

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

February 5, 2024

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, February 5, 2024, at 4:00 PM in the Commissioner's Meeting Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Commissioners in attendance were Chair Chad Banks, Vice Chair Rob Schuman, and Commissioner Theresa Baysinger. Others in attendance were Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Commissioner's Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Human Resources Director Jennifer Shinabery, County Highway Director Ryan Getts, Planning Director Nathan Bilger, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Maintenance Director Mark Sturtevant, Council Members Thomas Warner, Nick Brewer, Joan Western and James Argerbright, Leslie Blakley from Council on Aging, Zack Sand, Steve Carender, Jeremy Burton, Scott Frankle, Scott Wise and Sonya Emerick.

Chairman Banks opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: The Commissioners recognized employees with over 20 years of service. Lisa Rossiter has 38 years of service; Dan Bishop and Lindsey Grossnickle have 20 years of service.

NEXT LEVEL CONNECTIONS GRANT: Zack Sand with Sand Strategies was present with members of the Broadband Committee as well as a few internet providers to give Commissioners an update with the Next Level Connects Grant. Sands has been working with the Broadband Committee to try and get internet to rural areas of Whitley County and more county residents. A representative from Comcast and Surf Internet spoke to Commissioners about plans that they have for Whitey County. Zack Sand wanted Commissioners to sign a letter of support so that it could be included with the grant applications when providers apply. Commissioner Baysinger wants to use ARP Funds or CEDIT funds for the local match when the time comes. Baysinger made a motion to sign the letter of support as presented, seconded by Schuman, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

QUARTER 4 VOUCHER AND VEHICLE PURCHASE AGREEMENT: Leslie Blakley was present from Whitley County Council on Aging to get the 4th quarter voucher signed as well as the vehicle agreement for 2024. The 2024 vehicle purchase agreement is for a van and a bus purchase for 2024. The total amount for the agreement is \$147,887. The 4th quarter voucher total is \$91,624. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve both requests, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote.

EASEMENT APPROVAL: Chip Hill from the City of Columbia City was present to get approval for an easement for the trail that will be built to the High School. Attorney Boxberger needs to review the easement before Commissioners approve. This has been added to the next meeting agenda for 2-20-2024.

ROW PERMIT: Highway Director Ryan Getts was present to seek approval for a right of way permit for Fearnow Farm Drainage to allow for an open cut on Wolf Road to replace tile. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve the permit as presented, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

PLAT APPROVALS: Planning Director Nathan Bilger was present with four plats for approval.

1. CHL Addition in Churubusco is a replat of an older subdivision to make it a one lot plat. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger and passed unanimously with a 3/0 vote.
2. Blue Turtle Addition is a replat in Churubusco with the intent to sell the new lot. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger and passed unanimously with a 3/0 vote.
3. Bransfield Acres is located near 450 north and 350 west. The new owner wants to build a house on the lot. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve, seconded by Schuman and passed unanimously with a 3/0 vote.
4. S & G Mills Subdivision is a plat to split into two lots so a new home can be constructed. This is located off 500 N. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve, seconded by Schuman and passed unanimously with a 3/0 vote.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE: Health Director Scott Wagner was present to seek approval to continue with the wellness program that is offered for employees on their health insurance rates. He let the Commissioners know that the new Community Health Nurse Darcy Hoopingarner is trying to get more employees to participate in the wellness program as we only had approximately 12 employees for 2023. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to continue the wellness program, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote. Wagner also let Commissioners know that the Septic Ordinance will need to be placed on hold as the State has new legislation that might be put into place.

ATLAS BUILDING SERVICES CONTRACT: Maintenance Director Mark Sturtevant was present to have Commissioners sign a service contract for Atlas Building to complete section two of the courthouse. The contract is to complete tuck pointing and sealing. Attorney Boxberger has not yet reviewed the contract. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve the contract once the County Attorney has reviewed, seconded by Schuman, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

SOLID WASTE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT: Attorney Boxberger explained that the Solid Waste Board voted to increase the solid waste fee from \$53 to \$70. Because of this change the interlocal agreement needed to be signed again. There was verbiage changed to follow statute regarding the penalties and fees as well. The Commissioners need to approve Resolution 2024-03 that allows for the Commissioners to sign the interlocal agreement. Baysinger made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Schuman, and passed unanimously with a 3/0 vote.

HUMANE SOCIETY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: Commissioners and the County Attorney have reviewed the memorandum of understanding between the County and the Humane Society. Commissioner Baysinger stated that she would like to discuss for next year the idea of giving more than \$25,000. Banks stated that he feels \$25,000 is adequate and has not heard anything from the Humane Society stating that it is not enough. However, he is open to discussion. Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote.


OTHER BUSINESS: Banks stated that there was another item that he would like to discuss. The Commissioners had received a request from Daughters of the American Revolution asking to plant a tree on the courthouse lawn. Commissioners are in favor of this but would like to have Mark Sturtevant give his approval as well. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to allow for the tree planting, seconded by Schuman, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

MINUTES AND CLAIMS: The claim distributions from January 17, 2024, through February 5, 2024, were reviewed by the Commissioners. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve the payroll claims, seconded by Schuman and passed with a 3/0 vote. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve the accounts payable claims, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners reviewed minutes from January 2, 2024, regular meeting minutes that needed to be updated. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners also reviewed the bid opening minutes from January 16, 2024, Schuman made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners reviewed the regular meeting minutes from January 16, 2024. Schuman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote.


PUBLIC COMMENT: Council President James Argerbright asked the County Attorney a few questions regarding the interlocal agreement with solid waste and the role that the Council serves. Auditor Deakins presented Commissioners with three appointments that needed to be signed for the Redevelopment Commission members they appoint.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Banks adjourned the meeting at 5:18 PM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Chair Chad Banks



Vice Chair Robert Schuman

Commissioner Theresa Baysinger

Attest: Tiffany Deakins
Tiffany Deakins, Auditor