

Benton County Commissioners Meeting

November 7th, 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, John Fields, Mike Freeland, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and County Auditor, Audrey Freeland.

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Matt Hull, Carole Hoff, Gail Lange, Colin Sullivan, Josh Steiner, Stacey Drake, Nick Vitalone, Dave Fisher, Ron Shoup, Karen Hurtubise, Latisha Provo, Jason Fisher, John Cox, Daniel, Annette Zupin, Samantha Smith and Dianne Hubbard

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Cutting a lot of ditches – getting the berms off
- Gravel roads – working on
- Railroad – lots of brush clean up
- CCMG grant – they received an award of \$741,000. The board signed the resolution for the grant after approval with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.
- Stone – they are getting a stockpile
- Grinder – they will be working on some roads. Commissioner Berry asked about a couple of spots on 200, Mike said they need to look at the pipe first
- Pipes – reaching out for quotes to replace their stockpile
- Staff – applications are coming in slowly and he has held some interviews, but he is still down 3 people
- CDL – 3 have passed their CDL test

Stacey Drake and Nick Vitalone – Extension office

Stacey introduced Nick who has recently accepted the position of Benton County 4H Educator.

Stacey went on to discuss the following.

1. Internet issues – she said they are working with their IT and the problem happens to be in the cooper line. Commissioner Berry said that it is supposed to be a dedicated line from line. Stacey went on to talk about Mainstream and how Purdue could be willing to pay for all costs to get the lines run to the building. The board asked her to get more information and see what they are willing to cover expense wise.
2. Lighting – there are some fixtures above Kelly’s desk, and she reached out to Darren. There is water damage. The board spoke about the new roof that will be placed on the building soon
3. Holiday open house – working with Laura Burton there will be food and crafts
4. Annual meeting invites will be coming soon
5. HHS – she is working along with Latisha Provo and Andrea Bowman for a grant to get a community needs assessment, and the health department for cancer prevention grant. Berry asked about the grant and how recent it has to be because one has been done recently with the previous needs assessment.
6. 4H – Kelly is working on redoing the handbook

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7. A&R – Stacey said that she is very low on volunteers throughout region 9 and asked if the board might have some ideas on who might be interested.
8. Intern – Kelly would like to have a spring and summer there are funds within Cherilyn's pay line to cover expenses. Cherilyn is also paid from Purdue. As long as she has the funds and stays within her budget

Matt Hull – Building Inspector

Just stopped in to get an update on the house in Earl Park from Attorney Ahler. There is no court date yet.

Fields asked about the NIPSCO line west of Otterbein. They say that they put in for a permit and told him that it was at the clerk's office in May. NIPSCO line runs within the county right of way; 800 S just west of 1050. It is a 6-inch line, and they are afraid someone is going to hit it. Commissioner Fields will get with Mike Budreau at the highway to review further

Jason Fisher – EMA / DHS Director

- Staff – introduced Alana the newest EMT which puts him fully staffed.
- Sign on bonus - Auston passed his paramedic certification and Jason is asking for permission to pay out the sign on bonus incentive in the amount of \$3500.00. Commissioner Berry said that it is within the capital improvement plan. The board approved this to be paid. He has also signed a tuition agreement
- Billing – New World Collections is a company that Jason would like to move to. The board was ok with this change. They will go after anything over \$500 and auto accidents
- Dairy – They have assured him that the bill will be paid but it has not been paid to date. Attorney Ahler will send them a letter with a request of payment to be made in the amount of \$5,400 by November 21st, or they will move towards shutting them down from using the county roads.
- Weather radios – they passed out 195 weather radios free of charge to community members
- Generator – Jason is going to double check with Curt that the county's generators are on his check list
- Code Red list – Jason would like to be proactive and get an updated list for the upcoming weather season
- Fire alarm – it needs new ends placed on the system and they are working on getting them switched
- IT grant – FEMA funds left over and would like to use it towards the full cyber security plan, evaluation and exercise which is an estimated cost of \$8,000
- IOT basic plan – this would be good for insurance; Tom Beaumont is aware and on board. This will enhance what is already in place. They will get with each department as well to establish a plan

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John Cox – Sheriff

- Vehicles – he would like to move forward with selling the two decommissioned vehicles and presented the advertisement. The board is ok with that. The insurance check has not been received yet for the vehicle that was totaled.
- Security – 2nd courthouse security officer was approved by the council. He has got a job description written and will be presented for Commissioners to review/approve.
- Strays – they are receiving multiple calls for strays, bite and they do not have a plan on how these are to be handled. It is mainly calls for within towns. Attorney Ahler advised that the towns should have an ordinance. The sheriff said he would reach out to the towns to see what they have if anything. The board does not want to get into animal control. Boswell and Otterbein both have temporary cages. The topic will be revisited at a later date after the sheriff has had a chance to reach out.
- Out of state travel – just letting the board know of approved out of state travel
- Fair board – Freeland asked if John saw the email about them wanting a sprinkler system, but the engineer is reaching out to them because he does not feel the system is necessary. Fields asked about a phone call regarding an account for the hog barn. John said that it will be discussed at the next meeting and feels it will all be resolved.

Ron Shoup – Town of Otterbein

The town has a holding cage but nowhere to take them after a certain amount of time if they are not claimed. The problem is not having access to any temporary holding. Sometimes if there is a situation where there is a death, or a bite occurs. Latisha asked about possibly using the local vets. The Sheriff has spoken to both of them and while they are very good during an emergency situation, they do not want to become the “drop off zone”.

Ron then introduced Karen Hurtubise who is the new town administrator. She has been in the position since May.

Josh Steiner & Chad – Wildman

Josh came today to see if the board had any questions regarding the proposal, he provided to Darren about cleaning products and services they can provide. The board reviewed the proposal and discussed the services they offer. After further discussion the recommendation was determined to approve the change from Cintas to Wildman. Berry asked if the prices were promotional prices or not, no they are not. Chad added that within the contract agreement it does state that there will be an up to 5% increase annually. Freeland asked if there was a break for signing a multiple year agreement. If they signed a full 5-year agreement, they would look at a possible discount on the rates. Berry asked if we had enough time to notify the current provider, yes, we do. Chad asked if they do a first aid program, yes, they do. Josh said for now he was asked to do the cleaning side to start. Wildman does not have a contract for first aid side of the services offered.

The board stated that for now it will just be for the courthouse contract and to review the other locations later. This was approved with a motion per cancellation of current service provider by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

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Jason Fisher – Town of Fowler board member

Jason came before the board to see if they would consider drafting a letter of concern regarding the 55/Washington Street project with INDOT. There are multiple concerns and have documentation of them all. The Town's legal counsel is now involved. The board was in favor of having something drafted and asking Senator Niemeyer to come and review also.

Latisha Provo – Economic Development

She provided an update on some recent meetings she has attended or held.

- Steelhead – looking for public engagements for the holidays. Some ideas given were toys for tots, theatre, twilight concert, Oxford holiday kick off, extension office is holding a few things she might be interested in
- READI 2.0 – there are a couple of grants for early childhood and learning grant and the foundation is working on Lily 8.
- IEDA – she attended and felt that it was a great opportunity and contact building
- Website – she is working on updates and is working with whatsapp/247 also.
- KIRPC – released there grants and Fowler and Oxford got a water one. Benton County is on the list for 3 grants as well and more to come to that
- Indiana trails/Ivy Tech – great assets for community and career development
- IEDC – Wes Brown would like to do some BR&E visits with employers
- Rotary – attending a meeting as a guest speaker. The wireless project would be a good discussion topic, and that will be awarded today. 5G wireless project, they will also be reaching homes and business that cannot reach hard fiber; autosteer within 1-2 years for all ag.
- BC FAQS- a BC intern is putting together an advisory board and have ask Latisha to be a part of
- Discover Oxford – that are working to get her placed in lieu of Angie on that
- READI 2 – community piece that will focus on quality of life, quality of place and quality of opportunity which aligns with the Extension office and the foundation

Colin Sullivan – BF&S

Came today to review and award the RFP's that were received, there was one. Upon the board's approval it will be awarded today and sign the agreement so the project can move forward.

Commissioner Berry said that he has some questions before they continue. His concern is if they award it today is the county committed with what the company is willing to pay because the county is not sure at this point what they will be making from this agreement. Colin stated no, you are just signing the notice of award, from there Ameri crew will then begin to work on an agreement that will have all of that information for approval. Berry asked if once they sign the agreement if Ameri crew could move forward with the project. Attorney Ahler advised the board to wait until the agreement is signed.

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The RFP was approved and awarded with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. Colin will reach out to Ameri crew and let them know that they were awarded the RFP.

Business:

The Commissioner meeting minutes from 10.03.2023 were approved with corrections, motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion passed.

Monthly claims were presented. Commissioner Berry asked what the Brightspeed claim was. That is the phone bill for dispatch. He then asked about Tanner Utilities; this is for the highway building. Who is EMP technical group? Auditor Freeland will have Niccole bring down the claims

Pay at once claims were discussed and then approved the pay at once claims with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

The EMP group was for the detailing for the new sheriff unit. The monthly claims were approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Payroll was approved as presented. It was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland seconded by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried.

The 2024 Commissioner and Drainage Board meetings and Holiday schedule was reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

The board temporarily closed their regular scheduled meeting for the Drainage board meeting. They reopened their regular meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Business continued:

The board was presented with a BZA replacement for Allen Buchanan. After some discussion it was decided that Paul Jackson will fulfill his term on the board. It was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. Samantha will reach out to Allen and ask him to send a letter of resignation for their records.

The board discussed whether or not to hold a certificate sale, there are 4 properties on the list. The board made the decision to not hold a certificate sale. Auditor Freeland then spoke briefly about the Peer property in Boswell and that she was advised that we cannot take it to a deed because there is no proof of noticing. Attorney Ahler will review further.

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The board determined that they will not hold a certificate sale, this was done with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. Auditor Freeland will let SRI know of their decision.

The board then approved a new Otterbein Library board member (replacement) with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry spoke briefly about his conversations with Everside clinic regarding the drug testing, but he is working on getting some pricing so it can be compared before any cancellation letters are sent.

What is CASA – it is a court program for child advocacy. There are funds received from the state and placed within the court's budget.

The retirement village has multiple account budgets were discussed and the overtime policy. Commissioner Berry would like to see timeclock logs for that department and look into stating that no edits will be manually entered. The board will work on putting a policy together for how the edits will be handled. The discussion was tabled until something can be put together for consistency.

Attorney Ahler asked the board if they wanted the letter to be placed on his letterhead or how they wanted it to be distributed. Commissioner Berry said to put it on letterhead and send it to the board and he will distribute it.

Commissioner Berry asked why the dumpster bill was so high and who shops for competitive rates. Auditor Freeland said that the departments have them she assumes because she does not. Commissioner Fields will give another company name to the highway department so they can get some pricing.

There was a meeting up north for the CS projects are trying to get into and Commissioner Berry and Freeland attended. They reported that Ice Miller has been contacted to see about having them draft ordinances and on the environmental side. No commitments have been made but the board is in favor of doing that, they would like Attorney Ahler to be the liaison. They also talked about hiring a PR firm as well. There are about 4 or 5 companies he will reach out to and see what the proposed costs will be.

Berry will forward an email to Attorney Ahler for review that states there was a supposed bill passed in 2011 to allow carbon pipelines in Indiana (state statute). He said that Kendall made a comment that after 20 years and the project is done then the project is the states problem but Kendall claims that there is another 20 years on there, but Berry cannot find anything to verify that. Attorney Ahler will reach out and see if he can get more information.

Berry then spoke about collecting fees from BP and the fees to charge for roads and other county projects. He spoke with Baker Tilly, but they were more interested in doing something with the

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schools, but he does not feel that they can since it is for the county. Attorney Ahler will review the email chain and then reach out to determine what to put in an ordinance. He will need to know if it will be a new fund and other information.

Latisha asked about the resolution for the CO2 and if LEAP would be included as well for the water pipeline. White county included it all together and she feels that it will affect us as well.

Dianne Hubbard – Representative for Congressman Baird

Berry asked if he had reached out to BP about the loss of AV's. Dianne stated that he is aware of the issue but is not sure where those discussions stand. Berry asked her to pass along a request for him to reach out to Negele and discuss the bill she is working on. Dianne will take those questions and concerns back.

Business continued:

Auditor Freeland presented a tax rate for EMS for the board. Commissioner Berry asked her about when the safety tax was implemented, and taxes were lowered to what percentage. Auditor Freeland said that she would have to review. He continued on by saying that if the tax was to be added they could lower the safety tax rate to offset it.

Auditor Freeland presented a claim for EP sign shop, for \$3,769.00 and asked where the board would like that to be paid from. It will be paid for out of LIT.

Brouillette Heating and cooling bill for \$1308.00 is for repairs at the clinic. This will be paid out of the clinic's budget for participation fees. Berry asked Auditor Freeland if there has been any resolution on receiving the documentation on that. Auditor Freeland stated that any information she needs from Nicole or Pam is received quickly but she has not heard from Cathy Jarvis on anything.

The federal audit invoice was discussed on whether or not the board wanted to amend the ARPA plan to cover those expenses. The board determined that they would not amend the plan. The group had a quick discussion on the ARPA funds and timeline for those projects to be completed.

Auditor Freeland informed the board that the advertisement for the county farm bids has been sent and it is set for them to award that at the November 21st meeting.

The capital improvement plan is set for review/update next year. Commissioner Berry asked if mainstream provided a breakdown with the most recent payment, no there was not. Berry spoke with Zach who said that would be resolved. Attorney Ahler will draft a letter and send it to them.

Latisha asked about the contract with GLC and the agreement with Americrew but she needs a contract with GLC once the budget is ok for READI 1.0. Commissioner Berry wanted to talk to Kelly first so asked Latisha to reach out to him. Latisha said that a claim needs to be submitted

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by December 31st. They discussed the process and the budget. Commissioner Berry reiterated that he feels they were aware of the timeline and the RFP.

The equipment contract with The Market (Leeks) was presented and explained by Attorney Ahler. This contract was previously approved and will be signed once received.

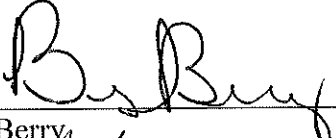
The ordinance regarding the county owned vehicles and use by specific county officials was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry asked if used of the right of ways for renewables needed to be done by a resolution or just within the minutes. It was done by a resolution. More information is to come following an RUA meeting at the county highway. Commissioner Berry briefly explained the process and how the funds are utilized and then after a 2–3-year period the commissioners take control of funds.

The board discussed the annual bonus, conditions of being eligible for bonuses and what amount would be paid out for all non-elected employees both full and part time. They will be paid as follows: \$600 to all full-time employees and \$300 to all part-time employees who are active and paid in the previous pay period. Where the bonuses will be paid from will be determined at a later date

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

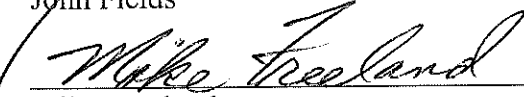
With no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m. with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland.



Bryan Berry



John Fields



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor