

Benton County Council

July 19th, 2022

The Benton County Council were set to meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Benton County Courthouse. Those in attendance were Council members: Robert Sloniger, Brent Cox, Jack Duncan, Jim Schoen, and Auditor, Audrey Freeland

Others in attendance were –Angie Taylor, Mike Freeland, Lisa Jefvert, Mike Freeland, Bryan Berry, Jim Deckard and Robert Bellucci

Business:

The board was presented their purposed 2023 budget books. The only thing that is not included is the cut sheet.

The meeting minutes from the June 23rd, 2022, meeting were approved as presented with a motion by Councilman, Brent Cox, second by Councilman, Jim Schoen and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry said that the roof is coming along and they should be on the other side by Monday.

Commissioner Berry then spoke briefly about the Town of Oxford is coming in to request assistance with. They would like for the county to provide them a short term loan so the on-going water project can continue without delays. They are to receive their grant funding early 2023 to repay. This is the water project for the Town and Drug Plastics who failed to meet their requirements so they could get fire protection coverage. The short term loan amount they are looking for is \$707,000.00 and Berry.

Commissioner Berry spoke about some upcoming investments the Finance Board is looking to do with Farmers and Merchants bank in the amount of 8.3 million.

The group revisited the discussion of the water project and reviewed the cash balances of funds to see where the funding might even be available. Councilman Schoen said the simplest would be to take it out of the wind funds and then when the repayment occurs the money would go back into it.

Auditor Freeland spoke to the board about the ongoing audits. A point to ponder but nothing that has to be done now or at all is moving all non-elected officials to an hourly rate. Since there is no comp time policy and the money is/would be due to those employees upon on separation of employment. Councilman Sloniger asked if the Commissioners were going to talk to those departments, yes they plan too.

Auditor Freeland then informed the group that the Auditor and Treasurer offices had their meet and greet with the new software company. The payroll and financial side will roll out possibly in September but the tax side will not be until February 2023.

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Jim Deckard & Robert Bellucci – Town of Oxford & Commonwealth

Jim spoke briefly about the multi-million dollar project that they are doing and how they are applying for funding with the state but they would like to get started. They cannot build the subdivision without the water and sewage infrastructure in place first.

Robert addressed the board and reiterated the project and specs adding that they are wanting to get started but they need the water and sewer first. They are waiting to see what Oxford is going to be awarded. They will need to start the process of the initial stages to stay in the project. They have applied for both grant funding and a low interest loan and they will know within a month on the funding they have been awarded.

They are here today to ask the county for a 0% interest short term loan in the amount of \$707,000.00. Councilman Sloniger asked how soon the county would be repaid. The Town will repay the county in full by April 2023. Councilman Schoen asked how soon they would need the money. Robert replied that it would be in September. Commissioner Berry asked if the money would come directly to the county or would the Town be a pass through. Robert said that is how another county is doing that on another project. After further discussion it was determined that the county will be sent an invoice and the county will pay the vendor directly. All claims will be paid out of the Hoosier Wind Fund (4907) and the repayment would be placed back into that fund. Councilman, Jim Schoen motioned to approve, second by Councilman, Jack Duncan and motion carried.

Commissioner Berry stated that the county would like it to be noted that the county requests a couple of stipulations;

1. The Town of Oxford will need to complete a capital improvement plan
2. The Town of Oxford will need to have their Planning and Zoning boards

The county would like this to be completed within the next two years. This has been requested before and due to a conversation with Rusty who stated that the Town would be taking over the permits. Commissioner Berry explained that in order to do that they would need to have a plan commission in place. The capital improvement plan must be able to show how the money is being spent.

Jim Deckard state that he was unaware of the Town doing the permits as they have not been discussing this. He will look into the request of the county.

Robert added that he would be willing to send updates and information as they progress. The council said that email or written notice of that would be fine, or he is welcome to get on the agenda for an in person update.

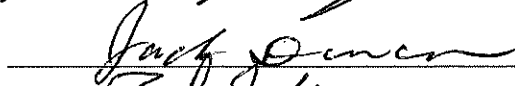
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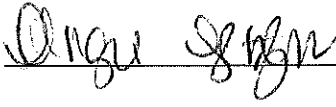
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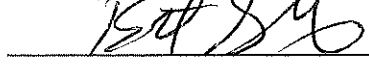
With no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:05 am with a motion by Councilman, Jim Schoen, second by Councilman, Brent Cox and motion carried.












Attest: 
Audrey Freeland, County Auditor