

Benton County Commissioner Meeting August 20th, 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, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and Auditor, Audrey Freeland.

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Colin Sullivan, Ron Shoup, Steve Wallpe, Dale Budreau, Latisha Provo, Gail Lange, Daniel Caswell, Leslie Fisher, Chrissie McCutcheon, Adriana Arredondo, Jon Charlesworth, John Gick, Greg Vogel, John Cox, Dennis Sondgeroth, Tyler Flook and Don Carless

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Patching – they are out working on this, and they have been out to Earl Park and Mike has reached out to a vendor for multi-pipe quotes.
- Detour – Mike is ok with the detour.
- Annex - He did not want them to trench through the new chip and seal
- 300 S – have caught more trucks running on the road
- Drag – building has begun but 2 months out
- Roads – Berry asked him to look at 700 N W of St Rd 71
- Raub – this is done
- Pipe – old pipe and dips are being reviewed/fixed.
- Brush – will do a control burn at the site when able
- 500 E – this pipe has been replaced. They did not know but it was encased in cement, so the road is raised a little bit.
- Recycling – New hire starts Thursday

Colin Sullivan – BF&S

Came to talk about Bridge 125 design agreement, which is the federal aid bridge that the county was awarded. This is an 80/20 grant. Taking less of the right of ways, the flood way is a little larger than anticipated so after working with their environmental team they will remove some of the trees on the north end. They will add trees back in, but it did increase some of the costs but not by much. They are working with INDOT on it as well. They are going to do a hydraulic analysis to determine what is needed for the flood plain. They might apply for a FEMA map of revision but will keep them updated on all of that.

The cost will be the county's 20% match and some hourly expenses. They will give an updated cost estimate after 1 year of completion. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to accept the agreement as presented, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Colin will be back for the small structures during the September 4th meeting.

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John Cox - Sheriff

- Staffing – shared surrounding area wages for jailers and deputies. He would like to request 2 jailers and 1 additional deputy for road traffic and detective. He also spoke about the public safety tax – he would like to revisit this and move forward and add additional tax to help offset his budget. Commissioner Berry said that the Council would have to approve any changes. Commissioner Freeland asked if he had asked the prosecutor about cost sharing the position, no but he plans too. Berry then asked about a vehicle, he plans to repurpose the current unassigned truck instead of selling it. The sheriff added that it would also not be fully outfitted. Commissioner Berry was not in favor of the additional position. Commissioner Freeland shared that he is ok with him moving forward but he does not want the burden to fall on the taxpayers. Commissioner Berry asked if there was a cost sharing agreement who would the individual (if position was approved) report too. The sheriff stated that they would report directly to him.
- Qualifications – got the annual certifications almost complete. A couple left but should finish those soon and thanked the Fowler PD and the Town for allowing them to join
- Fair – Increased attendance. Working on the new Horse and Pony arena. Next year they are looking at the possibility of having a circus since the cost of a carnival is not attainable. They are working on the berm, cleaning up and have received some road grindings to finish out the emergency lane. He is working on donations for the new building. He gave a brief update on the status of the build.
- Animal control – Commissioner Berry asked if he had spoken with the towns, some have said that they have bought cages. The sheriff said that they have a portable cage for temporary holding. He will get with the towns and see what they can put together.
- Sheriff sale – still in process and the sale will occur in November (Boswell school)
- Vehicle – Commissioner Freeland suggested talking to Matt Hoaks to see what he can do for him. Commissioner Berry said that it could save some money if he is able. The sheriff said that you have to pretty much gut the vehicle for the wiring, and it is a big undertaking. He added that Matt has just become his 4th reserve deputies.

Leslie Fisher – Soil & Water

The fair pond was discussed and there were 8 fish caught during the fishing derby and she presented a restocking quote from the Warren County fish sale. It was last done in 2018; it was going to be done in 2023, but the fish sale did not correlate with their timeline. Commissioner Berry asked if they understand it will take time to rejuvenate, yes, they do. The board is ok with it but would like to see numbers for the costs. It was discussed that maybe they should consider doing this every 2-3 years. The board asked her to get some numbers together and to come back to the September 4th meeting. Commissioner Berry and Freeland also feel that they should get flat head minnows instead of the food. Commissioner Berry added to make sure that they are sterile.

Leslie then moved forward to discuss the proposed park project and what their ask of the county will be. On July 17th they signed the purchase agreement, and the surveyor was just signed last week. She said that obstacle #1 is to be working on all of the grants to secure the purchase of

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the property. She is hoping to have a good foundation for the project in the next couple of weeks. She has identified a couple of 501C3 to use as a pass through. Friends of the Big Pine is one of the groups being considered. She is also meeting with the Community Foundation who has not been a pass-through agency. They have some entities that are willing to help with the environmental aspects. The group then reviewed the project phases. She stated it is an investment and it will be a long-term project and not everything will happen as fast as they may want too.

She is working on federal grants and some of it is lack of recreation green space which is what they hope will help push them over. There are many possible management(s) and said that it will be a public use site but may start off restricted. It will be for conservation, educational and public use.

The ask of the county is in terms of access, specifically the access lane. Commissioner Berry asked who will own it. Leslie replied that it will be owned by the Benton County Soil & Water Conservation district. Commissioner Freeland said so it will be removed from the tax base, yes that is correct. He said that to him is a negative for him and then asked what the loss of taxes would be. He asked if the BCSWD will also then maintain the property, yes, they will. There is a gentleman who has reached out and expressed an interest in helping with that. Commissioner Berry asked how long of a lane it would be, she was unsure. Berry said that his biggest concern is the liability of the county if they build the road. Commissioner Freeland said that they could install a culvert and go back 25 ft from the center of the road, beyond that the county does not own that property. Commissioner Berry said that they could help with some gravel to the access point. Leslie said that she is working to secure the funds by December 31st, 2024. If the county is willing to do this, she will convert the materials into a dollar figure to offset the match. The board asked her to get some additional information and figures. The county does not want to own it, and it would be a one-time assistance. She will provide an update at the next meeting.

Greg Vogel – Taxpayer

Mr. Vogel wanted to discuss the multi-family housing he is trying to build. He said that he has been working with the Town and has a completed survey. He is here to discuss two alleys that are not vacated. He would like to get the permits started but needs the county's help to get metal stakes where the drainage tile is. Without variance he has to be 75 feet from the drain tile. Commissioner Freeland said that the tile sits on the Town's property, the county put it in and the Town paid for it. Mr. Vogel then asked if the county would help him locate the minutes to show when it was installed, he was directed to the Surveyor's office. He said they were not able to help him with that. He has hired someone to come in and look as well but he has not checked the Town of Boswell's minutes.

Mr. Vogel has spoken with a liaison from Mr. Baird's office who told him that counties and towns have purchased land to build elderly living quarters and he is ready to sell. He asked if the county was willing to donate gravel to get the back lots and get the alleys open. Commissioner Freeland said that he is going to have to get permission from the Town for that.

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He asked for a contact on who to email to get the ball rolling on this, Auditor Freeland presented him with a card.

He said that Mr. Daugherty gave permission for him to speak on his behalf regarding the track. He stated that it needs dirt and would ask that the county to haul some in. He is going to ask the Town if they get the alleyways open then maybe that dirt could be used as well.

He would like for the county to think about the county hauling the dirt to the track.

Business:

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

Pay at once Claims were presented and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Payroll was presented and then approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

The grant of easement was briefly discussed and tabled

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

Denny Sondgeroth – Taxpayer

He came to ask about the gas line coming through. He said that once a pipeline is installed it is very difficult to put drainage over it. He proposed that the mains are put over the pipe. The depth of the pipes were discussed, and he was told that they would have to relocate their tiles. Commissioner Berry said that they told him that they had to locate every county main, and that the landowners will have to have that discussion with them as well. Mr. Stevens asked for a list for all of the landowners, the board told him that they will have to get that list from Center Pointe.

The regular scheduled meeting temporarily closed at 9:31 a.m. for the drainage board meeting. The Board of Commissioners reopened their regular meeting at 10:15 a.m. to discuss the following.

Don Careless – Epic

Don provided the commissioners with a financial summary report for the year to move forward with open enrollment strategies. It was discussed that the commissioners would renew the counties policy, Commissioner Freeland motioned to renew and Commissioner Berry seconded, motion carried.

Don discussed the pharmacy plan that we currently have with Citizen RX, Don stated that switching plans we would get back a bigger reimbursement for the year with Maxor,

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Commissioner Freeland motioned to switch the prescription plan to Maxor Commissioner Berry seconded, motion carried.

Commissioner Berry stated to let the records show that the county would eat any increases on premiums, Commissioner Berry motioned, and Commissioner Freeland seconded, motion carried.

Jason Fisher – EMS – DHS

Jason talked about the tower that runs EMS & Dispatch, he brought in a quote, because they are having issues with it. Jason stated that he is not sure what is wrong with it but J&K needs to look at it to figure it out.

Commissioner Berry stated after reviewing the quote that he has an antenna that is brand new at his shop that is a backup. The county can have it to cut the cost on the repair if need be. Jason said he would check with J&K to see if it will work. Commissioner Berry stated they would figure out what account it will be paid out of at the September 4th meeting. Commissioner Freeland said to go ahead and get the ball rolling on the repairs.

Jason talked about the 911 budget; Kylee wanted to add 2 more dispatchers. Jason wanted to ask for the commissioner's approval to do so, before budgets. Commissioner Freeland motioned to approve 2 new full time dispatcher positions, Commissioner Berry seconded, motion carried. Commissioner Berry did ask that after council approves the positions to come back to get full approval on the positions.

Jason requested out of state travel for the Motorola User Training Conference for him and Rachel. Commissioner Freeland motioned to approve, Commissioner Berry seconded, motion carried.

The J&K siren quote was tabled

Latisha Provo – Economic Developer

Latisha presented the GLPTC Resolution – it was approved at the last meeting just needed it signed.

Latisha presented the IFF Childcare Feasibility, Commissioner Freeland motion to approve, Commissioner Berry seconded, motion carried.

Latisha asked the commissioners about the NIPSCO press release, Commissioner Berry asked her to reach out to NextEra, but he is okay with moving forward.

Commissioner Berry asked Latisha if she had everything in order for READI 2, she stated yes.

Business Continued

Commissioner Berry discussed the decommissioning of the Benton County Wind Farm Escrow, Commissioner Freeland motioned to sign the Escrow Agreement, Commissioner Berry 2nd, motion carried.

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Attorney Ahler talked with BioTown, he has sent a revised Road Use Agreement. Attorney Ahler stated that he had an email from Cliff Robinson, he is wanting to know about the promissory note between Oxford and the County, for the monies for their water project. Attorney Ahler said he needs a copy of it.

Commissioner Berry talked about Metrocom. Commissioner Berry stated that he would like them to have to use the state highways instead of county. Commissioner Berry made a motion that Metrocom can only use the State Highways for their work, Commissioner Freeland seconded, motion carried.

Commissioner Freeland made a motion to approve the reimbursement ordinance, Commissioner Berry seconded, motion carried.

Deputy Auditor Beth Budreau presented an incident response plan from the county's IT department. Commissioner Freeland motioned to approve, Commissioner Berry seconded, motion carried.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:39 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, motion carried.



Bryan Berry


John Fields



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor



Attest: Beth Budreau, Benton County Chief Deputy Auditor