

## Benton County Commissioner Meeting February 4, 2025

The Benton County Commissioners met at 8:15 a.m. in the Commissioners room at the Benton County Courthouse. Those in attendance were Commissioners Phil McGinnis, Shawn Leuck and John Gick, Benton County Auditor Beth Budreau.

Others in attendance were Matt Hull, Derek Fuehrer, Daniel Caswell, Mike Budreau, Evan Puetz, Ron Shoup, Latisha Provo, Jason Fisher, John Cox, Brody Fox, Leslie Fisher, Bryan Berry, Sam Smith, Dave Fisher, Glenda Wallpe, Troy Strasburger, Emily Albaugh, Edwin Buswell, Anna Yates.

### **Mike Budreau – Highway Superintendent / Evan Puetz – Highway Assistant Superintendent**

- Getting quotes for a new Mack truck, should have numbers by next meeting
- Sander got fixed & Truck 16
- Still there are no permits for BP.
- Fuel pump #2 on road diesel broke down, they brought a used part last Friday and got it going, they are supposed to get the new part this Friday and swap them out.
- The new roller is being delivered in March.
- Another employee has quit, have a job interview scheduled for tomorrow.
- Concrete culvert on division, getting quotes from Sam & Debco for a plan B. Commissioner Phil stated he also has quotes from Barnhardt, for a crane.

Commissioner McGinnis stated that when the sander truck broke down, the rearend had went out and they had Joe fix it to get through the rest of winter. Commissioner McGinnis stated the frame of the truck is not in good shape, Evan stated that it is a 1995. Commissioner McGinnis stated that when Evan gets quote for this new Mack truck he is also going to get quotes for a dump bed that converts into a sander.

Commissioner McGinnis stated that the county is having a severe problem with grain trucks coming out of Illinois on 800 North. Evan stated he called the elevator and gave them a warning and he also talked to John Cox that same day. Evan stated the lady at the elevator is now on the frost freeze law texts also. Commissioner McGinnis stated he's not so sure it's just elevator traffic. Commissioner McGinnis stated that the semi's are blowing the stop sign at 800 North and 71, they are trying to go around the scales on 24. Commissioner McGinnis stated the frost freeze law in one thing, but their blowing the stop sign and that's not a good intersection as it is. Commissioner McGinnis stated they are working on getting it cleared up. Evan stated he gave the lady at the elevator a warning and the next time it would be a fine.

Commissioner Shawn Leuck asked if the highway could take some gravel down to the fairgrounds and put it where the little pump house sits on the east side of it, they are going to put the LP tank in that spot for the new building.

Commissioner Gick asked if the dirt loader was ready to go. Evan stated no they haven't gotten it out and it hasn't been ran in a few years. Commissioner Gick asked them to get it ready to go.

### **Jason Fisher – DHS / EMA Director**

Every year Jason submits paperwork by May with the Indiana Medicaid system, for the first 9 years then it went down quite a bit of money back, but after that not so much. What it is is a Medicaid reimbursement program, Indiana recognizes they don't pay enough billing for EMS for Medicaid and they put this mechanism in place for government entities to get money back.

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Jason presented a quote for a new tornado in the amount of \$36,660.00; the goal is to replace 1 siren a year until they are all replaced. The current ones are anywhere from 35-40 years old. The average lifespan is 15-20 years, so they're clearly overdue. There are 9 sirens in total within the county. Commissioner John Gick motioned to approve the purchase of a new tornado siren, Commissioner Phil McGinnis seconded, motion carried.

- Commissioner McGinnis requested possibly putting a line item in the budget for 2026 just for tornado siren replacement.
- The 911 center has started the hiring process for a new dispatcher.
- Jason would like to keep Morgan Stevens on as the ADA Coordinator, the commissioners asked for a job description on what she is going to be doing.

### **John Cox – Sheriff**

- Robb Hobbs has resigned as a part time jailer; he is ready to retire. Will hire new part time employee around May.
- 2021 Dodge truck has a new engine it is in Kentland to get the AC recharged.
- Met with Nate Bess & John Budreau about the dirt work around the jail this spring, they said to just have Mike call them when they start work.
- Pat Doyle will be delivering a container to store old records from the old jail.
- The Town of Fowler is okay with putting a grinder and bar system into the sewage basket.
- Busy in the jail – capacity was increased by ¼ over the weekend.

### **John Cox & Brody Fox – Fairgrounds**

- Horse and pony fencing is up
- Sand donations lined up from Rogers Group and Benton Dairy. Just asking for permission from the highway department to be able to haul it.
- John presented the receipts and expenditures for the new fair board building and the flyer for the brick drive for the donations for the building.
- Rental rates need to be decided – rental process will go through the Auditors office.
- Power should be back today for the new building
- 1000-gallon LP tank will be placed out at the fairgrounds for the new building. County highway will put down a gravel pad before placement.

Brody Fox asked for the commissioner's approval to replace the fan in the Sheep & Goat barn, Commissioner Phil McGinnis motioned to approve the replacement of the fan, Commissioner Shawn Leuck seconded, motion carried.

### **Leslie Fisher – SWCD**

Leslie came before the board to get established with the new board. She proceeded to explain how Soil & Water exists as a local entity; Commissioners cover the salaries for Leslie & Chrissie. All their operational budget they work through with their state association and grants for everything else. Leslie & Chrissie's roles are local liaisons to federal programs as a district.

Leslie presented an update of funding that they are working off, 319 grant which offsets all of the educational dollars that they will be working off for the next 3 years.

They receive a federal grant where they got money for an additional employee, but they are hired on under the soil & water board not the county side.

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Commissioner Shawn Leuck asked if she'd be able to get a grant to get rid of all the log jams in Pine Creek, Leslie stated that she is working on that.

Leslie stated that she met with the previous commissioners on the potential purchase of a county accessible park, but soil & water owns it. They were able to secure the funds, they got the grant 3 weeks before it was due, they gave them \$2,000 over what they were asking. Leslie presented minutes from August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to discuss the access point that was approved. Commissioner John Gick stated he doesn't have a problem with doing what the previous commissioners agreed on for access to the park. Commissioner Phil McGinnis agreed and stated that they can put access in for the park, but they will not be building a road.

### **Glenda Wallpe – Recorder**

Glenda wanted to address the SBOA audit, the paperwork after the audit stated that she was missing reports from 2022 & 2023. She reached out to Austyn for clarification, all he is asking and requiring for her office, is that when she is balancing her statement, she just need to make note of what that outstanding check is. Commissioner Phil McGinnis stated that they knew everything was good, because Austyn had explained everything to them prior to presenting the paperwork to her.

Glenda came before the board to get approval for a new copier for \$2,698.00. She stated that she got approval from the council to use perpetuation funds she just wanted the commissioners approval since it was over the limit. Commissioner Phil McGinnis asked her if it has been purchased yet, Glenda stated that she has a demo unit in her office right now to see if she likes it. Commissioner Shawn Leuck asked her to test it out and make sure she likes it, then come back for approval.

Glenda asked about the approval for the property fraud software that was presented at the previous meeting. She stated County Attorney Jacob Ahler reviewed the agreement and he was okay with it, the commissioners stated they were just waiting for the attorney to review it before they signed anything. Commissioner Shawn Leuck motioned to approve the agreement, seconded by Commissioner Phil McGinnis, motion carried.

Glenda stated when the gentlemen delivered her copier they were there until after 4, and security and everyone was gone. Commissioner Phil McGinnis stated that when there are deliveries like that the company needs to be made aware of our business hours and if they can't make it in time the delivery needs to be rescheduled.

**The board temporarily closed to hold the Drainage Board meeting at 9:45 am, then reopened at 10:26 am.**

### **Reann Weber – Taxpayer**

Reann came before the board; she stated she moved to Swannington recently and they have a bus stop that doesn't have a street light and its pitch back and she wants to know how she goes about getting one put in. There is no pole there at all for a light, and its on the main road going through Swannington she is wanting to know if the county could put one in, she did some research and its roughly about \$3000.00. Commissioner Shawn Leuck stated that he will reach out to his contact for NIPSCO but asked Reann to reach out to her as well, Commissioner Shawn Leuck gave Reann her phone number. The Commissioners asked her to get pricing and get everything started and let the commissioners know what they need to do or what she will need help with.

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### **Bryan Berry – Taxpayer**

Bryan stated the BP sent the decommissioning study to him, Bryan is suggesting that the commissioners do not accept the study, because they were supposed to use wood and they did not. Bryan explained the reason to use wood is because you've got 8 windfarms with 7 different companies, it happened with another windfarm where they were supposed to use wood, and they were told to redo the study and when they did it was a 6.5-million-dollar difference in what the bond should have been. Bryan recommends that the commissioners ask them to redo it. Bryan also suggests amending the ordinance so that it states when a wind farm sells, they have to come up with a new decommissioning plan.

- AES is going to sign the bond and send it.

### **Emily Albaugh & Edwin Buswell – KIRPC**

Regional Planning Commission

- Oxford has an EDA grant right now to run a water line out to drug plastics. The county is a co-applicant because to get the project funded they needed someone to say they have the local match. They do have their other funding in place.
- Working through some issues on an easement to get the EDA funding released, should be going out to bid soon.
- Oxford just got a downtown revitalization plan.
- Fowler will be submitting a grant to do a comprehensive plan, they are closing out a grant for park improvements and they just completed a water project. They are looking at owner occupied housing grants.
- Earl Park has a water project grant in.

The main reason they are attending the meeting today is to talk about the safe streets for all projects. In 2023 they submitted a grant to the federal highway to do local road and safe plan for the region. The selected USI to do the plan, they have started work, each of the county pledge a local match. They submitted an invoice for half of the amount in January 2025 and the other half will be submitted on January 2026. Commissioner Phil McGinnis asked what the project entails, Edwin stated it is to look at reducing local road and street fatalities, INDOT has a vision zero statement, the goal is zero fatalities across the board. Emily stated that in the region we have a very high fatality rate. Edwin stated to be eligible for federal safety grants, you must have this plan in place.

Edwin brought up that the previous commissioners talked about a drainage project in Raub. Commissioner Phil McGinnis stated he would like to continue the conversation if it's feasible, he would like more information on it.

### **Anna Yates – Murial Oxford Town Square**

Anna came before the board to request to use the highways lift again to finish the mural. Commissioner Shawn Leuck stated that he has an off-road scissor lift that she could use. He stated that he would stop by the spot to make sure it would work.

### **Business**

Meeting minutes from 01.22.2025 were approved by Commissioner John Gick, Commissioner Shawn Leuck seconded, motion carried.

Monthly claims were presented for February 2025, they were approved by Commissioner John Gick, Commissioner Shawn Leuck seconded, motion carried.

Pay at once claims were reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner John Gick, seconded by Commissioner Shawn Leuck, motion carried.

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The 01.24.2025 payroll was reviewed and approved with a motion by Commissioner John Gick, seconded by Commissioner Shawn Leuck, motion carried.

Commissioner Shawn Leuck stated that the rest of the fence will need paid for around the cemetery in Templeton.

The conflict-of-interest forms for the county employees were presented and Commissioners reviewed and approved.

Beth presented a library board appointment certificate for Brandi Muller at the Oxford Library. Commissioner Phil McGinnis motioned to approve, Commissioner Shawn Leuck seconded, motion carried.

Per the commissioners requested Auditor Beth Budreau reviewed Jason's spending on the EMS credit card and she suggested to the commissioners to increase his credit balance from \$1500.00 to \$2500.00. Commissioner Phil McGinnis motioned to approve the increase, seconded by Commissioner Shawn Leuck, motion carried.

Beth presented one bid that has been received so far for landscaping from Courtney Krug, the commissioners stated to hold the bid for now and at the next meeting they will review all of them.

**Latisha Provo – Economic Development**

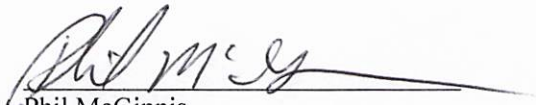
Latisha stated that she used her county vehicle the other night for a meeting, and she can't see hardly anything with her headlights and she said she will not drive it until they are fixed. Commissioner Phil McGinnis stated that he will reach out to the Highway Department and have them look at it.

Latisha stated that she attended a Town board meeting in Fowler, and they asked her about how they go about getting economic development money. Commissioner Phil McGinnis stated he told them he needs to see numbers before anything is decided.

Commissioner Phil McGinnis stated that if they do not get answers back from Purdue Extension, there are numerous counties in this state that run their own program without Purdue Extension being involved at all and they run flawlessly. Commissioner Phil McGinnis stated that they need to talk to Attorney Ahler to make sure the process is done correctly.

**With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Phil McGinnis, second by Commissioner, Shawn Leuck, motion carried**

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Phil McGinnis

  
Shawn Leuck

  
John Gick

  
Attest: Elizabeth Budreau, Benton County Auditor