

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

April 15, 2024

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, April 15, 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, Commissioner's Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Community Corrections Director Paula Worden, Clerk Cindy Doolittle, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Highway Director Ryan Getts, Jessica Hockemeyer, Mariejon Goss, Damien Stafford, Sheryl Kaminski, Rachel Alexander, and Darren Bickle.

Chairman Banks opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

LAUNCH PAD: Rachel Alexander and Darren Bickle were present to give some information for a program called Launch Pad. Launch Pad has been in Whitley County for two years and is partnering with the Economic Development Commission as well as the Community Foundation. Launch Pad is building long-term childcare solutions. They have already added 81 childcare positions within Whitley County and only hope to grow that number. Launch Pad has assisted with adding childcare to the Whitko Career Academy as well as within Whitley County Consolidated Schools. There are no requests from Commissioners or the County currently.

2023 HIGHWAY ANNUAL REPORT: Highway Director Ryan Getts was present to answer any questions that the Commissioners may have regarding the 2023 annual highway report. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote. Getts also let constituents know that the Highway Department was awarded a Community Crossings grant for 2024 totaling \$1,322,622.50 to allow for paving Lincolnway from 30 to the Kosciusko County line. This requires a Docusign from Commissioner Banks, Commissioner Schuman made a motion to allow for Banks to sign the Docusign to INDOT, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS: Commissioners have two board appointments to be reviewed. The first is for the Regional Sewer District, Elizabeth Wallace has been mentioned to have a term of April 16, 2024, ending April 15, 2028. Schuman made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote. The second request was for the Peabody Public Library for an appointment that would be from May 18, 2024, ending May 17, 2028. Commissioner Banks stated that he has been in conversation with Joel Frank about the appointment for over a year and made a motion to appoint Joel Frank to the Library Board, seconded by Schuman and passed with a 3/0 vote.

PLAT APPROVAL: Planning Director Nathan Bilger was present with 3 plats for approval.

1. Moses Addition is a 1-lot plat off 750 E. There are some drain issues that if need be, will go before the drainage board. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote.
2. Watering Hole is a 3-lot plat on South Washington Road. This is also requiring drain issues be addressed. Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote.
3. Green & Tran Addition is a re-plat at the corner of Crescent, Fish Hatchery & Colony at Tri-Lakes. Baysinger made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Schuman, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

SAFE STREETS FOR ALL ORDINANCE: Auditor Deakins stated that she recently learned that all new funds that need to be set up need to have an Ordinance come before Commissioners for approval. Attorney Boxberger stated that it has also come into question whether multiple readings are required for adopting Ordinances. There is a way to waive the second reading if all 3 Commissioners are present and all vote for the Ordinance. Baysinger made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-04 also to waive the second reading, seconded by Schuman, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

PROBLEM SOLVING ORDINANCE: Community Corrections Director Paula Worden was present to let Commissioners know that she had been awarded a \$9,000 grant to be used with the Veteran Treatment Court. This grant is also renewable so she will be applying for it next year as well. Baysinger made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-05 also to waive the second reading, seconded by Schuman, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

UPDATED BULK IMAGE FEE ORDINANCE: Recorder Rosemary Brown let Commissioners know that she needs to up her fee for bulk imaging to the max allowed \$.20 per image from the current \$.13 as her vendor has raised their costs. Attorney Boxberger reviewed and made changes to the Ordinance and agreement and is good with them. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-06 and to waive the second reading, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote. Commissioners also need to approve the Agreement for the Bulk Imaging, Baysinger made a motion to approve, seconded by Schuman and passed with a 3/0 vote.

2025 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE: Commissioners have reviewed the 2025 holiday schedule as well as presented it to the elected officials and department heads for review. Schuman made a motion to approve the 2025 holiday schedule, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote.

COMMISSIONER MEETING TIME: Commissioner Banks stated that Commissioners have been talking about the time of the meetings going from 1 pm to 4 pm and have all agreed that with their being no additional involvement from the public they would like to move the time back to 1 pm. Attorney Boxberger has no issues with the time going back to 1 pm. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

RESOLUTION LIMITING ELECTION SIGNAGE: Commissioners have met with Attorney Boxberger in creating a Resolution that would address some issues with election candidates and signs on the Courthouse lawn. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-07, seconded by Schuman. Commissioners, Attorney Boxberger, Election Supervisor Jessica Hockemeyer, and candidate Damien Stafford all spoke on the topic. Commissioners feel that as long as either the candidate or a representative of the candidate is present with the sign that is appropriate, also being the legal 50 feet away from the entrance. Stafford feels that his first amendment rights are being questioned, Commissioners allowed Stafford 4 minutes to speak against the resolution. Commissioner Banks read the resolution allowed. The vote was called and passed with a 3/0 vote.

FACILITIES REQUESTS: Commissioners had two facilities requests to review.


1. Whitley County Farmers Market would like to use the permanent drive at the Courthouse, lawn, and sidewalks for the 2024 season. This request is coming a little earlier than usual and could interfere with the early voting on May 4th. Jessica Hockemeyer has made an agreement with the Chief of Police, and this should not hinder the early voting on May 4th. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve, seconded by Schuman, and passed with a 3/0 vote.
2. Columbia City Connect would like to use the Courthouse on May 4th from 11 am to 1 pm for a walking history tour. With the Courthouse already being open for early voting this would not be an issue, anyone that will be on the tour will be asked to stay away from the voting area. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote.

MINUTES AND CLAIMS: The claim distributions from March 19, 2024, through April 15, 2024, were reviewed by the Commissioners. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve the account payable claims, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve the payroll claims, seconded by Baysinger and passed with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners reviewed the regular meeting minutes from March 18, 2024. Schuman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Baysinger, and passed with a 3/0 vote.

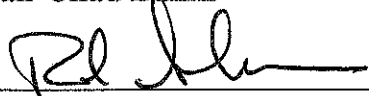
Commissioner Banks wanted to thank all of the dispatchers that work for the County and for all of their hard work. This is in recognition of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Banks adjourned the meeting at 5:22 PM.

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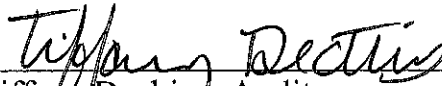
Chair Chad Banks



Vice Chair Robert Schuman



Commissioner Theresa Baysinger

Attest: 

Tiffany Deaking, Auditor