

**Benton County Commissioner Meeting**  
**September 17th, 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, County Attorney, Jacob Ahler and Auditor, Audrey Freeland.

**Others in attendance were:** Phil McGinnis, John Gick, Penny Titus, Latisha Provo, Evan Puetz, Gail Lange, Kelly Balensiefer, John Cox and Jonathan Devers

**Commissioner, Bryan Berry asked the room to take a moment of silence in honor of Commissioner, John Fields who recently passed away.**

**Evan Puetz – Assistant Highway Supervisor**

- Crack seal – they are working on this so they can prepare for chip and seal next year before temperatures drop
- Fairgrounds – they have been helping with the horse arena and hauled some clay to the racetrack.
- Bridges – they are cleaning up around them
- Dragging roads
- Lift – it is still in Oxford. Commissioner Berry will reach out to see if they are done with it
- Tower – Freeland Park tower needs some millings so it can be fenced around it (30X30).
- Metro-Comm – once the contract is finalized, they will need to drive the route and verify how many boring and hand holes (to hook everything together). The highway needs to decide where they should go so that they can still maintain the ditches.
- Drag – Evan called them a couple weeks ago, it should be done in about 30 days
- Permit fees – what is the charge for boring; it is \$25 for boring, and it is \$50 for telephone poles

**Business:**

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

The minutes from the executive session were approved with a motion by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

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

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

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The amendment to the ordinance regarding culverts was reviewed and discussed. It was then approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

**Kelly Balensiefer – Assessor**

Kelly came before the board to discuss the flyover contracts and the payment which has been split three ways in the past. Auditor Freeland stated that it comes from the Reassessment fund, the Commissioners fund and then Megawatt fund which is actually under the Commissioners control. It will be paid for out of the Surveyors perpetuation, the Commissioners out of Economic Development funds and the Assessor's Reassessment with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Kelly then talked about the GIS mapping and updated the board that they have been merged from Eagle View to Beacon/Schneider and she wanted to let them know. She said that there is nothing to approved today but one of the options they now offer is online appeal process which she feels will be nice. This year they had 109 appeals filed and only 2 people showed.

**Business continued:**

Attorney Ahler updated the group on the agreement with Metro-Comm and that it has been agreed upon, except for the map. Commissioner Berry said that the first page is incorrect so that will need to be corrected, and the map was sent last September.

The lease for the Boswell elevator grain leg was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

The lease for the Cyr's gran leg was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried

The Otterbein tower lease (water tower placement) was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry would like the contact for the NWSWD, Auditor Freeland will send that to him.

The grant of easement was tabled again since their attorney has not returned any communication

Auditor Freeland asked on behalf of the County Nurse for approval to purchase flu shots that were over their purchase limit. The board approved this with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried

**Jonathan Devers – Assistant EMA/DHS Director**

Presented a quote for a med bed unit (used but in new condition) for \$2,500.00. It has a 70-gallon tank / 50ft hose and a 6 ½ Honda pump with all stainless/brass fittings. They have the

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fund to pay for this out of the EMA donations and other EMA/EMS account lines. The request was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

The group then discussed the coroner's office relocation to the annex building. Commissioner Berry asked if they could look for a 15X15 area and suggested possibly reducing the bathroom spaced to assist with finding space. The group discussed a few different options, suggestions and placement. There were some discussions on solar panels and electricity to be ran to the other outbuilding. The board asked Jonathan to get some quotes on both of those. The board said to also advertise the glass crusher to sale.

### **John Cox – Sheriff**

- Newton Co – they have been assisting Newton Co as they deal with the loss of their deputy
- Ordinance – He is looking into a request from Templeton to clean up a few areas. He will be filing the ordinance violations this week. He has been working with Matt and Kathy on this
- Generator – worked great during the recent storm
- Vehicles –The county has received a check in the amount of \$15,085.00 for the totaled vehicle. Since they will not be replacing this vehicle; can those funds be used along with the Commissary to get the new vehicle detailed and outfitted. Auditor Freeland asked if the board could establish a new non-reverting fund with language to specify that all insurance payments should be place in this fund, so it is not absorbed by the big pot. Attorney Ahler advised that it could be with that language. A non-reverting fund will be created (named – Insurance payout funds), to be controlled by the board of Commissioners. The Sheriff will cover part of the expenses out of Commissary that is not available once the new ordinance and fund are established.
- Staff – one deputy is still out on FMLA, and he has just learned that he has one deputy that will be leaving
- Spillman – they are on the most updated version. He stated that the new dispatch supervisor is doing well
- Jail study – now complete and the next step is for the group to meet and then present to the whole group
- Fairgrounds – They have received one large donation to go towards the building. He would like to request approval for donation bricks (\$500 each) that will be placed at the west walkway with the board's approval. A motion to approve was made by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried. Thanks again to the highway department for all of their help with the arena, the new building and everything else they have done.
- Tower - Commissioner Berry would like the information on who put the fence around the tower. Auditor Freeland will get that information.
- Donations – Commissioner Berry would like for a one Commissioner, John Fields. This will be done. There are \$500 bricks available, and then for those who donate on a larger scale they will have something placed inside the vestibule. The board approved this with

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a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

**Business continued:**

Commissioner, Bryan Berry made a motion to appoint Rita Schutter as the new VSO Officer, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

The NWSWD appointment was discussed since there is a need for a replacement. This will be revisited later.

The deposit option form from Benton County wind farm needs another page signed. Commissioner Berry signed.

The Cintas issue was discussed, and Auditor Freeland said that it is still on-going and not resolved. They have been told that there was credits coming to the county.

Attorney Ahler provided an update on the Republics accounts.

Auditor Freeland presented another outstanding toll invoice from Illinois. She has disputed it, as it is not the county's vehicle.

Auditor Freeland presented the proposed 2025 holiday calendar.

Commissioner Berry asked about the extension mileage claim and said that he does not agree with the miles being charged. He does not want to pay mileage to someone he does not know. The mileage claims are denied, and the board would like Nick to attend the next meeting as well.

Commissioner Freeland asked if the county home van has been repaired. Auditor Freeland is unsure.

Commissioner Berry said that YWCA reached out asking the board for their support for breast cancer awareness and domestic violence. They will be at the next meeting.

Commissioner Berry stated that BP called him, and they are selling all of their onshore wind divisions and wanted to make the county aware.

AES sent the decommissioning study back and Commissioner Berry said that it came to \$4,571,971.00 and they had wood figure in a 20% increase for decommissioning and 20% decrease on the salvage value so the bond is now at \$7,193,000.00. Commissioner Berry has never seen it done this way before, he asked what the board wanted to accept. It was decided to accept the bond at 7,193,000.00.

The EDPR returned their decommissioning study and it came back at \$5,390,974.00 and they have set the bond at that amount. This was accepted with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, Bryan Berry and motion carried.

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Commissioner Berry is still waiting on the decommissioning bond from Pattern and Next ERA, he stated that they have both had over 60 days. Commissioner Freeland asked if we were going to start fining them. Yes, it is getting close to that.

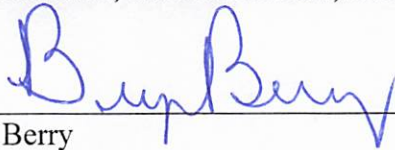
**Penny Titus - Rep. for Congressman Baird**

She came before the board today to introduce herself and provide a brief history of her work experience. She will be serving Clinton, Carrol, Cass, White and Benton.


**Business continued:**

Auditor Freeland asked on behalf on offices within the courthouse if offices were able to step out while Stanley Steemer is in their offices to avoid any breathing issues. The board had no problem whatsoever with that request.

**With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, Bryan Berry, motion carried.**

  
Bryan Berry

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John Fields

  
Mike Freeland

  
Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor