

Benton County Commissioner Meeting May 8th, 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, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and County Auditor, Audrey Freeland

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Dottie Warrick, Mark Gourley, Lathisa Provo, Ron Shoup, Jennifer Greenberg, John Cox and Glenda Wallpe

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- NIPSCO – they want to replace poles in Ambia, do they contact them. It is in town so they will need to work with Ambia directly
- CDL – the placed was closed and he is unable to come on site to do it, so they have begun looking into a new location for employees to go for certifications
- Pipe – replaced one on 1200 E. The other pipes look good, so they did not change those
- Boswell Med shed – the board would like the highway to keep mowing it
- Oil – done spraying and it is out, he will not get anymore until a project is started
- Chip-N-Seal – hoping to start next month
- Bridge – not quite complete / they hauled out stone this week; needs guard rails then pour concrete
- Truck – working on getting more bids since the Mack truck has come back with a 37,000 increase for the build
- Kubota – they owe \$3,000 for overextended hours
- Recycle building – drywall is hung / not mudded

Business:

Jason has a request for a purchase and assistance with funds for drug bins. The board discussed it and then the topic was tabled until the next meeting.

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

Monthly claims were approved as presented with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland 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 reports for 04.19.2024 and 05.03.2024 were presented and then approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

The group discussed the VISA cards and the increased utilization. After further discussion the travel card(s) will remain in the Auditor's office for all department travel. The board approved 1 additional card to be added to the travel card and the total limit for the travel cards will be increased to \$10,000.00. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

The Sheriff VISA card was reviewed and approved to retain the card with no changes or increased limit. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

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Commissioner, Bryan Berry spoke about the potential need for an alternative APC member for Citizen #4. He has spoken with Tim Barrett who has agreed to the position if approved. The alternate member was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

The board discussed the vacant VSO position and 3 applicants who applied. Mark Gourley joined the discussion. The group went on to discuss the applicants further, and the pros and cons with each one. Mark spoke briefly about the state's preferred way to handle the VA claims, and his willingness to be available for training purposes. After some discussion Commissioner, John Fields stated that he was leaning towards Robert Wealing for the position. A motion was made to appoint Bob Pratt as the new VSO was made by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Mark asked the board if they had not already done it to register for the ICC District meeting.

Jennifer Greenberg – Clerk

Jennifer said that the biggest issue they had with the election was paper jams with the machine. Their GBS election people will come out and clean all of them this summer, but it is \$115 per machine, and she has around 40 machines. She is fairly certain that she will have the funds but wanted to come before them and let them know if she does not. The board said to move forward with getting them cleaned.

The board signed the amended 2024 Commissioner Appointment sheet to reflect the new VSO and APC members.

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

John Cox – Sheriff / Fair board

- Deputy Marsh is back on duty. One officer is off at this time to be home with the new family member
- Light duty – to date there have been two individuals that have utilized the plan and it worked out well for all parties involved
- This is national officer week – he wanted to publicly thank all of his staff/team and had some personal shout outs to Jail Commander, Chrissy Minard, Jail Matron, Nora Davidson, CO, Jasmine Bice, CO, Cindy Hamilton, CO, Preston Cox, CO, Rob Hobbs, CO, Sheridan Denson, CO, Larry Minard and CO, Macey Miller for all of their hard work
- Vehicle – ready to sale the 2016 Dodge Ram. He presented an advertisement for the group to review, the board approved to move forward
- Feasible study – RQAW and him are moving forward
- Jail bathrooms – still having trouble getting parts as things are breaking but he is working through those issues. Sheriff Cox publicly thanked Vic Brouillette and his team
- Grants – update on grants he has applied for or been awarded. One with Benton County Foundation and the Coalition for a Drug Free Benton County and one with ICJI.
- Fairground building – coming along and working on speaking with potential donors. He is working with Auditor Freeland on how the funds would need to be handled. Auditor Freeland added that future plans will involve renting that space and asked how/who would handle those

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funds. He asked Attorney Ahler for his advisement. He advised on handling of the donations and that the funds which are not affiliated with fair board would be turned over to the county. He also suggested an MOU be created for more specifications. Commissioner Freeland asked to have the board review any publications before they are presented to the public as well, yes, he will.

- NIPSCO – Commissioner Freeland asked if the form for the 3 Phase has been complete, no but that will be resolved quickly
- Grandstands – they have been advised that they need emergency repairs. The fair board will have this done before the tractor pull in June. The cost after a discount will be \$6,332.00 and asked if there was any emergency funds that could be used for this. Commissioner Berry said that there is not but there is probably that much within the economic development budget. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to approve the cost to be paid for out of the ECD budget, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.
- Thank you's – Big thanks to Matt Hull and his crew for drainage assistance and local farmer Doug Brummett for the clay which he donated to the fair board. Also, to Mike Budreau and the highway crew for always helping wherever and whenever they can
- Fair board grants – lighting for the grandstands (\$13,000.00) and replace the horse and pony pin (\$9,000.00) which he applied for through the foundation. He applied for a grant through SIA to add fencing if approved. He has also discussed the community building.
- Court order – Attorney Ahler discussed a court order to sale the Boswell school at a sheriff sale
- Diary – Commissioner Berry asked if he could check out 300, yes, he will. His deputies have copies of the ordinance regarding the travel fines. Sheriff Cox added that he is over the manure trucks dropping it on the roads. Commissioner, John Fields said if they are in violation of the ordinance they should be fined as the county does not want

Glenda Wallpe – Recorder

She came today to discuss the ordinance form 2017 regarding the bulk user fee amounts. The new law states that it can be increased to \$0.20. She stated that there is one user agreement from 2019, and then she recently received another one which Attorney Ahler has reviewed/approved. This was approved to be amended with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. The new rate will be effective as of today's date.

Business continued:

Attorney Ahler discussed the outstanding debt owed by former employees for CDL and EMS tuition agreements. He asked the board for approval to move forward to small claims courts. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. It was clarified that a letter regarding clinic access being revoked was mailed.

Commissioner Berry spoke about the CO2 ordinance and asked if section 1, 3 and 6 and the changes that need to be made

Section 1 – it has Towns, Cities and Municipalities – they will remove municipalities so all of the Towns are covered such as Lochiel and Wadena (to name a few) and they added the 2-mile radius to the schools.

Commissioner Berry said that EDPR was giving some push back about having to use Woods for the decommissioning bonds, but they have now agreed to it. He asked the group if they felt they should add a fine stating that if someone else was used. Attorney Ahler advised that if it is what the board wants it should be added to the ordinance.

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AES who bought out Hoosier Wind (EDF) and they have finally gotten all of the O&M reports to him and have asked for the bond to be released. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to accept the new bond, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motioned carried.

Invergy and AEP and Commissioner Berry are discussing the letter of credit. Commissioner Berry suggested that they need to set up an escrow account and Attorney Ahler is going to draft an escrow agreement in place with the county's conditions. The escrow would be in lieu of a bond.

There is a tile in Raub that was found and fixed. The group discussed how the county could assess these in towns since they are non-regulated. It was advised by Attorney Ahler that the people of the towns would need to file a petition per the statute to make them regulated so the county can charge for it.

Commissioner Fields asked if a letter had been sent to Republics regarding the cancellation so they can contact the new company, yes it has been sent.

Latisha Provo – Economic Development

- Conference – Latisha stated that she will need a travel card for the Ball State ED conference
- LEICC – Melinda and Latisha have discussed the matches and in-kind matches, so the county has committed to those matches/funds
- Community Conversations – she will be attending the meeting at the theatre tonight at 6pm and asked whoever was available to attend
- Training – she wants to attend a training class through OCRA for grant admin.
- Wind tours – has some homeschool groups contact her about tours. She would like approval to use the cash balance funds within the wind tourism fund to host one group tour possibly in September. The only cost would be the rental fee for the theatre where she would like to hold the informational piece. A motion to approve this was given by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried
- READI 2.0 – there is a loan/bond application available if the board would like to look into it and see that is a possible way the county would like apply for which would help with matching funds

Business continued:

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

Commissioner Berry asked for approval to direct deposit a final paycheck for an employee who has moved out of state. Auditor Freeland stated that the employee has signed all the release paperwork. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry asked if the time clock edits were getting better to which Auditor Freeland replied not really, especially with the department that has been discussed previously.

A quote from Brouillette's was presented for the clerk's office which will require a total replacement. After a brief discussion the topic was tabled until the next meeting.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried

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The board briefly reopened the regularly scheduled meeting following the drainage board meeting at 10:11 a.m. to discuss the following.

Commissioner Berry presented a request from the drainage board meeting approving vacating the alleys and road in Freeland Park. The board signed the request.

Darren Regnier – Custodian


Darren came before the board to ask about getting a mower for the courthouse lawn. There have been multiple times where he has attempted to get one from the highway, but they were in use. He stated that there is a smaller one at the highway that he would be willing to take if the highway was allowed to purchase a new one with a larger deck and he and Mike Budreau have discussed this as well. The request was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, motion carried



Bryan Berry

John Fields

Mike Freeland

Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor