

# Benton County Commissioner Meeting

January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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, Steve Cox, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and County Auditor, Audrey Freeland

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Walt Wilson, Scott Ruppel, Paul Jackson, Gail Lange, Jeanna Pitstick, Ron Shoup, Lucas Darling, Angie Taylor, Jason Fisher, Carole Hoff, Jim Lawinger, Marci Maris and Dave Fisher

## Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Cutting brush
- Bridges – Mike got bids for #36 & #48. Commissioner Cox added that it was located 600 E and 400 N.

	<b>Bridge 36</b>	<b>Bridge 48</b>
Concrete	\$130,953.00	\$199,919.00
Steel decking	\$156,182.00	\$202,361.00

Commissioner Cox stated that steel is better. Commissioner Berry asked how long the bids were good for, 60 days. He then asked the board if they wanted to replace them both this year. Commissioner Cox said yes if we have the funds. Commissioner Berry said how about one this year and then next year look at the other one, Mike Budreau agreed. The board was in agreement that they should look at replacing bridge #36 this year but will table until Mike can get additional bids.

- Drag – sent an invoice
- Bridge #32 – Nick sent invoice and payment will go out 02/01/2022
- 100 S – started grinding and will throw down some stone today
- Plows – they are working on the plows so they are all ready to go
- ~~max~~ <sup>mocks</sup> – Commissioner Cox asked for an update. It will be around March before they have anything

## Scott Ruppel – Chamber of Commerce

Scott is here on behalf of the chamber asking for funding assistance for a phone app for what's up 24/7 website for community connection. They are asking 10 communities to help fund the cost which is \$10,000 (lifetime commitment). Commissioner Berry asked if that is something that economic developer does now, they only do the website not the phone app. Commissioner Berry asked how much they are seeking from the county. Commissioner Berry asked if he was going to go to the towns also. Scott said that he will be asking whoever he can. Commissioner, Steve Cox motioned to approve \$2500.00 from 5 year edit for now while he tries to obtain additional funding, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

## Jeanna Pitstick -

Jeanna introduced herself and stated that after she was let go as the assistant prosecutor attorney she realized she had a few items at her home she would like on record that she returned them. They included; a laptop, 2 docking stations, and her badge. She is also here today to ask the board for

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permission to purchase her firearm. She went on to state that she has done extensive training at Ed Sanows multiple time with this weapon and would like the opportunity to keep it. Commissioner, Steve Cox motioned to approve the purchase of her firearm, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried. Commissioner Berry asked what was done previously for others. Auditor Freeland stated that they have paid purchase price. Jeanna thanked the board.

**Business:**

**Commissioner Berry then asked everyone to take a moment of silence in honor of Dennis Goodman, who served as the Veterans Service Officer for Benton County before his passing.**

Commissioner Cox asked if that position needed to be advertised. Auditor Freeland stated that it is an appointed position so it is not required and knows of two individuals have expressed interest in the position. Paul Griner who retired from the navy and Rita Schutter who is retired from the air force. Commissioner Berry asked if there was anything pressing for the VSO office at this time. Auditor Freeland said that she has forwarded the phone to her at this time and some of the forms downloaded to her computer to assist as best she can until they fill the position. Commissioner Freeland will reach out to Paul and Commissioner Cox will reach out to Rita and get interviews scheduled for next week.

The January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 regular scheduled meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Pay at once claims were reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Steve Cox, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, and motion carried.

Payroll was approved as presented. They were approved with a motion by Commissioner, Steve Cox, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, and motion carried.

The County Home report was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, second by Commissioner, Steve Cox and motion carried.

**Jason Fisher – DHS / EMA Director**

- Dispatch – the remodel and move might occur by the end of the month
- Code Red – subscription for \$4200 out of a grant. Asking for permission to pay due to amount. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to approve, second by Commissioner, Steve Cox and motion carried
- Total runs – 2021 EMS ended with 1452 runs
- Medic 2 – still in the shop and they do not know what is wrong. It is at Mike Razors and the key does not activate anything. It should be a warranty issue.
- Commissioner Berry asked if they got the ceiling issue fixed since it is 1 inch more than it should be for the air handling units, yes.
- Door – outside door from Hayley’s we do not have a deliver date.
- Antenna - Commissioner Berry asked if they got the foot pedal and the mic during the warmer temps. Yes but it did not sound any better but will wait a couple more days and if it is not improved they will have to send a climber up. They might have to use E-dispatch until it is resolved.
- Lawsuit – Jacob will be working on a response and will get with Jason to verify

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- Cat 5 line – Commissioner Berry said that Terry needs to run the line at EMS and Courthouse for the security officer so he will reach out again.

**Business continued:**

The board signed three appointed official contracts for the 2022 appointments.

The amended capital improvement plan was presented and reviewed. With a motion by Commissioner, Steve Cox, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and the plan was approved.

**Paul Jackson – Angie Taylor – Economic Development**

Paul introduced Angie as his replacement and the board welcomed Angie. Angie was notified that she will serve as the Commissioners KIRPC appointment for 2022.

**Business continued:**

Commissioner Berry stated that with all the problems the county has had with AT&T he would like to open a Ting account so they can move forward with getting cell phones for Angie (Econ. Dev) and then also the county home on call phone. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to approve, second by Commissioner, Steve Cox and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry said that in order for the Mainstream broadband fee to be reimbursed to the county they will need a resolution signed and approved. It will be \$5 per customer paid back to the county. Commissioner, Steve Cox motioned to approve the resolution to be created, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried. Paul will send Jacob the contract. Commissioner Berry said that mainstream has been up to Earl Park and they have all of the casing for the fiber in town ran.

Commissioner Berry said that the Judge would like to see Dwayne moved down to the handicapped entrance by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. There was a discussion on future projects and remodeling. Auditor Freeland will get something sent to the Benton Review and advertise it on social media. The commissioners will ask Mike Budreau to remove the employee parking sign from the parking lot and mark it as public parking.

**The Commissioners then temporarily closed their meeting for the Annual Finance Board meeting at 8:45 a.m.**

**Carole Hoff – Finance Board Secretary**

Commissioner, Bryan Berry motioned to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, second by Commissioner, Steve Cox and motion carried.

Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to retain the officers as they stand, second by Commissioner, Steve Cox and motion carried. The officers of the Finance Board will be as follows for the 2022 year;

1. President – Steve Cox
2. Vice President – Bryan Berry
3. Secretary - Carole Hoff
- 4.

Carole passed out folders and informed the board what they would find and stated that rates are not good right now. The full minutes will be available by the Secretary of the Board of Finance Committee,

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Carole did request for comp time approval for Deputy, Kate Daily for May collections. The request was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

**The Commissioners closed the annual finance board meeting and reopened their meeting at 8:46**

**Jim Lawinger – Ambia Fire**

Jim came before the board to inform them that their safety equipment is not in compliance. They are receiving a grant from the foundation to assist with funding to bring them to compliant status and are requesting assistance from the county for the difference. The foundation grant is for \$10,000 and the Ambia Fire can match \$10,000 which leaves them short by about \$30,000. Jim stated that they are unable to apply for grants right now due to reports not being filed, which is being corrected at this time. Commissioner, Steve Cox motions to approve up to \$30,000 out of the public safety fund to Ambia Fire, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

**Business continued:**

Auditor Freeland brought the 2022 Commissioner Appointment list that has been approved to date but it was tabled until the Veterans officer is appointed before signing.

Commissioner Berry asked Auditor Freeland to explain the snow removal item on the agenda. Auditor Freeland stated that previously they had discussed with the custodian about having someone assist her with snow and ice removal but since it was her husband it would need to be a second appointment due to the nepotism law. Auditor Freeland stated that they can either do a part time (as needed) position or a contracted service agreement. After further discussion, Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to offer Dan Ford a part time position at \$15 an hour, second by Commissioner, Steve Cox and motion carried.

**Marci Maris – Chief Probation officer / Child Protection Team**

Marci came before the board today to request their approval and appointment of Jacob Kuckartz to the child protection team. Jake currently serves as the only administrator at prairie crossing and has served on the team for many years. Commissioner, Steve Cox motioned for the official appointment of Jacob Kuckartz, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

**Business continued:**

Commissioner Berry asked about the ARPA grant updates. Auditor Freeland stated that she removed it because she needs to read the final rule and find where the “additional flexibility” is and if it will cover some of the areas they were wanting to possibly fund. Once she reviews it she will send it over to Jacob for review.

Auditor Freeland then presented the feasible study agreement that was previously approved for signing.

Commissioner Berry spoke briefly about Mike Stimson (Fastlane) and how they currently provide the internet to the county. Since there has been on going issues with mainstream that they should consider renewing with Fastlane, they have customers here and are willing to stay. Commissioner Freeland said


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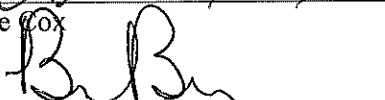
as long as they can keep the speed up he is ok with that. Commissioner Berry said that there is also a contract with Caesar (will be up in 2023) so they will review that one in October. A new contract will be drafted with Fastlane for 2 years with a motion by Commissioner, Steve Cox, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.


Auditor Freeland then asked about a couple of claims that were presented; one from the county home and one from the sheriff. Per the who to contact sheet they are not listed. Commissioner Berry stated that the one for the county home payable to Edwards Royal Heating and Cooling is actually Aaron Fisher so that one is ok to be processed. Commissioner Berry said to deny claim until signed service agreement by the board is presented. Attorney Ahler gave his advisement on the matter as the Commissioners are the contractual body. Commissioner, Bryan Berry motioned to approve the Edwards Royal claim but to deny the other to Davis Solutions, second by Commissioner, Steve Cox and motion carried.

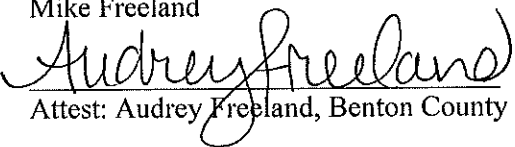
Attorney Ahler gave a brief recap on the two pending lawsuits with the county. The Keener case will have a response sent within the 5 days and the Daugherty case is still pending.

**With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:39 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Steve Cox, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, motion carried**

  
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Steve Cox

  
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Bryan Berry

  
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Mike Freeland

  
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Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor