

Benton County Commissioner Meeting January 3rd, 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, Latisha Provo, Gail Lange, Karen Hurtubise, John Cox, Jason Fisher, Dave Byers, Dave Fisher and Samantha Smith

The first order of business was the organization of officers:

President: Bryan Berry / motion made by Mike Freeland, 2nd by John Fields
 Vice President: John Fields / motion made by Mike Freeland, 2nd by Bryan Berry,
 Secretary: Audrey Freeland / motion made by President, Bryan Berry, 2nd by John Fields.
 Mike Freeland abstained from voting

The board of Commissioners then made the following appointments:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Appointee</u>	<u>Motion-Second-Abstained</u>
County Attorney	Jacob Ahler	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Courthouse Custodian	Darren Regnier	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Dept. Homeland Sec/EMA	Director Jason Fisher	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Deputy EMA Director	Jonathan Devers	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
District Planning Council Rep	Jonathan Devers	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
IT Person/Company	Silverback Consulting Group, Inc	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
**N.W. In. Solid Waste Dist. Rep	John Fields	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
**K-IRPC – Comm. Representative	Latisha Provo	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
**Bi-County Drainage Board (2 Comm.)	Commissioners by district	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Board of Zoning Appeals Attorney	Brooke Scheurich	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Advisory Plan Commission Atty	Brooke Scheurich	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Community Action Board Rep	Audrey Freeland	Bryan Berry/John Fields/Mike Freeland
Economic Developer Director	Latisha Provo	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Highway Bookkeeper	Michelle Traylor	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
ADA Coordinator	Bailey Finley	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Highway Supervisor	Mike Budreau	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
**Plan Comm. Council rep	Brent Cox	Appointed by the County Council
**Plan Commission Rep.	Mike Freeland	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
**Plan Commission Rep	Jon Charlesworth	Is automatically on the board
**Plan Comm. Surveyor rep	David Fisher	Is automatically on the board
Plan Commission Members	Paul Jackson	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Plan Commission Members	Jim Lawinger	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Plan Commission Members	Bob Leburg	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Plan Commission Members	Paul Schutter	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Plan Commission Members	Deb Orr-Lane	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Retirement Village Superintendent	Tonya Robinson	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Veterans Officer	Paul Griner	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Wabash Valley Hospital Rep.	Audrey Freeland	Bryan Berry/John Fields/Mike Freeland
Recycling Administrator	Michelle Traylor	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Health Commissioner	H.B. Recom. – Kathy Sarault	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Building Comm (Brd apt. Comm Recm.)	Carl “Matt” Hull (Recommended)	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Health Commissioner – Secretary	Kathy Sarault	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Building Commissioner – Secretary	Kathy Sarault	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Fair Board President	John Cox	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Fair Board Vice President	Brody Fox	Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A

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Fair Board Secretary
Fair Board Treasurer
Fair Board Public Relations
Fair Board Sergeant at Arms

Meredith Cobb
Kyle Keffer
Niki Harman
David Quear

Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A
Bryan Berry/John Fields/N/A

**** Representative is to be a Member of the Board of Commissioners or by statute requirements**

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Brush – the guys are out cutting
- Recycle bldg. - Installation to the new recycle building has started
- Dairies – they have been fixing the roads continuously (about every 2 wks they are laying more stone). Berry said that both of them have been cement stabilized. Mike said 40 loads have been dumped on 900 W and 30 loads on 400 E. Berry said that doesn't count 800 either and it will take at least 10 loads on there. Berry feels that even though they have agreed to pay the fees they need to hold them to the transportation agreement and charge them for some of the gravel. Mike said 30 loads is approximately \$4500.00. Fields thought it was supposed to hold up for 10+ years, it is, and they are not sure why it is not. Mike will continue to put gravel until plan is approved, the current cost for cement stabilization is around \$86,000 per mile. The board feels that moving forward the cost for this will need to be shared and placed in the transportation plan stating that. Berry will draft something and send it to the attorney for review.
- Bridge – Nick said it would be mid-February before he starts. Mike B. said that Hull has not gotten in touch with him.
- KOBDA – the board wants Mike to look around at lease prices. Fields said to get the price with and without a loader
- Drag – they are way behind and BC is 10th on the list. It will not be ready until late summer 2025
- Frost Law – it is now in effect and Berry asked if he was still using the code red. Mike said yes and it is working well.

