

Benton County Commissioner Meeting
July 2nd, 2024

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

Others in attendance were: Mike Budreau, Latisha Provo, Joy Loflin, Kelly Balensiefer, Jon Charlesworth, Matt Hull and Ben Dispennett

Mike Budreau – Highway Supervisor

- Chip-n-seal – 22 miles left
- Pipe – found a bad pipe and will need to order some to restock
- Recycle – Angie would like the camera system moved to the new recycling building. Commissioner Berry asked him to reach out to Matt about getting that done. They held interviews for the department and have selected a new employee
- Pipe – Commissioner Freeland asked where the bad pipe was located – 800 N 975 E. Commissioner Berry asked if they have reached out to Colin, yes Michelle has
- Next ERA – Commissioner Berry asked if they have reached out to him, no but he believes they have the Sheriff because he received a name
- Highway – any prospects for the open positions, not really. One current employee may decide to leave employment due to the drive. They are down 2 full time at this time, not counting the one who might resign.
- Maintenance seals – these are being done as they go. They use S on those
- 800 S – Commissioner Fields said that it looks really good
- CCMG – they are working on the next grant cycle for next year, not sure if they will get anything through the July drawn
- 600 N – Berry asked about a previous discussion from ST RD 71 (1/4 mile) to Benton and if that has been put back, no it has not but they will
- 400 S – will be in next year's CCMG. It will be grounded and rebuilt. 800 S is junk, but it will be next year as well. They will also be working on 5 E to 6 N next year that will be ground as well

Kelly Balensiefer – Assessor

Kelly came before the board today because she need to hire an attorney for the appeals that is fluent in the exemptions. She presented a proposal from an attorney who speaks at their conferences on exemptions. They have 109 appeals this year and that is the highest it has been in the last 10 years.

She has hired a new deputy to replace her chief who will be leaving in August, she will start July 15th.

The board approved the engagement letter for Attorney, Sara Schreiber with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Kelly then asked the board to approve a part time position for her office so she can request funding for the 2025 budget. She is not sure if the position will be needed or not but would

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rather be prepared. A motion to approve the part time position was approved with the elimination of the 2nd deputy (full time) position being eliminated was made by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Business:

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

Monthly claims were discussed and then approved all but the Wildman invoices for the AED recertification until a copy of their certification is received with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry asked if fund 8116 is a state fund (used for substitute teachers) and if it was used for county employees or just the schools. Auditor Freeland said that is just for the school.

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

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

Commissioner Bryan Berry finally got an email regarding the easement for Gross so he hopes they can approve it at the next meeting.

Auditor Freeland presented an agreement for contractors and contracted services which was reviewed by the County Attorney. After some discussion the topic was tabled for some revisions to be made to the document and an ordinance or resolution will be drafted regarding contracts as well.

The board reviewed, approved and signed the annual covered bridge certification notice. It was approved stating that Benton County had zero covered bridges with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry asked Latisha if she had talked with KIRPC regarding the safe streets grant per the email from Edwin regarding the match funds. There are quite a few areas going together for the match and Berry thought it was help get more transit. He feels that county did not agree to match funds until a study was done, and Edwin came before them.

County Attorney provided an update on J.O.B.S. and communication between him and SRI, Inc counsel. Auditor Freeland stated that Treasurer Hoff did remove both parcels from the tax sale certified list due to the legal proceedings.

Commissioner Freeland asked if a contract with Stanley Steemer was ever found. No just the awarded bid and discussions that they would schedule through Commissioner Freeland on when they would be on site.

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Latisha Provo – Economic Development Director

Latisha wanted to speak to the board about getting approval to hire an assistant for her department. Commissioner Fields asked if there were any funds in her budget for that position currently, no there is not, and it would be for 2025.

She presented a non-reverting fund ordinance to create a new fund for the Wabash Heartland Campus and Community Collaboration. This was accepted and approved with a motion by Commissioner, John Fields, seconded by Commissioner, Mike Freeland and motion carried.

Latisha then talked about City Ride Share and eventually they will need the board's permission to even have the program in the county. It will be through Purdue. Commissioner Berry asked her to reach out to Edwin regarding his match request.

The RCI study was discussed and if there were any locations the board would like to add to it. The board will get back to her if they think of any.

