

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

June 6, 2023

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Tuesday, June 6, 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 Commissioners Chad Banks, Theresa Baysinger and Rob Schuman, Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Health Director Scott Wagner, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Clerk Cindy Doolittle, Dale Buuck from the EDC, Maintenance Director Mark Sturtevant, Coroner Scott Smith, Sheriff Jason Spencer, Chief Deputy Todd Cook and Janelle Schmitt with the Sheriff's Department, Prosecutor DJ Sigler, Todd Geiger from 4-H, Kyle Pepler from the Maintenance Department, Tim Summers from the Maintenance Department, and Michael Ashby from the Peabody Library.

Chairman Argerbright called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROGER'S LEASE RESOLUTION: Dale Buuck with EDC was present to give an update on 26 acres purchased by Rogers Property Management on 100 S just north of Paige's Crossing. RDC has been working with them as they develop the property. They plan to build a shell building on the property. RDC is working with prospective companies who are willing to put up the building as well as helping with hearing costs and do a lease like they have done in the past. Last week they realized a step was skipped on a public hearing so that will happen shortly and be presented at the next Council meeting.

ANNUAL CF-1 ABATMENT APPROVALS: Dale Buuck with EDC stated that the Auditor and himself reviewed the CF-1s filed for tax abatements. They verified the investment was made, the employment numbers were met, and the wages were in alignment. All but Gator Cases and Indiana Materials Processing complied. Gator Cases turned in their CF-1 tax paperwork, but not in the timeframe they were supposed to. Buuck recommends they not be approved for this year but be allowed to turn in their form on time next year to pick up where they left off. Indiana Materials didn't turn in any of their paperwork and after looking into it they may have sold that property, so it's recommended it's not approved either. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the abatements presented except for Gator Cases and Indiana Materials with the Chairman signing, seconded by Wheeler, and passed with a 7/0 vote.

SANDS STRATEGIES: Dale Buuck with EDC gave an update on the internet committee and Sands Strategy. They have greatly increased the size in the taskforce of well over 30 individual stakeholders throughout the county. They have over 30 companies on the provider list that they are working with. EDC added a broadband drop down on their website where you can take a launch speed test. People taking this test throughout the county will help them map out the needs and build a case for grants and showing providers where there's opportunities.

CORONER ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUEST: Coroner Scott Smith was present to seek approval on some additional funds to do DNA testing to close a cold case from 1984 and the possible burial costs. Scott explained we have been storing the bones since 1984 and now we have the technologies to identify who's they are. Prosecutor DJ Sigler stated he will pay for \$2,500 of the \$8,885 quote from Snapshot DNA Analysis. Once the bones have been identified Scott will advertise for the claiming of the remains. After 30 days if no one claims the remains, Scott will come back to the Council to request additional funds for burial costs. The Auditor's Office will advertise for the additional and will bring it back to next month's meeting for approval. The Council gave Scott the consensus to proceed until the next month's meeting when they vote on the additional. Scott stated he would be unavailable on June 28th for the budget meeting due to a leadership conference the same day. He made a few changes due to cost increase.

CLERK BUDGET: Clerk Cindy Doolittle was present to discuss her budget due to being at a State Conference the day of the budget hearing on June 28th. Cindy explained the differences in her County General Clerk budget. She lowered her budget in printing and increased her dues and subscriptions. Cindy explained the increase in election budget is due to it being a bigger election. The election equipment in 2024 is going to have to have a verifiable paper trail which is a heavy piece of equipment that is hooked up to every voter machine. The state is also mandating all new cases that will house all the equipment which is also very heavy and are over 50lbs. After speaking with other counties, they are looking into hiring a moving company to drop off and pick up the election equipment to make it easier and take the liability off the county if someone got hurt trying to move the heavy equipment. They discussed following the moving company to make sure all the right machines are delivered to the correct precinct. They also plan to hire mechanics to fix the machinery if there's issues with the machines during elections. The budget for 2025 will decrease significantly due to the election year.

EXTENSION ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUEST: Todd Geiger with Extension was present to give a STEM update and seek approval for an additional appropriation. Todd stated that last year they did 9 events and this year they have held 46 events. They reach out to elementary, middle, and now high schools. Todd stated he could use more volunteers to help with these events. Todd stated he came today to request

additional funds for mileage/travel. Previously his fuel fund was budgeted around \$8,000 and due to COVID he had not been using that much over the last couple of years. His travel budget was decreased to \$3000, but now that they are doing more events, they will need to go back to the \$8,000 budget. Therefore, he's requesting an additional of \$5,000 more. The Auditors office did not receive the request in time to advertise and therefore it will have to wait until the next meeting to approve.

FUND TRANSFER: Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tinchler stated that we have two ordinance funds that need cleaned up due to payments for liens getting applied to the wrong fund as well as a negative fund due to liens not being paid in a timely manner. State Board of Accounts have stated that a negative fund is not allowed, therefore we need to correct it this year otherwise it will be a finding in our audit. The two transfers will cleanup the funds. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the transfer requests, seconded by Western and passed with a 7/0 vote.

HANDBOOK OVERTIME DISCUSSION: Commissioner Banks reminded Council of the change made in 2022 effective 2023 to the way overtime is calculated and the freeze of the change. Commissioners voted to change the policy back to the way it was in the previous handbook with a 2/1 vote. Banks stated Commissioners and Council both need to approve policy changes. Warner expressed his concern of using paid time off as hours worked when calculating overtime. Councilman Hodges made a motion to accept the recommendation by Commissioners to revert to the policy prior to January 1st, 2023, regarding calculating overtime, seconded by Brewer and carried with a 4/3 vote with Warner, Wheeler, and Western voting against.

COMMISSIONER REPORT: Commissioner Banks gave the Commissioner's report.

- An amendment was made to the solar ordinance.
- A rezoning ordinance from RR to VR at Crooked Lake Clubhouse.
- They continue to have biweekly meetings for the jail project. Banks invited a member of the Council to join the meetings. Councilman Argerbright and Western would take turns going to the meetings.

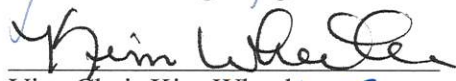
IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES: The Council reviewed the May 2, 2023, regular meeting minutes, Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Warner and passed with a 7/0 vote.

OTHER BUSINESS: Councilwoman Western stated she believes they need to sit on a shift with dispatch as previously discussed and would like to see it happen soon so when Council has to make decisions regarding dispatch, they have a better understanding.

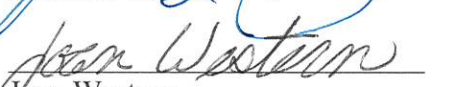
There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Argerbright adjourned the meeting at 9:23 AM.

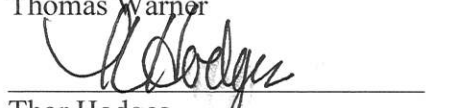
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Chair James Argerbright


Vice Chair Kim Wheeler

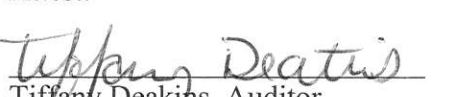

Nicholas Brewer


Joan Western

Thomas Warner

Thor Hodges

John Barrett

Attest:


Tiffany Deakins, Auditor