

Benton County Commissioner Meeting November 19th, 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, Shawn Leuck, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and Auditor, Audrey Freeland.

Others in attendance were: John Gick, Evan Puetz, Amy Wilkinson, Latisha Provo, Penny Titus, Phil McGinnis, Derek Fuehrer, Ingrid Barce, Jason Fisher and John Cox

Commissioner Berry started the meeting off regarding the email from BP in response to the board wanting to impose the daily fines since they had not yet received the decommissioning plan. They replied that it was not signed in 2021 but regardless of that it does not follow the ordinance. Attorney Ahler agreed.

Evan Puetz – Assistant Highway Supervisor

- Cutting brush along roadside
- Winter ready – they have the plows and sanders ready
- Stone – he brought the amounts of all of the stone that has been placed on the dairy roads. Commissioner Berry said they need to use winter mix or larger stone. He also stated that Mike Budreau should have the agreed average that it costs and that previously it was agreed that the dairy would pay above and beyond that. Suggested to use #2's or super mix. The concrete stabilization is broken so they will take a look at that as well
- Truck – they will get it within the 2nd week of December
- Bids – Commissioner Berry asked him to reach out to Reith Riley & Milestone for chip and seal, gravel and blacktop prices

Commissioner Berry asked the board their thoughts on the daily fines being imposed. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland seconded by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck and motion carried.

Jason Fisher – EMA / EMS Director

- ADA email – Jason asked the board if they received the email regarding ADA compliance for the Benton County Library. After some discussion, Attorney Ahler added that the library board needs to address this. Jason will reach out to the library board.
- Vehicle – Jason asked about starting the process for the EMA vehicle since the process takes at least 60-90 days
- Bid – Jason has not received any additional bids for the fencing
- Trees – Commissioner Freeland asked about the trees at the West end of the Ambulance building. They still need to be trimmed. Commissioner Freeland will get ahold of someone to come cut those back
- Electric – Jason has sent emails to Caleb and Goose about submitting a bid

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- Door – Jason would like to talk with Shawn at some point to see how feasible it would be to install an overhead door. Yes, they will get together.

Ingrid Barce – Petition to vacate (Weaver Real Estate)

They are here to vacate alleys in Freeland now that the Weaver has the title for the one parcel. Now that they have title, they are asking for the alleys to be vacated. The group reviewed the map, and the alleys requested to be vacated. The vacation request is for the alleys not the streets. The county would reverse an easement in the event there are any utilities underneath.

There are 3 alleys in total within this petition. They were approved with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry seconded by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck and motion carried. Ingrid will get it recorded, and copies will be distributed.

John Cox – Sheriff

- Vehicles – 2021 has a blown engine block and the 2019 has a head gasket leak. He has reached out to the insurance company to see if anything is covered, Cox will keep the board updated on that. He would like permission to move forward by talking to Alsop's about purchasing the demo truck they have available for \$74,000.00. They are aware that it cannot be purchased until 2025. The tip of the spear quote is \$91,464.79. He was approved by the council in the amount of \$78,000.00. The board approved to accept the demo truck to be purchased next year with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.
- PTO – He asked the board if they would make a special exception for his staff to roll over their full PTO balance due to staff shortages. Auditor Freeland reviewed the PTO portion of the personnel policy and said that the amount the staff members would be allowed to roll over was more than originally stated. Commissioner Berry stated that they need to follow the personnel policy and that was one of the reasons of moving to PTO.
- RQAW – after the jail study and small group met the plan will be to get with Nathan from the Town of Fowler to close the road while removing the trees and then during the springtime, clean downspouts and gutters. Then they will ask the hallway and Matt Hull to excavate around the sally port and jail. He has spoken with Phil at Castongia's about using their mini excavator. Once that is done then they will need to reseal and then tile and put it back to the original grade. Sheriff Cox will also talk with Nathan about installing a grinder at the pit.
- Fairground building – this project is wrapping up and going well. NIPSCO says it is ready to go but there is no date yet. Commissioner Freeland will contact them to get the contact updated to Commissioner Leuck's information. The email they have listed is incorrect. Commissioner Leuck asked if they were putting doors on the bathrooms or not. Cox replied no they are not since they are doing the juttred walls
- Staff – he has hired a new corrections officer
- Training – all deputies and corrections officers are working on completing their defensive tactical training before the end of the year

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Business:

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

Pay at once Claims from the previous meeting for the visa claim and the current pay at once claims were reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck and motion carried

Payroll were presented and then approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck and motion carried.

The safety deposit box authorization was tabled and will be placed on the second December meeting agenda.

The 2025 Holiday and Commissioners schedule was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

The 2025 claims and payroll schedule was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck and motion carried.

The 5th amended capital improvement plan was reviewed and discussed. Commissioner Berry explained what the capital improvement plan is for and how it is budgeted. He also gave his recommendations on not using it for salaries long term. The plan was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Auditor Freeland presented the unsold property list from the recent tax sale and asked if the board would like to hold a commissioner's sale for those 8 properties. The decision was made to move forward with the sale but remove the one property (301 N Washington Street / Boswell, IN – Jessica Allen) that is deemed unsafe and the board set the minimum bid at \$50. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry asked if a AES bond was received within the last 2-3 weeks. Auditor Freeland replied that she did not.

Commissioner Berry spoke about Next ERA not using Wood for their decommissioning study and feels that it should be denied. Attorney Ahler has a letter drafted and will get it sent out today. The board feels that they should all be done by the same company. A motion to deny the presented decommissioning study was made with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry stated that Pattern has reached out regarding their decommissioning study and the issues should be resolved soon so it can be filed.

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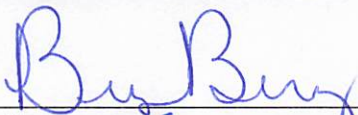
Auditor Freeland presented a letter received from Gretencord Landscaping that was letting the board know that he has sold the mulching portion of the business to Blue Line Mulching and more. She added that the current county agreement is with Courtney Krug.

Auditor Freeland asked about a recent complaint that was filed. Attorney Ahler will send a response to the individual.

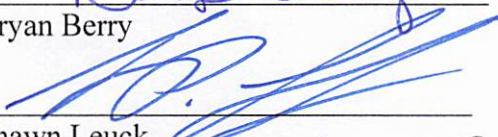
Auditor Freeland presented the interlocal agreement with Tippecanoe County for the "ride share" program. Attorney Ahler has reviewed and recommended the board signing it. The agreement was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck and motion carried.

Commissioner Freeland discussed the old jail building and how the building is deteriorating and has mold. After further discussion it was decided that the board will receive sealed bids to remove the old jail building. The motion was made by Commissioner, Bryan Berry seconded by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck and motion carried.

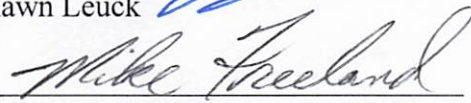
With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:27 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck, motion carried.



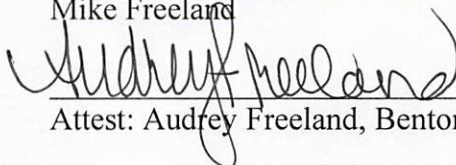
Bryan Berry



Shawn Leuck



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor