

Benton County Commissioner Meeting January 18th, 2023

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, Walt Wilson, Ron Shoup, Lucas Darling, Gail Lange, Angie Taylor, Gina Lewis, Derrek Fuehrer, Brayden Ely, Dave Fisher, John Cox, Jason Fisher, D.J. Griffith, and Samantha Smith

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Cold patch – working what they can with that
- Brush – been cutting more brush from ditches
- Roads – they caught another dump truck on the roads. Mike asked the board if he should reach out to the sheriff, yes. Commissioner Freeland said that Sheriff Cox would like to get with Mike so they can review all of the RUA's. Sheriff would like to give everyone a warning when he goes to the offices and then if they still do not adhere to it then the deputies will write tickets.
- RUA – Commissioner Berry said that he reviewed the RUA that was sent to him and Budreau and asked them to send all communication to all three board members and have updated the board information. In the RUA they are talking about a 25 year occurrence for 24 hours and to size the pipes towards that. He would like Mike to talk to Walt and see if that is big enough.
- Reith-Riley/Milestone – Mike is going to get bids because they will not do 500,000.00 blanket bonds for new bids, repairs are ok. Mike would like at the entrance (60 foot) to stay
- Ordinance – The board discussed and accepted the ordinance that after violators have been warned tickets are to be written. Sheriff Cox and Mike B. will go to the offices together and this will serve as warning. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to approve, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. Commissioner, Bryan Berry stated with corrections.
- Van – Commissioner Berry asked Mike to take the van for a drive to see if it would be sufficient for the coroner.
- Driver – Commissioner Field asked if Mike has been able to find any help, yes they have hired one
- Fuel – Mike reached out and Andy said that they do not add on trucking fees so there is hidden cost but they are not sure how the other company was able to sell it for \$1.94

Jason Fisher – DHS / EMA Director

- New hire – Jason introduced his new FT hire, D.J. Griffith.
- Tower – J&K are coming to look at everything. The electrician Jason thought he had is booked up with commercial stuff, and there is still one cable that is still on the ground from the jail to the courthouse
- Grants –
 1. Camera trailer – getting another quote
 2. U-dock trailer – this has been ordered
 3. IT Enhancements – Commissioner Berry asked if he was able to look into the dehumidifier AC units, Jason is fine with it

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4. Siren replacement – either the mitigation or HSHP will not qualify but Jason would still like to look at doing at least one a year. The board asked him to get bids. Some are about 30 years old. Commissioner Fields added that Tipp. Co. does direct wires. Freeland asked how many sirens does the county have? Each town and the school has one also, with the town of Otterbein and Fowler having two as well as the school has two. Last year, batteries were replaced in Boswell and one here in the town of Fowler
- Building – Commissioner Freeland asked if Cobb had gotten a hold of him to get the waterline insulated, the insulation has been ordered.

Gina Lewis – Recorder Deputy

Gina came before the board to request an ordinance so that none of the books in the office/vault are allowed to be destroyed even though they have been scanned. They are requested this due to some of the scans not being clear and geology searchers find the books easier.

They are also requesting to scan approximately 137 more books using the recorders perpetuation fund. Commissioner Berry asked what that would cost. Gina replied that they are still waiting on a quote back from US Imaging. Gina added that by scanning it also assures that they have a digital copy in the event of a fire.

Commissioner Freeland asked how many books were scanned last time, 115 deed books. He said that once they receive the bid to come back so they can make sure there is enough money.

Auditor Freeland asked if they were going to approve the ordinance. Berry asked if there was one created, no there is not. The board asked Gina to repeat the request for Attorney Ahler. Attorney Ahler will draft the ordinance.

John Cox – Sheriff

- AED's – Jason is helping him to acquire a couple for the jail and then will get one in each deputy vehicle if they can secure grant funding. Commissioner Berry asked if they are placed in vehicles if the deputies will have to be trained, yes they will.
- Jail – RQAW is coming back on January 30th / Commissioner Berry said that the roofing guys found problems in the ceiling, rock and debris, gutters (all plugged), roof has been temporary fixed until they are able to get the pitched roof. Once the roof is done then, Whitus will come back and then finish tuck pointing.
- Grant – received an award letter from INDHS - \$13,600 for new body worn systems it will require a \$3,400.00 match and John plans on asking the Council if they can help out with that or if there are other funds to pay that.
- Vertical Horizons – wiring nightmare but they will remove anything not needed
- Flooring – Deno's has about finished installation
- Sewer – Sheriff Cox is still waiting on Johnson to give him a quote. The current individuals doing it and he asked them to drop off their current bill and he would get it paid
- Vehicles – Cox is over the Dodge issue because he still does not have a build date. They have an order going in this Thursday and if the county is willing to purchase a second one they will give an additional discount. Commissioner Berry said that he spoke with Auditor Freeland and then

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is funding available. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to approve the second vehicle from Alsop in Kentland, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried

- Fleet – Sheriff Cox said that he will go through the rest of the inventory of vehicles so the board can see if they could be used elsewhere. As of right now there are two trucks that will be coming out of the fleet. Sheriff Cox would like one pool vehicle for inmate transports and a backup for any of his deputies if needed.
- Uniform/equipment – he is re-outfitting the deputies and while it is a slow process he is getting that done. He continues to look for grants because some of his CO's have nothing in the form of uniforms or other protective gear
- Hiring – Sheriff Cox asked the board if was ok with him looking outside of the “county” boundaries for both CO's and merit deputies. The merit board is willing to look at a map from ST Rd 24 to ST Rd 18/43. The board was in full support.
- Ambulance bills – there are a couple of old ambulance bills that were not paid and Sheriff Cox would like the boards approval to bill the inmates insurance as primary if applicable, yes that is fine. The understanding has to be though that even if they do not have coverage they are to receive the same care. Commissioner Berry asked if the county can charge inmates a lower rate, yes as long as it is the same across the board. The board will talk with Jason to get the ambulance billing rates amended to get the jail rate added.
- Commissary funds – being used to buy equipment
- Cameras – Commissioner Berry asked if he saw the email from Chuck that said that those were placed in 2015. He then asked Sheriff to look and see where exactly he is wanting to place the new ones. Sheriff Cox said until the roof is fixed he is not real concerned with doing much so that it is not wasted efforts and taxpayers money
- Extra accounts – Sheriff Cox is working on getting these all eliminated
- Fair board – at their next meeting they will do organization of office and review those responsibilities
- Fair – the fair will be held July 12-16th for 2023. He is working with Wes Richardson to review the show bill, they all need to work together but for 4H to know that it is a county fair. He does not feel there will be any issues with this. Leslie Fisher is the 4H President and feels that she will be very easy to work with. Cox continued by saying that there are events that they do want to hold other events out there.
- Project Barn updates – Commissioner Berry said there are no designs yet but they are looking at a 60X60 building and possibly putting/moving the EMS building there so there is always a presence. They are not sure if that will occur or not but just something that they are looking into
- Poles – Lyle Garrelts took care of the snapped poles, they also found more that are rotten. Sheriff Cox will work with Warren County REMC on getting those replaced. He also is going to reach out to the wind companies for donations towards the fair/fairgrounds. If they are willing to donate the fair board will make sure they have a banner or something showcasing their community efforts.
- Show arena – John would like to see if the highway could come out and do some chip and seal at least at the ends of the show arenas. Commissioner Berry asked if there were a lot of chuck holes, not holes but lots of cracks and chunks of asphalt that are lose.
- Sanction Go Karts and family night at fairgrounds – they are looking to bring this to the grounds and possibly do this in place of the derby. He would like to request help from the highway to grating the track and adding material if needed. The railroad tie wall in front of the grandstand is blowing out everywhere and that is where (if any donations are received) would be used
- Grandstands – they need work, so they are getting bids for non portable ones like previously discussed. John is also going to reach out to the state highway to see if they would be willing to donate a light and then also place a banner in their name. The fair board will look to rent a

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barrier wall. Commissioner Berry said to reach out to Goodland and see what they use for their go kart races. John has secured use of the Earl Park Festival roller for the track and a couple of farmers have volunteered to come and disc it. Commissioner Berry will forward Greg Babcock's contact information, he was heavily involved in the Goodland go kart races. John said that Brody Fox has been a big help.

Business:

The January 4th, 2023 regular scheduled meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

The pay at once claims were approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried

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

The county's cyber risk contact will remain to be Commissioner, Bryan Berry with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried

The county home report was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. Commissioner Berry asked if there was any updates on the resident the county received from the Caldwell home, she has been placed elsewhere. The board will talk with Tonya about revising the intake form for new residents. Commissioner Freeland asked if they could add to it that they need to be evaluated by a licensed physician or could they partner with Valley Oaks maybe. Auditor Freeland said that in the mental health field they are struggling to see those who have been on their waiting list. It was suggested that maybe the intake forms be sent to the Medical Director. The topic was tabled until form information could be reviewed and compiled.

The resolution to accept the property from Town of Fowler was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. Attorney Ahler advised that once it was received to just attach an exhibit A for recording purposes.

Angie Taylor – Economic Development

Angie presented a commitment letter and informed the board that she does not see how they will be able to do just go one year at a time without messing up the other counties from receiving funding. This is for the INVETS program. Commissioner Berry said that the issue is that they did not feel they wanted to participate anyway because there is no jobs here and then the housing issues. He feels that if they are committing to funding this and no one moves here they are just out of those funds. Angie said that other counties have had the same issues and with child care, she will go back and ask them more questions.

Angie said that she has had some resistance from local businesses who do not even want to provide any information towards this. Commissioner Freeland said tell them that and it could be our out. Commissioner Berry feels that we need to do it but have the ability to reevaluate each year because Tippecanoe County is going to benefit from this long before Benton County will. The board told her to add another line saying that the county will do on a year by year basis dependent on results. Commissioner Berry asked if they could reverse the amendment and just do year one for \$8,000 and then

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they will review for year 2 & 3. After further discussion, Commissioner, Bryan Berry motioned to a commitment letter to Invets/Greater Lafayette Community Economic Development Foundation for a one year at \$8,000.00 and to review annually, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Angie then spoke about the shared copies of the IEDC READI project that is ready for pre-submission, the board has not yet reviewed them yet.

Angie does have an idea that maybe another vendor should be considered for material donation or equipment regarding the fairgrounds. Commissioner Berry asked Angie to reach out to them and say unless I call you personally with a PO# they are not to sell/deliver anything on behalf of the Economic Development account.


Business continued:

The board signed the clean copies of both the 2023 Commissioner appointments and the who to contact list.


Commissioner Berry spoke about the amendments made to the capital improvement plan and explained why the county must have one in place and that it has to be reviewed every two years. One of the amendments is for a part time person to assist with the Enhanced AFR and assessments for all county assets. Commissioner, Bryan Berry then motioned to approve the amended capital improvement plan, second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry said that by statute there is to be a Board of Finance meeting in January and since that did not happen he would like to post notice of a joint meeting with the county council on January 26, 2023 and to also discuss anything else on the investing policy. In the joint meeting Commissioner Berry would like to look at hiring a financial advisor to review the investments for the county.


With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried



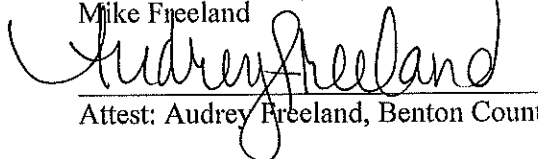
Bryan Berry



John Fields



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor