

Benton County Commissioner Meeting April 16th, 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, Gail Lange, Latisha Provo, Jim Evers, John Cox, Jason Fisher, Kylee Senesac, Angie Glotzbach, Jim Schoen, Brent Cox, Trina Schutter, Jackie Steinmetz, Robert Sloniger, Harold Holdeman, Arni Muller, Brian Brown, Carole Hoff, Bill Brost and Charles Sinn

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Grinding – 500 N (between 1-2 W), might have to put down gravel from BP messed it up, and will have to add some gravel. 100 at the bridge needs to be repaired as well
- Yearend report – asking for the board to sign so it can be transmitted to the state
- Trees – he is getting requests to cut the trees back further than the easement, the board said no they will not authorize that.
- Dairy road – they will be over there soon, but they are out repairing a lot of roads.
- St Rd 71 – road is closed for state project
- Road funding - Commissioner Freeland asked Latisha if she was able to find any grant funding, no she has not had any luck to date
- 600 E – did they put reclaim on it, yes, they did
- 800 N – at tracks (41 and 700 W) – will patch holes. They have received thank you's from individuals for their efforts, that was appreciated.
- Bridge – this will have to be bid out and it will be handled by BF&S
- Annual report – this was approved and signed with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried
- Closed road – rap should be put on north side this week, then after 1 week bridge can be set. They will then need to have it inspected before the road is reopened.
- Employee – currently Mike is down 4
- Mowing – The summer help position is posted, and discussion of max hourly rate was had. Wayne will no longer be mowing at Boswell so summer help might need to pick up that location as well.

Jason Fisher – DHS / EMA Director

- Mitigation plan/agreement grant – Jacob has reviewed it and was ok with it, he now needs board's approval to proceed. He would like to start in May and the contract can be extended to next year. Fields asked if the thresholds were the same, yes, they are. It was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried
- Proclamation – Jason presented a proclamation for National Telecommunication week, that was read by Commissioner Berry. The week of April 14th-20th will be recognized as such with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.
- Claims – Commissioner Freeland asked if he was still working on these, yes. Insurance came through on one and nothing has been heard from the individual one.
- County Home – waiting on quote for all of the wiring, cause when the mainstream installation was done not everything was reconnected correctly. There was one camera that was not working but that has been fixed and access restored.

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- Power upgrades – J&K upgrade quote and will discuss it with the 911 board 6343.57 to upgrade the power to 250Watts to Dispatch, Fire, EMS, EMA and sirens. Currently we are at 100 watts. In 911 meeting minutes, it was discussed that they would not move forward until the license was achieved. Jason added that he did pick up the full cost of \$13,000 migration for the Spillman upgrade, but they will need to refer to those minutes to know where this costs will be paid from.

John Cox – Sheriff / Fair board

- Academy – Deputy Marsh is graduating this Friday
- Jail – full (36 inmates)
- Repairs – L&D Electric is working on some issues.
- Chairs – 24/7 chairs were ordered, and he gave 2 to dispatch
- Fleet – Deputy Marsh's truck has an electrical problem (Durango) and will not stop. Was towed to Alsop's
- Jail/Sheriff – On road deputies will be at full staff by next week. Losing a CO for another opportunity and will bring him to being down 3 CO's
- ❖ Fair board – they are getting some funding from donors which are up this year. BP Wind and Vestas are two of the top donors.
- ❖ Matt Hull is close to finishing up the tile project for them so the drainage issue will be resolved, and he has reached out to the State Highway to clean out the ditch
- ❖ Board meeting with 4H Council – they will announce the donor program to the community (\$500 / \$1500 / \$2500)
- ❖ Building – the footers have been poured. Commissioner Freeland spoke about NIPSCO and the application for 3 Phase to be brought across the road. Sheriff Cox and Auditor Freeland will work on the application for NIPSCO and list Commissioner, Mike Freeland as the County contact. Discussed the total cost of project again, it is still over budget. He will be placing an article in the Benton Review as well to get the word out.
- Freezer – The case is with the state police but more than likely has stalled. Sheriff Cox will reach out to his contact.
- Vehicle – still using the Economic Development vehicle and until Deputy Marsh's is returned, they will need to continue utilizing it.

Business:

Commissioner Berry will be establishing a county account with IMI to keep the accounts separate and provide more transparency

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.

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Commissioner Berry spoke about the vacant VSO position and potential applicants

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

The RUA with Bio Town was discussed which will include Freeland Dairy, Seven Hills and Ambia. They have provided the routes. A signature page was created. Once approved and signed it will be sent to Bio Town for their signature.

Commissioner Berry presented a letter addressed to Recycling, EMA, County Nurse and the Extension office regarding the upcoming primary election and the need for early closure on Monday, May 6th, 2024, to secure the polling location. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. The board directed Auditor Freland to send the letter to the departments listed above.

The RUA with Bio Town was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freland and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry said that BP would like to have an executive session. The board was in full agreement that they should come into a public meeting to discuss. Commissioner Berry said that he will also let them know that the seismic testing results should also be shared publicly per the boards agreement. Commissioner Fields asked if they had done any well checks, not that the board was aware of.

Commissioner Berry stated that the County Nurse and him were discussing the expansion of the office and she had a thought of switching side with extension in order to save money on the office remodel. Commissioner Berry said that with the extension office having difficulty keeping the educator position filled. Commissioner Fields and Commissioner Freland stated that they agree with that completely.

Commissioner Berry said that he is still having issues with AEP and Invenergy on the release. Attorney Ahler and him will be attending a meeting with them next week. He stated that they do not want to sign the MOU, he proposes that they (on Fowler Ridge 2) each have to create an escrow account for 1 million each. They discussed the letter of credit not being received and how the delivery companies do not put down the correct name before leaving and marking it as delivered. A motion to not accept the letter of credit from Invenergy and that both companies will need to obtain an escrow account at one million each was made by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

A joint board meeting with the County Council was held to discuss the possibility of reestablishing the cumulative jail fund.

Sheriff Cox started off by saying that they recently had a meeting with RQAW regarding the feasibility study and had representatives from both boards; Commissioner, Mike Freland and Councilman, Brent Cox were in attendance. He went on to discuss the need to increase the revenue that is placed into the cumulative jail fund to cover the costs of repairs as well as annual maintenance.

Auditor Freland shared a couple of options; eliminate the cumulative jail rate altogether and increase the cumulative capital development fund, raise the rate for cum jail to ensure the jail has some revenue each year or raise both. CCD (Cumulative Capital Development) rate is not a controlled levy fund.

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After further discussion by the County Council and the Board of Commissioners on how to move forward. There was discussion of looking into a bond or loan option if needed in the future. After further discussion it was determined that the cumulative jail fund rate would be increased from 0.0024 to 0.0048 and no other fund rates were changed with a motion by Councilman, Brent Cox, seconded by Councilman, Robert Sloniger and motion carried

The board temporarily closed to hold the Drainage Board meeting at 9:59 am, then reopened at 10:45 am

Charles Sinn – Business owner (Oxford)

He wanted to come back before the board to see if he needed to reapply for his reclassification because he believed he filled in the original paperwork incorrectly. In the front building he wants it as business retail, but the paperwork seems it was a total rezone to general business and that is not what they are wanting to do that. He stated that he wanted a variance only, not a rezone it. Commissioner Freeland said that the map shows the entire property. Commissioner Berry said that it is listed as 7.49 acres. He said that a general business classification would work but the big building he would like it to be left as industrial. After some discussion Commissioner Freeland stated that he would in fact have to reapply and it would have to be split and said that he would need to confirm all of this with the APC and BZA attorney. He then asked Samantha Smith to reach out to the attorney and then stated they would table the discussion further until they hear back from her.

Arni Muller, Brian Brown & Harold Holdeman – Taxpayers

They wanted to come before the board to give their favorable recommendation for Rodney Wealing as the new VSO for Benton County. Arni told the Commissioners they have done a great job with the position in the past and would like them to know they strongly urge them to appoint Rodney. They (small group of veterans) met with and voted on their support for him after speaking with him. He provided a recap of Mr. Wealing background. Harold said that Memorial Day is coming up fast and feels the board needs to fill that position quickly. He comes today as a Chaplin for the American Legion. Arni and Brian will be involved in the Memorial Day celebration, unless an appointment is made. Commissioner Freeland thanked them and said that they have other applicants they are going to review as well.

Brian talked about the position and different forms that with Rodney service history he would have a good idea of which ones and how to complete them. The individual must be good with the public and public relations. Brian then discussed the VSR online course that has to be taken. Auditor Freeland stated that the position requires the individual to become accredited through that class and then they are to travel to Indianapolis or Danville to receive their CAT card.

The board thanked them for coming in and that said they would take their comments into consideration.

Business continued:

Wildman application was presented (new cleaning product company) for signature. Commissioner, Bryan Berry signed that it was approved. They have informed Darren that they will be in about 2-3 weeks to install their dispensers.

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Carole Hoff – Treasurer

She said that she has received over 1.1 million dollars in tax payments today from wind farms. Generally, this would go into FSB (Fowler State Bank) however FMB (Farmers & Merchant Bank) reached out because they are looking for money. They offered 5% for 1 year and with FSB they are at 5.01% and Trust is currently at 5.36% She went on to say that funds are somewhat equally distributed, but the rates are comparable as well.

Commissioner Freeland asked what the difference would be from the 5.36% versus the 5% in that year. Carole stated that she had not calculated that figure. Commissioner Berry asked if FMB was wanting a CD, yes, they are for 1 year. Commissioner Freeland said that he did not have a problem using a local bank. Commissioner Fields agreed. Auditor Freeland asked if that was a motion, yes. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to place the funds in Farmers & Merchants Bank as a CD, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Business continued:

The credit card policy will be revised and reviewed by the county attorney.

Auditor Freeland reported that upon their request she looked at the when the sheriff was granted his own credit card. She added that if the board did determine to allow him to keep the card, she would like for them to consider raising his credit limit so that card could be utilized when traveling/transporting inmates. She will place that on the next agenda.

Auditor Freeland asked if there had been any determination on where they planned on paying the Stanley Steemer invoices and if they knew when they would be on site. Commissioner Freeland Commissioner Berry said that he thought it was decided to pay it from the undistributed/budgeted funds and if not, that is where it should be paid from.

All agreements with former employees have been sent to Attorney Ahler so he can send out notices to them.

ARPA balances were reviewed, and Auditor Freeland asked the board if they were ok with her moving forward with the report for the April 30th report update.

Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to pay the Stanley Steemer invoices once received out of the ARPA undistributed/budgeted funds, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Latisha Provo – Economic Development

The group talked about the READI grants, they discussed an email regarding Childcare and the matching funds. Commissioner Berry said that he thought that the county had already secured those funds. Latisha stated that she has spoken with various people, and they state the county does not owe anything and the amounts are READI dollars, she is trying to find out if they are reimbursable or what they mean by that. When the county originally agreed to the grant Purdue and Lilly were not part of it.

There is one childcare applicant in Benton County, but they need a fence, they want to use the grant dollars for the fencing. Commissioner Berry said that he needs a better explanation on the match funds that have already been paid and is not happy with IEDC. The county agreed that \$75,000 and now they are saying that is more and that isn't right. Latisha said that Right Steps are also very upset with how it

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has been going. They discussed ORCA and the Oxford school project, the Childcare project and Broadband projects further and what the next steps are, and applications Latisha has received. Commissioner Berry said that he would still like an explanation from the IEDC because the story is different depending on who you reach.

Latisha discussed that she has received some questions and how hard it is for Mainstream to run fiber off of their lines, expansion abilities for businesses and how someone would be able to tie into that. Commissioner Freeland said that they need to call Mainstream and get their names and/or businesses on the list. The county will not pay for it to be run, and the wireless is up.

Business continued:

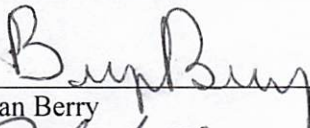
Commissioner Berry spoke about AES who bought out Hoosier Wind and he is still waiting on more reports before they will sign the decommissioning.

The board asked about time clock edits and which department(s) are sent in the most. That department was discussed, and overtime used to date. The employees are frustrated and have been advised to documentation and to reach out to the board is required.

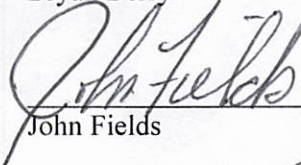
Commissioner Fields asked if the dumpster contract has been resolved. Auditor Freeland said that Attorney Ahler is going to send them a letter.

Commissioner, Bryan Berry wanted the minutes to reflect that the request by the Treasurer was done in a public meeting, not a board of finance meeting. He went on to explain where the funds are placed and are at the determination of the Treasurer and the Board of Commissioners just approve which banks.

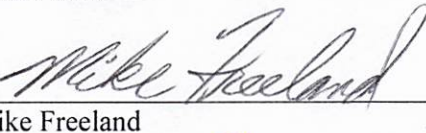
With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried



Bryan Berry



John Fields



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor