

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

May 2, 2023

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Members in attendance were Chair James Argerbright, Vice-Chair Kim Wheeler, Thomas Warner, Thor Hodges, Joan Western, Nicholas Brewer, and John Barrett. Others in attendance were Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Commissioners Chad Banks, Theresa Baysinger and Rob Schuman, Assessor Kim Erdly, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Health Director Scott Wagner, Dale Buuck from the EDC, Highway Director Katy Fry, Mark Sturtevant, Chief Deputy Todd Cook and Billy Maddox from the Sheriffs Department and Lori Heuer.

Chairman Argerbright called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. John Barrett wanted to congratulate Thor Hodges on his retirement from the City and presented him with a coin.

WHITLEY COUNTY 4H CLUBS UPDATE: Lori Heuer was present to tell Council what the 4H has been spending the annual contributions and the additional \$40,000 that was granted in 2020. There are still lots of things that need to be repaired and she encourages Council to consider giving more to the 4H program.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS: Health Director Scott Wagner was present to seek approval for appropriations to grants that were not budgeted for at the start of the budget process. Scott will make sure that moving forward all grants will have appropriations. Warner made a motion to approve all the Health Department additional appropriations, seconded by Wheeler and passed with a 7/0 vote.

SICK TIME PAYOUT ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION: Auditor Tiffany Deakins explained that appropriations needed to be made for sick time payout that was normally appropriated in the Rainy-Day Fund. Council would prefer to have Tiffany come back and get appropriations approved as they need to be paid out.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK OVERTIME DISCUSSION: HR Director Jennifer Shinabery was present to answer questions that the Council had regarding the policy for calculating overtime. Katy Fry and Todd Cook spoke with Council about how this could affect their departments and how often overtime is earned. Commissioners voted to change the policy back to the way it was in the previous handbook with a 2/1 vote. The Council would like another month to make their decision. Councilman Barrett made a motion to table, seconded by Warner and carried with a 6/1 vote with Hodges voting against.

REDEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT: Planning Director Nathan Bilger was present to review the 2022 Redevelopment Annual Report.

BROADBAND CONSULTANT PROPOSAL: Dale Buuck from the Whitley County EDC was present on behalf of the Whitley County Broadband Task Force to seek approval from Council to contract with consultant Zach Sand and Sand Strategies to assist with bringing broadband to rural Whitley County. Commissioners unanimously voted to move forward with the contract and added it to the ARP Plan. Councilman Barrett voted to approve the contract and Resolution 2023-11 to appropriate the funds, Brewer seconded, and the vote passed with a 7/0 vote.

BUDGET CALENDAR DISCUSSION: Councilman Argerbright went over the budget calendar with Council.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Councilman Argerbright stated there was nothing to review.

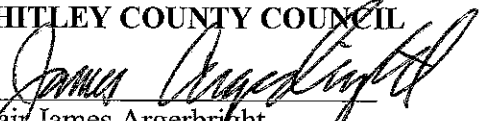
COMMISSIONER REPORT: Commissioner Banks gave the Commissioner report.

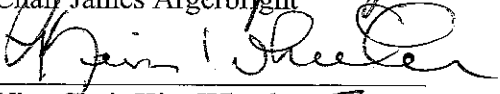
- The Highway Department was awarded the Community Crossings matching grant for this year.
- Banks presented John Barrett with a certificate for 26 years of service to Whitley County.
- The jail project is moving along, Banks encouraged Council to drive by and take a look. Also that Commissioners had to pay approximately \$180,000 for NIPSCO to make improvements for the project.
- At the March 20th Commissioner meeting the Reiff Lease Rental agreement was signed.
- The Humane Society agreement was also signed for 2023 for \$25,000.
- Commissioners are working on updating the Solar Ordinance.
- Columbia City Connect is launching the historical digital walk tour this Friday at 5:30 pm just before First Fridays.

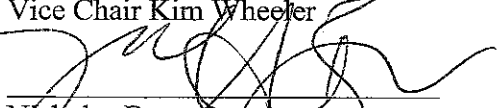
IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES: The Council reviewed the April 4, 2023, regular meeting minutes, Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Western and passed with a 7/0 vote.

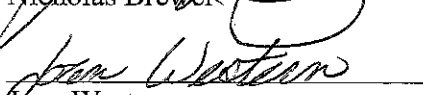
There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Argerbright adjourned the meeting at 9:37 AM.

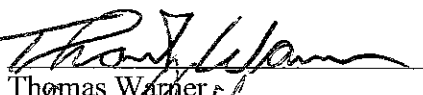
WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

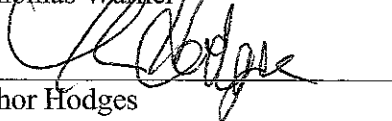

Chair James Argerbright

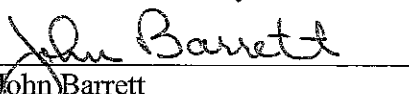

Vice Chair Kim Wheeler


Nicholas Brewer


Joan Western


Thomas Warner


Thor Hodges


John Barrett

Attest:


Tiffany Deakins, Auditor