The part position discussion was revisited and approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Jon Charlesworth – Purdue Extension

Commissioner Berry asked how the 4H camp went. Jon stated that both the camp and the round up went great.

Jon came before the board to request extended time and possible overtime for Kelly Wallpe during the fair time. He also wanted to extend additional hours to the part time girls as well but does not feel they will work enough hours to have overtime hours. The board stated that the request is approved as follows; 32.5 to 40 hours will be hourly, anything over 40 will be comp time that must be used within 60 days. The board also stressed that the 1-hour lunch must be documented and that they will not pay mileage for them driving to the fairgrounds as that is their office during that time. Auditor Freeland will send Jon the time sheet that they will use for those pay periods.

Business continued:

Auditor Freeland asked about the LOW annual fee acknowledgment and if she had approval to move forward with being billed annually. Commissioner Berry asked if the amount listed was the total amount, she will double check. A motion to approve the annual fee once the total amount has been approved and the Auditor to use President Berry's electronic signature was made by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Auditor Freeland had an invoice for the fairground building for tresses, and asked if that could be paid as a pay at once from the ARPA funds. The approval was given with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

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A quote from the Town of Earl was shared and discussed. Latisha has reached out to the individual who presented it to the county.

Auditor Freeland asked about invoices received for 365 for emails. After some discussion on these matters, the invoices will be sent to the board for review.

The board discussed the Cintas accounts and the status of them since it has been so long. Auditor Freeland asked which accounts are being cancelled. After some discussion the board said that the following accounts are being cancelled as of now, Courthouse, Annex, County EMS and the County Highway. The County Attorney spoke as to what he would need if it was to go to court. This was approved with a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

The group discussed the repayment agreements for the small claim's cases. The board stated that the one individual will need to make payments if they are not picking up hours. The small claim case will not be pulled until a payment is received and back in good standing.

Commissioner Berry addressed the group about Pattern and the escrow account since they used another company besides Wood. They have come back and agreed to use Wood. Berry feels all wind companies should use them for the decommissioning plans, so they are handled the same across the board, the county went with Wood in 2018. Commissioner, Mike Freeland motioned that if they use Wood then a letter of credit would be accepted, seconded by Commissioner, John Fields and motion carried.

Commissioner Fields asked if anything had been received from Republics, no, nothing has been received. He asked Attorney Ahler what the county can do since the letter stated that we were going to cancel immediately but they have not yet retrieved their bins. We cannot stop paying if the bins are being used by the public. Commissioner Fields said that he will get the new dumpsters set and then somehow get the old ones removed or blocked so they cannot be utilized.

Commissioner Berry asked if there should be a cease and desist should be placed on Bio-Town today, yes you should. They have been contacted and no response has been received. They have been notified that a bond is needed and signed the contract but no bond has been received and no notification of one existing has been received.

Bridge 125 – Commissioner Berry asked the board if they got their forms filled out, yes, they all have completed it.

Commissioner Berry asked when the impact payments would be sent out. Auditor Freeland stated it would be done in late July.

The new IMI account for the Board of Commissioners has been established.

Commissioner Fields got the EMS survey done.

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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 10:02 a.m. to discuss the following.

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

Others in attendance were: Joy Loflin, Latisha Provo and Gail Lange

Auditor Freeland stated that she spoke with the custodian about Wildman and certification to inspect the AED's, he stated that he does not have a copy of anything so she will reach out and request it. The payment for the AED portion is to be held until the documentation is received. All other Wildman invoices can be paid out.

An email regarding timeclock edits was discussed and the board advised Auditor Freeland that no edits were to be made until review of the location and timeclock connectivity was done.

Commissioner Freeland spoke about the breakers at the county home popping and that the air conditioner was out on the men's side of the building. He will contact Lyle to look at it.

Latisha provided the group with some additional information on the LEI CCC grant.

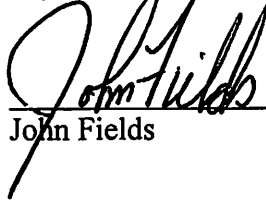
The board talked about the open CES position at the Extension office.

Gail Lange asked the board to speak on their new VSO and why he was chosen for the position.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m. With a motion by Commissioner, Mike Freeland, second by Commissioner, John Fields, motion carried.



Bryan Berry



John Fields

Mike Freeland



Attest: Audrey Freeland, Benton County Auditor