Jason Fisher – DHS / EMA Director

- Snorkel truck – Jason asked the board for approval to move forward with selling it. The county paid 16,000 and they have put 5,000 into it but they are going for around \$30,000. The board gave Jason approval to move forward with direction from the broker and share it with them.
- Cabinets – Jason would like to get approval to have some cabinets installed at the EMS/EOC area and the quote was for \$7,000 there are 4 uppers and 9 lower ones and includes a countertop. Berry asked if he had the funds available. Jason has some cushion in the EMS equipment line but not much because it usually is absorbed into his gas & oil account. He said that he could possibly use some Local Emergency funds. The board tabled it until Jason could see if the local emergency funds could be used.
- Fire alarm quote – the board felt that the quote was high but know that fiber is. The cost is \$5900 and Jason said that Tom Beaumont did not feel that the cost was that bad. The board motioned to approve the line to be ran with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. This will be paid for out of the courthouse repair account line.
- Claim – Jason asked the board for approval to pay the full annual amount for the Lexipol online system from his budget. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.
- The board reviewed and approved the credit card agreement with pay gov. it was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

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- The board signed the mutual aid agreement
- Drone – Berry asked Jason if he could ask Jonathan to fly the tower so they can get a list of all of the equipment on the tower
- E911 meeting – the board will hold their first meeting on January 25th
- LIT rate – Sheriff Cox joined the conversation. Berry stated that the county has a public safety tax in place, and it funds EMS through those tax dollars. He then went on to say that if the county council put on the new EMS tax, and then reallocate the public safety tax between the two. Then if they re-establish the cumulative jail tax rate. Berry said that they would need to review each of them and see what can be done. They asked Auditor Freeland to look at the rates and bring it to the next meeting. Sheriff Cox added that he will speak to them about funding the two positions that were approved but not funded. Cox would like to get them closer to at least what Warren County is making which would be about \$8,000 more. The board asked them to work together to put together a plan for the next 5-10 years and be competitive in pay. Fields added to look at paramedics and EMT's and dispatchers.

Seal bids for bituminous, fuel, hot mix, stone, oil and etc... The highway bids received bids from the following:

Fuel –

Newton Oil
Ceres Solutions
Petroleum Traders Corporation

Bituminous Bids

Bit Mat / Klink Group
Milestone

Stone

Roger Stone
Peoples Ready Mix

Asphalt (Surface & binder)

Milestone
Reith-Riley
Central Paving

All bids were accepted, and the final decision was given to the Highway Superintendent with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields and the motion passed. A complete breakdown of bids will be available in the Benton County Auditor's office once received from the Benton County Highway department.

John Cox – Sheriff

- Vehicles – he is working with Alsop's/Emerson's on getting some quotes for the 1 vehicle he was awarded for 2024 by the council
- Repairs – he is working on the plan for maintenance to get all of the repairs done and on a maintenance schedule. The board stated that they are going to get the purchasing limit for the Sheriff increased soon

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- Ventilation & Jail repairs – they are still ongoing. They have got some blue lights and split units installed and they are working with Brouillette’s to get a plan to get the rest of the air units repaired/replaced. The stainless-steel toilet and sinks for the jail cells are approximately \$7,000 each and he is looking to do 2 of them in 2024. The board asked for the ARPA grant funds to be moved from the sewer to the jail ventilation once John gets those figures
- Ballistic vests – through funds within his budget he was able to get his entire department reequipped
- Cameras – Haley’s will be onsite to review the cameras and software issues. Berry asked for a list of the cameras to be made. The board also asked him to discuss with them what would be needed for the live stream feed for board meetings
- Grants he is hoping will be awarded
 - Ballistic shields for the security and courtroom
- RQAW – they are on track to present the jail deterioration repair plan
- Stanley Steemer – Freeland asked if Sheriff had heard from them, no he has not
- Candidates – they will be interviewing 3 individuals next week. At this time he does not have any applications for jailers
- Spillman – the annual technology will be done along with the fingerprint system.
- Farneys claim – the board asked why he had a unit repaired there. John said that he is already looking into that.
- Town Hall meetings – Sheriff Cox is attending the town hall meetings and discussing best options for stray dog calls and back up assistance

Business:

Minutes were presented and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried

The monthly claims were approved with no amendments 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.

Andrea Bowman – Benton Community Foundation

Lilly opened another match and that is how a lot of foundations were started. She continued on by saying that there is another county initiative grant and they received \$50,000 to work on a study along with Latisha Prove and the Extension office to see what is needed to make the community stronger. This could be transportation, childcare and a few other topics. She just wanted to come before the board to let them know what has been going on and that they are doing a needs assessment. There are a lot of steps that they will have to go through, and she is hopefully that they will pass each one so they will be eligible for the grant funds that could range up to 5 million dollars. Berry asked Latisha to reach out to Edwin at KIRPC to see if he could assist Andrea in any way.

Business continued:

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

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The group discussed the capital improvement plan review/amendment was shared and tabled until the next meeting so the board had time to review.

Commissioner Berry spoke about the need to amend the purchasing limit for the Sheriff. He would like to raise the limit back to \$5,000. The board was in agreement. Auditor Freeland will send information to Attorney Ahler so he can amend the ordinance.

Commissioner Berry did not receive a copy of the Purdue Contractual agreement and asked that it be tabled until they had a chance to review.

The board temporarily closed to hold the Drainage Board meeting at 9:32 am, then reopened at 9:53 am

Jason Fisher – DHS / EMA Director

Jason is looking to hold an EMR (Emergency Medical Responder-1st responder) class and asked if the board was willing to fund it once again. It is \$1100 for the books. Fields asked if he was also doing a paramedic class, yes there are two people currently enrolled. The EMR class is about 60 hours and him and Gregory Robinson will be teaching some of it along with Tracy Emilson and David Greer doing the EMT portion. The board is ok with assisting again with the funding as long as there is the signed tuition agreements. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Jason then asked about getting a quote for an office space to be built for his full-time employee, so they have adequate workspace. Berry asked him how he felt about doing something at the annex. He said what if they extend the nurses office like they discussed and then closing off a 10X12 space for the coroner and then using the current space for his full-time employee. Berry said he would have to talk with Matt and see if he was ok with it. Freeland added that if they are going to do a restroom, they need to talk with Matt Hull about it to see if they can hook to the town. Berry said they have to do a finger system. Freeland said but the recycling will have a septic system, yes. They discussed some options that could be done.

Jason said that Gail Lange with the Benton Review has agreed to be the communication representative for the LEPC.

Business continued:

Berry revisited the capital improvement plan amendment that shared what he had drafted. He discussed the recovery fee and how the recovery fees (\$5) are coming in, now with the wireless fee (\$10) plus the farm data and tower rent and rent being paid to Wadena he feels they need a part time person to track this and has added \$12,000 to pay for it through the capital improvement. He spoke with Jason and feels that his FT (Bailey) would have time to complete these tasks as well. Berry said that he listed in the CIP (capital improvement plan) for 2024 and feels that by 2025 it could come out of that budget within fund 4961. They will need to amend the ordinance to list all of the fees and then claims to be paid out. Auditor Freeland will send that ordinance to be amended as well.

Samantha Smith asked the board if they could meet with Jamie regarding the Hoover/Simmons on March 4th in Newton County. They stated that it would be best if it was held by 10 am Eastern time. They then discussed adding a meeting for February 21st that will be a bi-county meeting.

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Auditor Freeland asked if there was anything specific, they want her to list for Attorney Ahler to add. Berry said that he feels that it should include that claims will be paid out of there and all fees placed in there. Freeland asked if he found a place in Wadena, not yet but he is working on it. Berry went on to list the item for the CIP; Economic development budget – 129,015 / Recovery fee – 12,000 / Courthouse upkeep (gutters) 50,000 – this is budgeted high / Broadband expansion – rollover from last year 50,000 / Incentive / signon bonus for paramedics, sheriff deputies – 40,000 / Earl Park food bank – 1500 / BC Food pantry – 5,000 (for 2024 and 2025) / Economic incentive – 30,000 (to help towns) / Dust control (7 hills) – 5,000 / Assessment employee – 24,000 / READI grant – 75,000 --- TOTAL - 451,539. The capital improvement plan amendment was approved by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Berry asked if approving it that they were just taking fees out of it. Auditor Freeland said that they need to discuss what they want in it so it can be added by the attorney for approval.

Berry asked if they need to sign the appointment sheet, no Auditor Freeland will clean it up and add the motion / 2nd and if anyone abstained before they signed it.

Auditor Freeland asked on behalf of Mr. Wealing about some damage that he sustained to his vehicle. Scott stated that the total damage would be around \$4,000 and did not want to pursue legal action against another small business. After some discussion the board said that he will need to file a tort claim.

The board received their annual conflict of interest and nepotism forms to complete.

Commissioner Freeland asked if the BZA members need to be listed on the Commissioner appointments, they have not been placed on there before. Freeland will ask the BZA attorney if they should be or not.

Auditor Freeland asked about the prosecutor's office and their keycard access after-hours. The board said that there will be no changes made at this time.

Solential Energy Focus (out of Carmel) would like to schedule a meeting with the board to discuss their business further regarding sustainable energy. The board would like more information before scheduling anything further.

Auditor Freeland asked if the board was aware of any further communication from Cintas.

Commissioner Berry asked Auditor Freeland if she could pull the drug screen costs so he can compare them with the clinic and other quotes.

Auditor Freeland stated that there are checks to be picked up today, but they just need to be signed by the Treasurer.

Auditor Freeland spoke briefly about the cyber security training and that not all of the employees received the email, but Tom is going to provide a list of those who has not yet completed. She then said that she also asked Tom if the quarantine email file was no longer a thing because people have not had anything in there for a couple of weeks now.

Berry revisited the ARPA balances, and he asked Freeland how much more was needed at the Annex. He asked the board if they were ok with any remaining funds being used for the nurse's extra space, yes, they are. They discussed the fairgrounds building. The board said that the other projects that are completed that any remaining funds will be allocated.

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Latisha Provo - Economic Development

Berry talked about Norfolk and Appalachian railroads and that they had conversations about purchasing it but it never happened. He has talked with someone else who said they might now be willing to sell some property. Latisha said that he has told her that there are multiple sites, and he wants a relationship with Benton County. Berry said that Angie had some who came spoke with her on the topic before and nothing came of it.

Latisha spoke about upcoming meetings and the need for further education needed on the fiber. Berry said that they need to reach out to Americrew to attend the meeting as well. Latisha will send the board of the Towns meetings

The group talked about the wireless and fiber projects and possible push back they might encounter, and Gail said that she will help in anyway she can. A call was made to Kelly with Ameri-crew who said they would send a representative to the upcoming meeting.

Fields spoke briefly about the cooler that they discussed gifting to the Leeks. The group had some discussion on the cases that were originally purchased and how many were purchased.

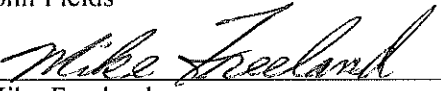
With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried



Bryan Berry



John Fields



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor