover some expenses. After much discussion, it was determined that a card will be approved with a limit of \$1,500 and review in one year with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried
- LEPC – next meeting will be held January 25th at 11 am

Benton County Commissioner Meeting
January 17th, 2024

Ryan Pyke & Ben Ledo – Make my Move

They came before the board to discuss what they are about. It is an online marketplace that focuses on talent and economic development, in short talent 1st economic development. They help communities attract, promote and recruit remote workers. It is for those that can live and work anywhere which helps the local economy. Some of the benefits they have seen from this is 43% of the individuals take local jobs and bring at least one school age child. Make my Move has the marketing skills and have assisted to bring in teachers, police officers, nurses, correction officers, Paramedics and EMT's into other communities. Commissioner Berry asked what the county needs to bring to the table. They will need to create the program (assisted by Make my Move), agree to a 12-month marketing plan and then fulfillment. 90% of the work is done by Make my Move. They would be willing to bring back an official proposal if the county is interested. They will assist throughout the process and on the local side they will need to know school information, neighborhoods and healthcare options. After further discussion, the board said that they would discuss this further with Latisha and she will reach out with their decision. Ben added that SB361 sec 22 allows the transfer of ARPA or TIF funds towards recruitment.

Kathy Sarault – Health department

Commissioner Berry asked her if the new rates were advertised, yes, they were as of January 1st.

Business:

Minutes were presented and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried

Pay at once claims were reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Payroll was discussed and then approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry said on the Purdue Extension Contractual agreement (which he discussed with Attorney Ahler) on page 2 paragraph 2 he does not agree with submitting to their request. Commissioner Freeland said that is already in the county's policy and agreed it should be removed. The agreement was again tabled.

The county home report was approved as presented with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

The board temporarily closed to hold the Drainage Board meeting at 9:30 am, then reopened at 9:32 am

John Dockery & Jim Jenness – Whatsup 24/7

They wanted to come before the board to discuss the current website and what they can do to assist with it moving forward. They gave a brief background on themselves and what they can offer to communities. Whatsup 24/7 can handle the website and add pictures and other items to be added such as tourism, festivals, county fair, county history and theatre.

Benton County Commissioner Meeting January 17th, 2024

The group talked about the proposed costs. To do the day-to-day work it will cost \$300 a month. They talked about items from neighboring counties that can be added to attract and promote the county. Total costs would be about \$550 a month for them to do everything and updates. The board said that they will meet with Latisha when she returns and then have her reach out. Commissioner Berry said that one thing if they moved forward, he would like to see it simplified to get to the special exception ordinances and permit fees. They can do that with no problem. Commissioner Freeland asked out of the total of \$8235.00 how much is already being paid. The county currently pays approximately \$600, the \$1500 would be a one-time fee. The overall total would be \$6,000.

Phyllis Zickmund – Taxpayer

Phyllis wanted to come today to discuss the need for animal control within the county. The board informed her that the Sheriff has been working on this with the towns. She offered to lend a hand and would like to volunteer. They advised her to reach out to the Sheriff.

Business continued:

The sharing contracts were reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. The contracts approved were for the following.

- Area IV / Hope Transit
- 4H Council
- Boswell Senior Center
- Fowler Senior Center
- Oxford Senior Center
- Historical Society

Auditor Freeland said that the public safety tax is a hot topic among the auditors. A lot of counties are concerned about it because there are a lot of them getting request from special territory and fire departments who would like to get a part of the distribution, a portion of it not what has been set aside in the PSAP.

Greg Vogel – Taxpayer

He came before the board to discuss the twelve lots he purchased in the Town of Boswell and his plans for it. With the current zoning status as an R3 they could build duplexes. He feels that might be a good option or a pole barn dominion duplex. He is in the preliminary stages, but he wanted to come before the board and discuss what he would like to do.

When he purchased the property, he was told there were some drainage issues near a concrete tile on the corner of North and Stokes Street. While he was withing he noticed another catch basin and wondered if there was another tile. He would like assistance from the board to get the water moved from the one tile to the other one for drainage. Commissioner Berry asked who he talked with. Greg said that he spoke with the Surveyor, the Building inspector and some town folks. They discussed if it was a county tile or not. He has had some title work done but he could not find any permits or anything regarding it. Commissioner Berry stated that since it is a county drain/tile the county has 75 feet on each side. He also added that Dimmich would have to give them permission to go through there and it should be in the drainage board minutes. The board said that if he was to attend a drainage board meeting, they would be willing to assist with what they can. Greg added some statistical information on population and said

Benton County Commissioner Meeting
January 17th, 2024

that if all 12 would be developed that would add 10% to the Town of Boswell population. He also asked about road access and the board said that he would need to work with the Town for that.

The board temporarily closed to hold the Finance Board meeting at 10:19 a.m. and reopened immediately following.

Ed Geswein – Taxpayer / Boswell Armory

He wanted to come before the board to discuss the plans with the Boswell Armory. He shared a story about a Veterans resource task force group who approached him to help find a location for veterans. Mary T Klinker Veterans Resource group is out of Lafayette and the current president is Jim Logsdon who is a double amputee who served in Vietnam. They are looking to get a facility locally to be like the one in Minnesota, Eagles Healing Nest that assists veterans with their rehab. It is not a homeless shelter but rather a location that will be modeled after Eagles Healing Nest. Mary T Klinker has entered into a contract with Mr. Senesac regarding the armory, it is a lease with an option to buy.

He spoke about the local needs and how it is much bigger than he ever knew it was. They are totally funded by donations. Huston Electric is one business that is in full support of this mission. Scott and Christine Lovelace are the representatives and will be running the facility. She is a case manager and will oversee much of the daily routines. Ed said that he is not here to ask anything of the county but wanted to share the project and to get the support of the county officials.

One thing they are looking at starting is a food distribution because the veterans want to give back. Commissioner Berry stated that there is one in Earl Park that always needs help, and they distribute food twice a week. Commissioner Fields asked if the building is sound enough. Ed replied that they have had some people go through it and feel it is salvageable. Commissioner Freeland asked if it was going to be cost effective. The board was unanimous in their support and feel it will be great.

They went on to discuss the building, upcoming bills and the cost for the immediate improvements. Ed also share that there is an individual who has stated they would cover the rent for the first year. Not only do they have to pay rent, but they also have to pay insurance and property taxes. They are a 501C3 but that will not start until 2025. They will be looking for donors and other assistance at some point. The Boswell school was discussed as another possible location, but Ed stated they have already signed a lease. It is on a 3-year lease and each year the price does change. The board said that if they do need to anything to reach out and they are willing to do what they can.

Business continued:

Chief Deputy, Beth Budreau presented the 2024 Commissioner Appointment list that was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Beth then discussed a quote from Data Pit Stop and whether or not the board would approve the tax data website for the Treasurer and Auditor offices. Commissioner Berry asked how much it was for the year and if Beth wanted to keep it. The annual cost is \$4,000. The board tabled the discussion.

Beth presented an ordinance regarding the camera and recording but stated that County Attorney Ahler does not advise the board in signing this since it will not hold up in court. The board had a brief discussion and then determined that they would not approve it. Beth marked the ordinance as being denied.

Benton County Commissioner Meeting
January 17th, 2024

Commissioner Berry then called for a moment of silence on behalf of Councilman, Mike Connor.

Commissioner Berry said that he has talked with Mr. Worthman with BP, and he will be bringing around his new assistant. They do not have anything set for when they will get the finalization for the repower. Berry did tell them to get a hold of Bill Brost when they do.

Commissioner Berry talked about the Ting phone accounts and the issues they have been having. New sim cards will be sent.

Commissioner Berry asked the board what their thoughts were about having an open house of some kind for the 150 years for the courthouse. He reached out to the historical society, but they did not provide much assistance or seem to be interested in helping with it. He is attempting to find the date and will share as he finds out more information.

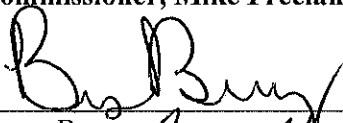
Commissioner Fields asked if everyone saw the thank you card from the Rettig's, yes, they did. He went on to state that there is a second cooler, and he was asking if it was staying there for future buyers. The board agreed to leave the extra cooler.

Commissioner Fields asked what Shawn Leuck's cost was for the fairgrounds building. The group discussed whether or not they were going to receive any donations, there is no confirmation on any. Berry said \$329,471.00 in bids and that does not include any labor. The group said they would regroup and discuss it further later.

Commissioner Fields then talked about the light duty and that every department is different. They then discussed the two presented to date. The group had some more discussions on how they feel about it and that they should not have approved. Commissioner, Bryan Berry motioned to cancel all light duty job descriptions. Commissioner Fields asked how many people have utilized it. Chief Deputy said it has not been used much and that in her personal opinion it is not worth it. After further discussion the open motion was not passed.

The group discussed the different departments and upcoming requests for additional personnel. Nothing was passed at this time.

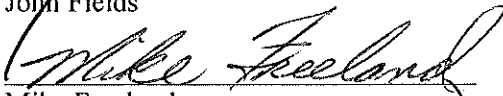
With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:09 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried



Bryan Berry



John Fields



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor