

Benton County Commissioner Meeting
July 16th, 2024

The Benton County Commissioners met at 8:15 a.m. at the Annex Building. Those in attendance were Commissioners Bryan Berry, John Fields, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and Auditor, Audrey Freeland.

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Latisha Provo, Jason Fisher, Sara Niccum, Jennifer Greenberg, Samantha Smith, Derek Fuehrer, Connie Neininger, Dave Fisher and Matt Hull

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Chip-n-seal – 10 miles left, then they will begin patching
- Recycle bldg. – the cameras will be moved if they have not been already
- Thanks – Mike stated that the EMA/EMS crews were a big help with last night storms
- 330 S – discussed that there are 2 pipes that need to be fixed. A multi-plate was suggested instead of the two double pipes.
- Quote – Mike received 2 quotes to restock his pipes. They were presented and awarded as follows.

**Debco Metals - \$16,983.00

**E3 Bridge - \$15,295.60

The bid was awarded to E3 with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

- Staff – new hire started yesterday.
- 800 S – west of 200 they would like to put more stone in their driveway but are concerned with the edge of the road. Mike said he would get a crew out there soon

Jason Fisher – EMA / EMS and DHS Director

- Survey – this has been completed and submitted
- Staff – Val Murphy has passed her paramedic accreditation test. Jason asked if it was possible for her to receive the same incentive bonus as previous staff has. He also stated that he hired another full-time staff.
- Storm update – widespread and 30 areas of damage. There were 10 utility poles and around 200 without power and numerous down trees were reported
- Cameras – Berry asked if the cameras have been moved yet, Jason was unsure
- Staff – there are 3 individuals currently in class
- Storm – they were pretty widespread. Over 30 areas with damage. Some utility poles, 200 people without power. Thanked the highway for helping clear the trees off the roads. Jason said that the new dispatcher was on duty and did well
- Ambulance – Fields asked for a status update. Not much and no target date yet but the chassis has been allocated

The board revisited the incentive payment and said that they are ok doing it, however they want the amount to be consistent with what has been done in the past.

- Sirens – Jason stated he has J&K preparing a quote for a replacement siren since they had discussed doing 1 a year.

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Business:

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

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

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

Jennifer Greenberg – Clerk

Jennifer came before the board to discuss the possibility of moving to voting centers for Benton County. It would have very little cost to the county, it would reduce the number of poll workers needed which is a struggle each year. Currently there is 6 precinct voting sites, if they became a vote center county, they can do 4 sites and people can vote at any one of the four locations. She would eliminate Fishbach Farms and Oxford. While nothing has been finalized at this point she is looking at having the four be at Otterbein, Boswell, Earl Park and Fowler. All four of these locations are handicap accessible.

If approved her next step is to write a draft and submit it to the state for approval, which could be done as quickly as 60 days. Commissioner, Bryan Berry motioned to approve moving to a voting center, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Business continued:

The county home room and board report was approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried. Commissioner Fields asked if there were any new issues with the home, nothing new just the ones that had previously been discussed.

Sara Niccum asked how the board planned on enforcing the no videotaping or recording. They discussed the 1st amendment people who had come into the courthouse prior. The ordinance was put into place as of 2022.

Samantha Smith – Chief Deputy Surveyor

Sam came before the board today asking for approval on the setbacks for Cyr's grain bin. The Plan and BZA gave favorable recommendations. Commissioner, Bryan Berry motioned to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry asked Sam if she and Michelle could go through the petitions for the share creek, yes, they will. Auditor Freeland and Sam talked about getting together to get the new conservancy set up in the LOW system.

Commissioner Berry also asked for the Glotzbach bin map. Sam stated that she had that ready.

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Business continued:

The grant of easement was briefly discussed and tabled

Commissioner Berry said that he and Jon Charlesworth spoke about the offices swapping space. They discussed making them a little bit wider so they can have the same square footage. They would also like to keep the IT room as part of their storage room, he told them that was fine.

Commissioner Berry asked Attorney Ahler about the email they received this morning from Bio-Town requesting an extension. He asked how much more detailed it could be. Attorney Ahler advised that he called them and went through it all. They replied that with the way it is worded they cannot insure a blanket bond. They would like to have an amended RUA done so Attorney Ahler will redraft.

Jason Fisher – EMA / EMS and DHS Director

Jason returned to ask about an amended tuition repayment agreement with verbiage added that a payment is due each month regardless of if shifts are worked or not.

Business continued:

Commissioner, John Fields motioned to extend the 10-day extension to Bio Town for the amendment, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry said on the thing with Metro Comm that no one is going to get the Mainstream and Verizon together so more than likely Metro Comm is going to be the ones running the fiber to the new Earl Park Tower. He asked the thoughts of getting an annual payment aside from permit fees, maybe for the bandwidth or something. They will mirror another contract for repairs as well.

Commissioner Berry asked when the impact payments would be sent out, early August.

Latisha Provo – Economic Development

- Chamber – attended the meeting and it went well. She presented a survey and got some good feedback. Have some interested in taking on a leadership role
- Admin training – She has passed her class for the block grant and has been invited to the next step which will start in August
- READI-/Broadband – the last 5 reimbursements have been received
- LEI CCC – received the full advance payment for the Wabash Heartland Campus/Community grant
- Boswell resident – Mr. Vogel has not reached out to her since the last town meeting. Commissioner Fields asked if it was a county or town issue. The board briefly discussed it. Attorney Ahler has also been involved in conversations with the Surveyor's office and shared the email discussions. The group stated that they had not heard anything regarding an RV park, it was more duplexes and duplex barn dominium.

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- Email – the group discussed an email from Scott Rudd (Mainstream). It was determined that there was no advantage to the county
- Oxford school – SAS was hired to remove the asbestos tiles and they were instructed that there was to be no activity during the Dan Patch days festival

Connie Neininger – Ag Strategy

Connie presented the board with a handout she then reviewed. The topic of discussion was the start of the analytical part of the Ag process.

Connie discussed the amount of revenues leaving the counties and what they project that could be retained with proper growth in ag assets. They ask the region to define their “Ag regions” and six counties stepped forward. They analyzed the data and compiled that into the handout they reviewed; the inputs, outputs, fuel and anything else coming from outside the region. They also provided statistics on the “leakage” or gaps and lost opportunities. They talked about the strategies and how to connect them with local businesses. She also spoke about what they are talking about trying to increase within the region overall. She spoke about the right to farm policy within the IN Code. She wrapped up by thanking the board for their time and hopes to speak with them soon.

Business continued:

Auditor Freeland presented the annual agreement for Peterson Consulting who reviews the GASB and capital assets ledgers for the county, the fee is \$3300.00. The agreement was approved and signed with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

The Incident Response Plan discussion was tabled.

The board revisited the Vogel issues and asked what the next steps should be since it has been going back and forth for a while. Commissioner Fields and Berry both feel that it should be the Town. Dave Fisher added that Mr. Vogel has been told no numerous times, but he will not accept that answer. Commissioner Berry said that they will have Attorney Ahler draft a letter

The regular scheduled meeting closed at 9:32 a.m. for the drainage board meeting, and the Board of Commissioners reopened their regular meeting at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the following.

Those in attendance were Commissioners Bryan Berry, John Fields, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and Auditor, Audrey Freeland.

Others in attendance were: Latisha Provo and Sara Niccum

The board discussed the Vogel concerns again and it was determined that Attorney Ahler will draft and send a letter to both the Town of Boswell and Mr. Vogel regarding the property on Stokes Street.

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Auditor Freeland verified the amount of previous incentive payments in the amount of \$3500 and the board stated that she was authorized to pay the most recent employee that same amount.

Auditor Freeland then asked about the email from SRI regarding a new account to be set up for the sheriff's sale. After some discussion, she will reach out to SRI and get more information before moving forward.

Cintas accounts that are being cancelled were reviewed. The courthouse, annex, highway and EMS are all in the process of being cancelled and counsel is waiting for a reply from Nick Ramsey.

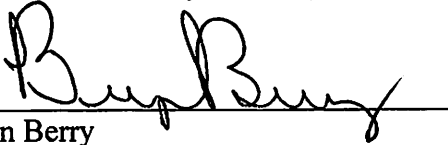
The RUA will be emailed out today and the money from Bio-Town has been received.

Attorney Ahler discussed the issues with the Peer property and will reach out to Auditor Freeland to review and see what needs to be done.

Commissioner Berry said that he has spoken to the Attorney Generals office about the Carbon and DNR complaints and he will be able to sit in on the meetings.

Commissioner Fields is going to work on getting the new dumpsters set, the current dumpsters secured so they cannot be used further and schedule them to be picked up.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, second by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried.



Bryan Berry

John Fields

Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor