

Benton County Commissioners Meeting December 19th, 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, Mike Freeland, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and County Auditor, Audrey Freeland.

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Karen Hurtubise, Jason Fisher, Bill Brost, Latisha Provo, John Cox and Kathy Sarault

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Continue to cut brush
- Pipes – they have added 470 pipes to the WTH website
- Nick – trying to get a hold of Davis to start bridge but Mike B will call him again
- John Deere – Mike presented a warrant letter (grader) that is for 3 yrs/2,000 hours for \$15,000. The board said to take the extended warranty
- BP – Mike has not received anything regarding the damage they did to 500 N
- Berm – tough to complete with the weather
- New hire – he hired someone yesterday and has another interview scheduled.

Jason Fisher – DHA / EMA Director

- Billing ordinance – no sure if the changes will help or not. If they make no changes, it will continue as it is now
- Collections –
- Claims – Jason would like to permission to pay the claims below as an annual payment for a cheaper overall cost but needs permission since they are over the \$1,000 threshold. These were approved to be paid with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried
 - ESO reporting software - \$6737.00
 - Protocol app - \$2000.00
 - Ice machine - \$1690.00 (max)
- Gear – it has arrived, and Jason can pay for it through EMS equipment line or LEPC funds. The cost is \$1899.00
- Mainstream – they have been in the building. It will be a three-step process
- Cloud/Email migration – since this has occurred Jason has lost all emails prior to 2022. He would like to update the Homeland security and the billing by adopting the State Fire Marshals ordinance as a county ordinance. This will eliminate any future issues with trucking companies. Attorney Ahler provided an update on the letter he sent regarding the outstanding issues. He then asked if the county has a hazardous material ordinance, no they do not.
- Code Red – grant funding was available for the last 4 years but there has been no communication regarding its availability for 2024 and the EMPG money cannot be used for it. Commissioner, Bryan Berry motioned to approve the cost \$4840.50 to be paid for 2024 out of the capital improvement funds, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

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- Siren – one has been installed in Earl Park by the Town Hall
 - Volunteer incentive payments – Berry asked why there were multiple payments to people. Depending on the incident it varied on where it was paid from.
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John Cox – Sheriff

John shared a power point to provide the year recap/overview. He spoke about the department's accomplishments for the year and thanked the board for their support. He then talked briefly about the 2024 items he will be looking at incorporating or upgrading. His biggest concern is getting all road deputies vehicle cameras for the safety of his staff.

He spoke briefly about RQAW and the proposal to fix the jail. They will share it with the Sheriff and then he will present it to the board or ask them to join him.

He would like to work with the Council on re-establishing the Cumulative Jail fund so additional revenues can be placed into that fund.

He is working on getting a quote for the truck he has been allotted in the first part of the year.

He asked the board how they would like him to request approval for purchases over \$1,000 as they come up next year. Berry said at minimum they would like an email prior with as much detail as possible, so they were prepared to vote during the meeting.

John then spoke with Commissioner Freeland briefly about the new building going in at the fairgrounds and some of the specs. Freeland said that he did inform Cobb that the board wants to keep the work locally.

Jason Fisher – DHA / EMA Director returned

Jason returned to discuss the fire alarm with the board and what is needed to fix it. They have to set it up to extend the fiber from the jail to the fire alarm and is directly connected. It has to be monitored at some point by someone and feels that dispatch would be the best option. Freeland asked if Mainstream could do it. Jason replied that they would not do the 911 fiber. Berry asked what the point to point was. That is the alarm to jail fiber and the quote he has so far is \$3,700.00 one-time step-up fee. He is also not sure if there is or what the monthly monitoring fee. It would give a second fiber line also. After further discussion the topic was tabled until January.

Kathy Sarault – Health Department

Kathy came before regarding a possible amendment needed to include eye lash extensions, but it was determined by her and Attorney Ahler that it is not needed. Attorney Ahler stated that he had the ordinance (modeled off of Tippecanoe County) ready to be signed today. The eye lash extensions are run by the state through cosmetology.

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She then asked the board for permission to raise the vital records fee. She shared surrounding counties fees for comparison. The current fee is \$7.00 and have been that since 2008, she is asking for it to be raise to \$15. The new fee request was approved effective 01-01-2024 to \$15.00 with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

The ordinance for the tattoo parlor was approved and signed with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Latisha Provo – Economic Development

- READI 1.0 – submitted 1st claim
- Childcare – 39 seats left for childcare
- Ag strategy – combine proposal will be given to KIRPC
- IMVETS – want to use BC as a platform
- READI 2.0 – have items ready to deploy to all businesses
- Survey – will be sent to the board to review (this is from GLC)
- Make my move & What’s up 24/7 will be attending a meeting in January
- NIPSCO – assisted with a business location for inspection and waived fees (minus what was used)
- BR&E visits are scheduled
- Boswell citizens institute – she attended the function. This is just a grant for the future but no funding pass that initial phase.
- Scholarship – she received this from Wabash Valley power
- BC Student – assisted a student with this project
- TIF districts – asked if there were any in the county and if so where. Yes, there is one district with 3 parcels in it. The group had some discussions on them and whether or not they should look at anymore, the board is not in favor. Karen Hurtubise added that they are great for commercial areas but not residential areas. Latisha said that at conferences they talk about how those funds are used for matching grants
- IEDC site visit – they will start at GLC and then move to Delphi
- IMVETS – who is her contact, Simon is who joined the last zoom meeting. Berry said that he said that when Angie was here, they felt that BC would not meet the requirements for jobs for veterans. Berry said that they said they were not doing the vet side of READI 1.0 but possibly the housing side.
- KIRPC rep – Berry asked if she was ok with being the boards rep, yes she is

Bill Brost – Taxpayer

Bill wanted to discuss the internet development and that he is only 1 mile from the lines they have run but they will not bring it to his residence. Berry said that they are on the ground now looking for wireless sites, it will be about 200 meg. Bill said that they are around the division.

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Berry said he has tried and will try again but has been told no each time. Berry is hopeful they will start after the 1st of the year.

~~Bill then asked about the wind turbine regen and said that the guys never got back in touch with him or come out like they said. Bill said that after they moved out, they were supposed to talk with him, and they did not. He said that some Spencer wanted him to email them what he needed corrected on the tile. Berry asked why Jones did not take care of it, he was transferred to another place. Bill said that he wanted the contractor to put in the pattern tiles (he knows where they are) and they are not going to dig up as much. Bill said that he is going to go ahead and do it.~~

Business:

Sealed bids for the 2010 Ford Explorer were opened and awarded as follows:

James Morgan - \$900.00

John Fields - \$1825.00

The board awarded the bid to John Fields with a motion from Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

The Commissioner meeting minutes from 12.05.2023 were approved with corrections, motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion passed.

Commissioner Berry asked why there were two payments to Ameri crew. She had the claim brought down and it stated that it was mis keyed on the running balance totals and that there was just payment totaling \$350,000.00.

Payroll were approved by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried

The county home report was approved by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried

Title search work for the on-going lawsuit was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Auditor Freeland spoke about a recent meeting her and Chief Deputy, Beth Budreau had with IPEP and items they are willing to offer to the county free of charge. The rep has reached out to both Jason and the Sheriff Cox.

Auditor Freeland presented the county farm lease agreement to be signed. The board signed the agreement.

Auditor Freeland asked about keycard access for after-hour access. The discussion was tabled until a later date.

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Auditor Freeland reminded the board again about the need to establish a plan regarding the live streaming of meetings.

~~Berry asked about the light duty request and if they can have it for just one department.~~
Attorney Ahler said that for law enforcement there are things that they can have versus an office position.

The pay at once claims were approved with the correction to the running total balance with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

The light duty job description was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried

Attorney Ahler provided the board with a few updates.

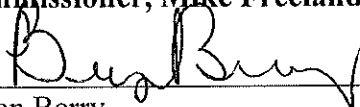
The board took a short recess at 9:34 a.m. for their Drainage Board meeting. The board reopened after the Drainage board meeting at 9:49 a.m.

The board came back to discuss a couple more housekeeping items.

Commissioner Berry motioned to approve selling the Tahoe to Kesler & Schafer Auctions in the amount of \$14,500.00, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.


The board approved the 2024 claim and payroll schedule with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m. with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry.

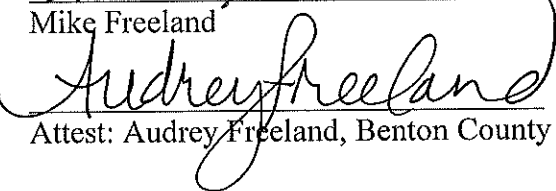


Bryan Berry

John Fields



Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor