

## **Benton County Commissioners Meeting July 18th, 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, Mike Freeland, John Fields, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and County Chief Deputy Auditor, Beth Budreau.

Others in attendance were: Gail Lang, Angie Taylor, Stacey Quick, Jason Fisher, Sam Smith, Dave Fisher, Sue Murphy, Ron Shoup, Mike Budreau and Annette Zupin.

### **Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor**

- Finished with chip and seal.
- Getting oil today to start patching again. There are several roads that need patching.
- Pipes that need done.
- Commissioner Berry asked if Mike was able to talk to Jeff Albertson. Mike said yes, he was going to go look at the truck today and hook it up to their trailer and see what it's like. Commissioner Freeland made a motion that if Mike likes the truck to go ahead and get it for \$17,300 from J&L Trucking, seconded by Commissioner Fields motion passed.
- Mike plans on picking up some of the stone that the windmill company put down. He said by next week they should be done with the cranes. He will use the gravel to cap some of the roads that they use.
- Commissioner Berry asked about 100 W if it was any better, Mike said they didn't maintain it, but he sent guys down to drag it. But he didn't want to put a bunch of stone down because it would just get mashed down. Mike said that he was waiting for them to get done before doing anything.
- Mike said the new building is done; he wants to make the lane bigger out front. He is probably going to have to take out a couple of trees and build a bigger ramp to get in and out. One tree is dead, but one is not. Commissioner Berry said okay do whatever you think needs done.
- 400 E bridge – Nick said it won't be done until Fall.
- Bridge Inspections – A couple of setbacks – Mike said that they have gone out and made adjustments at a couple of bridges. They just haven't sent the full inspections back. He is looking for the inspections of bridge 35.
- Commissioner Berry asked Mike to reach out to Jeremy Davis to let him know that he got the bid at recycling, he is to start the foundation.

### **Jason Fisher – EMS/EMA/DHS**

- Jason sent an energy grant to Jacob to check it out, Jacob started he is okay with it.
- Jason said that they were here on the 13<sup>th</sup> and installed the lightening protection.
- Mellott Fire Dept in Fountain County bought a used ambulance, when they bought it they didn't know that they were getting the striker power load cot. It has a really new version of the cot. They wanted to know if EMS was interested in buying it for \$10,000. It is a much newer version than what they have now. Jason wanted the commissioner's thoughts on it. Bryan asked what they would use it for. Jason said that if the cot is truly

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a newer version, then it would go in the front-line truck and then all the trucks will have power loading cots. Jason said he or Devers would go down and look at it before purchasing it. Bryan said to find out the details on it first before making any decisions. Jason said he isn't going to agree on anything until they look at it.

- Ambulance update – The doors finally came in for the one getting repaired. It is getting painted now, they will put the exterior parts on it next week. Insurance is paying for it, we just have to pay the deductible. The other ambulance is done, it is just waiting to be transported here to have the wires and stuff put in it for the radio. It will then be sent to Andrew for the graphics.
- With the credit for School of EMS, Jason said they have a class starting in a couple of weeks and he reached out to his staff to see if anyone would be interested in taking paramedic's class. There are two employees that would be interested in going, Jason said he has a ½ credit for one tuition. Jason didn't know if that was something the commissioners would be interested in paying the tuition. Bryan asked how many paramedics we are down. Jason said officially 1 has put in their resignation and then the other has not done his final testing yet. Bryan said if we have two employees that want to take the class then he is fine with that. Jason asked Jacob to double check our tuition agreements to make sure they are up to date. Jason said that there is a little bit of a process with the applications for the class and both employees have started on that.
- Deno's came and gave quotes on cabinets for hallway. He also wanted to add cabinets in an area in dispatch but couldn't get a quote for them before she left. It said the cabinets would be the same and the space would be the same also maybe a little smaller.
- Jason asked for permission to use Matt to clean out the IT room, Commissioners are fine with that.
- Jason would like to buy 2 radios – he's kind of waiting on J&K to give him more options but brought in a quote for just the head and one radio. Bryan told Jason to figure out what he wants to do and figure out how much money he has, and then how much the commissioners will have to spend. Bryan said he wants to wait until Audrey gets back before they spend anymore money because he wants to go over fund/account balances with her to see where they are at. Cabinets, radios & cot are tabled until next meeting.

### **Angie Taylor – Economic Development**

Angie stated Clay Andrews will be getting ahold of Bryan soon, the letter of intent for Readi 2.0 has been signed by Warren County. At the last meeting they had, there was a little pushback from Scott about where they plan to go with 2.0 until everyone signed the letter of intent. The letter of intent is not a true commitment, it is just stating that we are interested in participating. It's the MOU that's going to be the commitment. Angie said Ben is sending her a sample of things that he has added to it, as the rural part of the region has a little more say in how it is run. Angie asked the commissioners about doing a letter of intent for Readi 2.0. It was approved with a motion by Commissioner Berry, seconded by Commissioner Freeland, motion carried.

### **Stacey Quick – Extension**

Stacey came in to let the commissioners know that the Benton County Fair went well. She also wanted to let them know that as if yesterday Monday July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the extension offices,

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office manager was terminated. So, they will have an opening, it will be posted internally first for 5 days and then externally.

### **Sam Smith – Drainage Board Minutes**

Sam brought in drainage board minutes that Randy needs signed for the Iroquois Meeting. – Commissioner Berry asked Attorney Ahler about approving drainage board minutes during a commissioners meeting. Attorney Ahler said no that it would have to be done during a drainage board meeting that is advertised. No drainage board meeting minutes were signed.

She also presented an application for Michael Gardner from a plan commissioner meeting for variance setbacks. The petition was approved with a motion by Commissioner Freeland seconded by Commissioner Fields and motion carried.

### **Annette Zupin – Benton Community School’s Superintendent**

Annette wanted to come in and introduce herself, she has officially almost been here for 2 weeks now and had their first board meeting last night – Monday July 17<sup>th</sup>. She has had 7 years of experience of being superintendent at North Judson San Pierre High School – also a rural area. Annette had spoken with Commissioner Berry the day prior to the meeting and let him know that the wind turbines are a new thing for her and any help with that she would greatly appreciate. She let the commissioners know that anything they needed from the school to just let her, or Tracy know.

### **Business:**

The Commissioner meeting minutes from 07.05.2023 were approved with a motion by Commissioner Freeland, seconded by Commissioner John Fields and motion passed.

Pay at Once claims (corrected) were approved with a motion by Commissioner Freeland, seconded by Commissioner Fields and motion carried.

Pay at Once Claims (current) were approved with a motion by Commissioner Freeland, seconded by Commissioner Fields and motion carried.

Payroll (07/14/2023) was approved as presented. It was approved with a motion by Commissioner Fields, seconded by Commissioner Freeland, motion carried.

Commissioner Berry brought up that the courthouse is going to be 150 years old next year; he was wondering if we would want to have a celebration or open house of some sort. He would like to do some sort of recognition. Commissioner Berry asked Angie to reach out to the Historical Society to see what the date is exactly.

Commissioner Berry asked Attorney Ahler to look over the road use agreement that he is going to forward him see what needs to be taken out or added.

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The Commissioners have been talking to Farm Bureau about the Carbon Sequestration. They think that its going to have a lot to do with right of ways. The last time the right of way was looked at for Benton County was in 1978, that's when it got established from a 40 foot right of way to a 50 foot right of way. Commissioner Berry asked Attorney Ahler if that's something he would want to look into, Jacob said he could do that without a problem.

Commissioner Berry said that in our WEX ordinance each developer is supposed to give us an operation maintenance report every year, and nobody has been doing it. Commissioner Berry has reached out to most of them that they need to back date them and get it done. Commissioner Berry said that he hasn't heard back, in the section that talks about operations he would like to add a \$1,000 fine a day if they don't get the report into us in a timely fashion.

Commissioner Berry talked about two meetings ago it was agreed that what the County wanted if Carbon Sequestration happened there would be a rate of \$215 per acre, Commissioner Berry was told that the language needs to be changed because we don't want to state that as a money figure. There needs to be an economic redevelopment agreement with the county before they can get their special exceptions and move forward with their carbon sequestration project, Attorney Ahler agrees that that is a good idea.

Commissioner Berry talked about the Oxford School, he was under the impression that it was being torn down. Attorney Ahler stated that there isn't a court order that actually says it has to be torn down by a certain date. There is only an unsafe building order, but they have secured the site so that it's not considered unsafe.

Commissioner Berry asked Attorney Ahler about an update with J.O.B.S., Jacob said that we got his certified mail notification and has 20 days to respond to it. If they don't respond within 20 days, then Attorney Ahler can file for default judgement.

Commissioner Berry said that he was told that the 2024 Community Impact payment is done, to help pay the 2024 taxes that we will be short on. Commissioner Berry said he hasn't seen it yet, and he's not sure when he's going to be bringing it or if it will be mailed.

Beth Budreau presented the commissioners with 2 letters to mail out to employees regarding PTO time and leave of absence. She asked the Commissioners and Attorney Ahler to look over them and the commissioners to sign if they all agreed. It was approved with a motion by Commissioner Freeland, seconded by Commissioner Fields, motion carried.

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

Chief Deputy Auditor Beth Budreau asked about the summons that was received for a property. Attorney Ahler said he entered his appearance in it, we were just named because we're the taxing authority. Attorney Ahler said the county doesn't really have a position in it, they just have to be named.

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Chief Deputy Auditor Beth Budreau brought up election budgets – She gave the commissioners a handout from a conference her and County Auditor Freeland went to that states there are portions of the election budget that are to be approved by the commissioners. Commissioner Berry wants something by the first meeting in August that shows what the wages are for election workers.

The Peterson Consulting Services Inc. – Capital Asset Reporting Services for State and Local Governments Document was approved with a motion by Commissioner Fields seconded by Commissioner Freeland and motion carried.

Jason Fisher brought in a claim for Brightspeed for dispatch. The invoice was passed due and Kylie was wanting to know if it could be a pay at once. Brightspeed claim was approved to be a pay at once with a motion by Commissioner Freeland seconded by Commissioner Fields and motion carried.

**With no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m. with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.**

  
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Bryan Berry

  
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John Fields

  
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Mike Freeland

  
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Beth Budreau

Attest: Beth Budreau, Benton County Chief Deputy Auditor