

Benton County Commissioners Meeting September 19th, 2023

The Benton County Commissioners met at 8:15 a.m. at the Benton County Courthouse in Fowler, IN 47944. Those in attendance were Commissioners Bryan Berry, John Fields, Mike Freeland, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and County Auditor, Audrey Freeland.

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Colin Sullivan, Walt Wilson and Carole Hoff

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Pipe – new pipe installed on 800 N and will replace a pipe
- Blade – will be moved Friday
- Guard rail – clean up still on going and will trim intersections
- Mainstream – when are they moving pole on 300 S, no word yet. It will be done
- New hire – no show
- 800N / 800W – will have to move it 45% and the pole as well (within county easement)
- Recycle building – septic or grinder. Matt Hull will do the work. Freeland & Fields said that a septic would be easiest and best overall
- SAS – will be out tomorrow
- Drags – board approved to order one since it will not arrive until next year. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried
- Gravel – 200 S lay down. 3 or 4 will stay unless there is an unforeseen issue.
- County vehicles – ordinance will be written, and they will remain at the highway as long as they are out of the way. No outside departments are permitted to drive them

Business:

The Commissioner meeting minutes from 09.03.2023 were approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion passed. Let the record show that Commissioner, Mike Freeland did not sign as he was not in attendance.

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

Payroll (09/08/2023) was approved as presented. It was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland seconded by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried.

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

The resolution to gift a property to the Town of Boswell was tabled until Attorney Ahler receives the Town's resolution.

The partial proposal from Stanley Steemer to clean the duct work at both the jail and the courthouse was discussed. The board approved to have the jail ducts cleaned and then they will

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re-evaluate the rest of the proposal to see what total cost will be. If funding is available, it will be paid for out of the capital improvement funds.

~~The ordinance for Public Health fund 1161 to be created was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried~~

The data request for GIS files in exchange of limited plat books and a wall map was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Berry stated that Surf Internet did response to Attorney Ahler's email, and they would like to try and work something out. Berry feels that since it has taken over a year for them to respond it has taken them too long and since then there have been discussions with Mainstream and Ameri-crew so he feels they should remove their equipment. The board agreed and Surf Internet will be notified to remove all equipment, and this was approved.

Cell phone tower contracts were discussed and what can be shown to landowners. The board discussed what they would like to have written into one such as monthly payment of \$1500 and yearly increase (possibly 2%) and that if any other equipment is placed on the tower that the lease would increase.

The County Home cash rent contract will be reviewed and discussed further at a later date.

The extension office request to close the office while they attend training was reviewed. After some discussion the board approved the closure and stated that they need to place a notice on the door at least 3 days prior. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried

The tuition repayment for a former paramedic was discussed. Attorney Ahler will draft an agreement for repayment.

Economic Development director interview candidates were discussed. While there were 3 qualified individuals the board voted to appoint Latisha Provo as the new director. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. Auditor Freeland will reach out to all candidates.

Business continued:

An email from the Recorder stating that she is no longer going to go with the approved quote for rebinding/repairs due to the cost at this time. If she decides to revisit this she will come back before the board for approval.

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Colin Sullivan – BF & S

The group discussed the next steps for the RFP and Attorney Ahler had no concerns with it as it is written. It will be advertised it 2 X and then awarded TBD. This will be covered by various funds, including but not limited to ARPA, Meadow Lake, Jordan Creek and capital improvement,

Carole Hoff – Treasurer

Carole addressed Attorney Ahler about a performance bond for BP Carbon Solutions discussing their contract that was received by her yesterday. Attorney Ahler reviewed and said that it was the bond paperwork.

Business continued:

Auditor Freeland asked Attorney Ahler if he would be able to draft a policy regarding HB1167 and live streaming of meetings and the process involved. She also asked if the pending one regarding tax sale requirements of the auditor are possibly changing.

The 2024 appointment list and the proposed meeting and holiday schedule were shared and after a brief discussion it was tabled.

Invenergy – phone conference call

The group discussed a possible MOU with Invenergy (HB1401) and was held via phone conference that started at 9:16 a.m. Those on the phone call was James Valentine, Katherine and Nichin

After brief introductions the group went on to discuss LC (letter of credit) and HB1401. Katherine asked if Invenergy needs to execute or if there is any action on BP's part. Commissioner Berry stated that it is just the IRG Acquisition Holdings (buying out FR#2) is all that needs to do anything. Under the adjusted ordinance it has to be returned to the county by April 1st each year.

Commissioner Berry motioned to approve that if the IRG legal counsel is fine with the MOU the county will move forward. Katherine confirmed that it would be listed as IRG Acquisitions Holdings on behalf of Fowler Ridge II. Berry's motion was seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

The group ended the phone conference at 9:25 a.m.

Business continued:

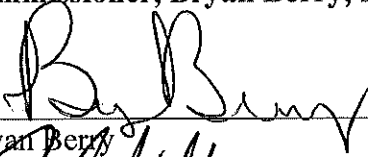
The board discussed the personnel policy. There will not be an amendment made at this time, but Auditor Freeland will reach out to the drug testing company and make sure that the list of

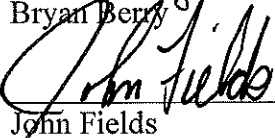
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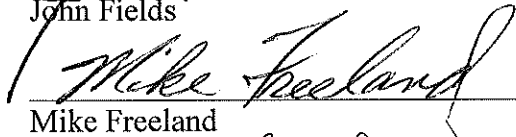
eligible employees (non-cdl) is updated. The board then approved removing elected officials aside from those who have a county vehicle and who have signed a waiver with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Attorney Ahler reviewed 3 projects he is currently working on for the county and things that he needs signatures on. He also briefly discussed the upcoming hearing date that him and Auditor Freeland will attend on behalf of the county.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m. with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields


Bryan Berry


John Fields


Mike Freeland


Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor