

Benton County Commissioners Meeting

November 21st, 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: John Dadacz, Karen Hurtubise, Mike Budreau, Latisha Provo, Brent Cox, Carole Hoff, Steve Wallpe, John Cox, Jason Fisher, Bill Brost and Kathy Sarault

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Brush clean up and chipping
- Grinding will begin next week hopefully
- Small structures – there are 3 small structures that Mike feels that need to be reviewed
- Bridges – no word yet but it will not be until next month or the first of the year
- Roads – Has a list started for next year. Mike 8 south and 2 back to the adeway and 12 east from 18 to about 320 will be ground and there is a lot of maintenance
- Next ERA – Berry asked if project they plan on doing in 2025 if they should go into Pine and Bolivar and hire someone to check out the culverts, yes, the board agrees. The board feels that since there have been 6 small structures replaced it would be a good idea. Mike will look into a few companies and get some prices
- Dumpsters – Michelle is going to call around and get some current prices for comparison. Fields asked if one of them is Indiana Waste, Mike was unsure so Fields will check with Michelle

Latisha Provo – Economic Development

- Agreements – Attorney Ahler had a chance to review and had so issues with them. Berry asked if his name needed to be added for signature. Latisha said that she verified, and she is only listed on the communication not on the signature portion. Berry will be signatory on behalf of the county. The GLAC contract was signed by the board
- Site visits – IEDC is scheduling some site visits and then would also like to put together a power point presentation and need some photos for that
- Meetings – she attends a lot of meetings and finding which ones fit in line with the county. She feels that GLEA is very beneficial
- Discover Oxford – she has made some contacts with the new businesses
- Chamber – she is working with Ruppel's to get the chamber revitalized and going again. She met with Ed and Emily with KIRPC and looks forward to working with them. She also met with Karen from the Town of Otterbein, and with Karen from NIPSCO. She also met with RDM and is going to look into taking GLEA on a tour when the time comes for their site visits.
- Ameri crew – Berry asked if the claim paid to them will be sufficient for submission. She is unsure but is going to upload it with explanation, but she will keep the board up to date. Berry asked what the last day for checks will be. Auditor Freeland said that she is going to request them to vote on December 15th.

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Business:

The Commissioner meeting minutes from 11.07.2023 were approved with corrections, motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion passed.

John Cox – Sheriff

- Job description – John presented the job description for the second full time security officer. Sheriff Cox explained the position and requirements. The board approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried
- Vehicle – insurance money has been received. He has replaced 3 vehicles this year and would like the board's approval to look to replace one in 2024, however this is not in the budget. The board said he can get a quote and come back but not a guarantee. He would like to get into a rotation cycle of replacing one and then following year replacing two. He would like to keep the fleets fresh. Fields asked what kind of miles he is looking to keep them around. John replied that he would like to replace around 170-175,000 miles
- Theft case – it is in process with the state police
- Stanley Steemer – Todd has not reached back out

Jason Fisher – EMA & DHS Director

- Ryder truck invoice – he has spoken with Attorney Ahler about this. John at the dairy and Jason have talked but Bio-Town has not responded so Attorney Ahler has a letter to be sent to their attorney. The claim was paid out of donations, and it is believed that they feel the county was asking for a donation and that is not the case. Jason said that they were discrediting the fire department's actions, time and stated their labor was inflated. Freeland asked Attorney Ahler to move forward and if it goes to court so be it. Fields agreed and added that it would be under Ryders insurance. The wrecker service has been paid so Jason is not sure why they have not paid the county.
- Health Coalition - Jason sent the board an email and he will receive \$6500 from them to cover the expenses of the new trailer.
- Grants – he has applied for two grants; one for \$27,000-29,000.00 for paramedic tuition reimbursement for 3 candidates and the other grant applied for is for an EMT class to be fully funded. He has not received any award notifications yet
- Code Red – this has previously been paid for out of the EMPG grant but he wants to inform the board that the funding may not be available in 2024. The total annual cost is \$4,840.00 and is due in January.
- Disaster – Jason stated that he has found out that after the tornadoes in March there are mitigation funds available to be used for tornado shelters or storm warning siren replacement – it will require a 25% county match. The last quote that Jason received was approx. \$200,000 + and that is for 9 sirens, poles and message capabilities. Tornado shelters are very expensive. A school shelter costs around the 1-million-dollar mark

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mainly due to the size required to fit everyone. Fields feels that storm warning sirens is where the county should put their focus.

- Vehicles – Berry asked about the snorkel truck and getting it advertised, yes, he will bring it over
- Mainstream – Berry thinks he has everything worked out but will let Jason know

Business continued:

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

Three payrolls were approved as follows.

Payroll -11.03.2023 approved by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner Mike Freeland and motion carried

Payroll – 11.17.2023 approved by Commissioner, Mike Freeland second by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried

Longevity - approved by Commissioner, John Fields, second by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried

The notice from Fowler Pest Control was reviewed and Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to stay with them.

Kathy Sarault – Health Department

Kathy came before the board today to discuss a new tattoo business coming into Fowler. She plans on taking part out of three different counties to put into one for Benton County for permitting. He has provided Kathy a copy of his policy for the business, and she shared an inspection report model she got from other counties and from state codes.

There will be three individuals working in the parlor and they will offer tattoos and piercings. It will be located where the pet grooming place was. He would like to be able to open by the end of the month, but Kathy isn't sure it will be. He currently has another establishment in Lafayette. Attorney Ahler will create a similar ordinance as presented for the board to approve. Kathy has copies of what Tippecanoe and Allen County have approved and will share it with Attorney Ahler. Kathy will create an application as she stated from the three examples she received. The fees and advertising requirements were discussed. The group also discussed possible regulations due to the Town and Attorney Ahler will reach out to their counsel to see if they have anything.

Business continued:

The contract between the county and “The Market” for the Leeks was approved with updates with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

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Auditor Freeland asked the board for approval to pay the invoice for the Town of Oxford water project. After much discussion the board asked Auditor Freeland to send them the contract for review before approving.

The board received 6 sealed bids for the county farm located at the retirement village. The bids were read and awarded as follows.

Maple Island Farms - \$404.70 per acre – Annual \$57,845.00

Shawn Leuck - \$341.00 per acre

Josh Brost - \$266.50 per acre – Annual \$38,619.80

James Hatala - \$179 per acre - Annual \$26,850.00

John Dadacz – Annual \$46,000.00

Wetli Farms - \$301.00 per acre – Annual \$44,621.04

Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned to accept the bid received from Maple Island Farms, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried. The contract will be signed by the board on December 5th.

Commissioner Berry asked if a payment from BP for damages on 500 N around \$67,000, not that Auditor Freeland is aware of, but she will look into it.

Commissioner Berry referenced meeting minutes from 07.19.2022 where they discussed use of the right of way and that they would recognize renewables as utilities, but nothing has been awarded. Attorney Ahler will get something drafted.

Auditor Freeland said she received a text from Jason Fisher asking if the board wanted him to advertise or if he is to advertise the truck or if they want to use a broker. If a broker is used nothing is paid unless you sell. The board stated that Jason is to advertise.

The board then discussed the agreement with BP for payments for 2024, 2025 and 2026 for the loss of AV's that will go into the community investment fund. The board agreed that Commissioner Berry will sign the 3-year agreement even though it is less than what they paid previously, and the board will determine what will be distributed to affected taxing districts. The extra received in 2023 also included circuit breaker credits.

Commissioner Berry stated that he found out that the wireless fiber will cost \$109 monthly per customer for 200 up and 50 down. This will be for 250MB service, and the county will get \$10 per customer. Fields asked what the projection of time will be once the towers are constructed. It is set for August of 2024, because they will not start until there are funds to start the project.

AES is buying out Hoosier Wind so they are going through the decommissioning bond and MOU and making sure they understand that they will have to pay taxes.

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Fields asked about the wind project in Bolivar township and if they are getting people to sign up because he is hearing conflicting stories. It appears that they must be getting some contracts because they have the land secured.

Freeland asked about the CenterPoint and if they are taking gas from there and sending it to Lafayette, yes they are.

Fields stated that he received an email from TJ regarding the Boswell school and that he informed him that he will have to come before the entire board.

The board then asked Attorney Ahler if he had received a response from Surf Internet, he has not. Then if it is not removed by the 30 days from the date of the letter, the county has the right to remove it and then hold it for 90 days.

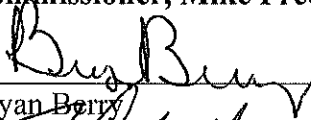
With no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:23 a.m. with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields.

The board reopened after the Drainage board meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Commissioner Berry stated that Attorney Ahler had asked if he was able to purchase health insurance through the county. After some discussion and other individuals this has been offered by the board approved to allow him to purchase health insurance. This was done with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

The board then discussed the last day for pay at once claims to be paid out. It was agreed upon that the last day any regular pay at once claims can be paid is December 15th, 2023. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

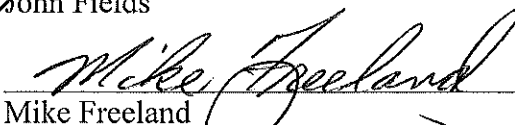
With no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m. with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields.



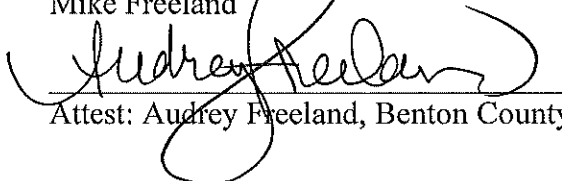
Bryan Berry



John Fields



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor