

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

November 6, 2024

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Members in attendance were Vice Chair Thomas Warner, Kim Wheeler, Nicholas Brewer, Thor Hodges, Joan Western, John Barrett with James Argerbright absent. Others in attendance were Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Commissioners Banks and Baysinger, Commissioners' Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, HR Jennifer Shinabery, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Community Corrections Director Paula Worden, Assessor Kim Erdly, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Engineer Brad Allen, Highway Director Ryan Getts, Maintenance Supervisor Kyle Pepler, Dale Buuck and Abbey Anthony from the EDC, and Monte Wilkinson.

Vice -Chair Warner called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

BROADBAND UPDATE: Dale Buuck from the EDC was present to give Council an update on broadband within the county and let them know that he will likely be coming forward at the December meeting for a funding request. The contract with Sand Strategies has come to an end however Dale has been working with Zach still. Dale might come forward with an additional funding request to work with Sand again if the BEAD funding gets approved.

SOUTH WHITLEY LIBRARY DISCUSSION: Monte Wilkinson, a Richland Township Board member was present to speak with Council regarding his concerns for South Whitley. He spoke on Board Members of the South Whitley Library and his concerns for the tax rate as well as funds.

MAINTENANCE VEHICLE REQUEST: Maintenance Supervisor Kyle Pepler was present to get approval for the purchase of a pick-up truck and plow for the Maintenance Department. This will allow for better hauling of equipment, tools and ease of carrying larger supplies. Kyle has provided quotes from Kelley Automotive and City Ford. The new vehicle will be ready approximately 12 weeks after the purchase, and the Commissioners would like to sell the Trailblazer on GovDeals once the new vehicle is acquired. Councilman Brewer made a motion to approve up to \$55,549 to be paid from County General funds, and he would like to see Kyle reach out and see if City Ford would price match. Seconded by Barrett, passing with a 6/0 vote.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Ed Beber from Probation would like to see the job description for one of the probation officers changed to Assistant Chief Probation Officer. This change will not affect the pay, just a title change to match the work that is already being done by the employee. Barrett made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Hodges and passed with a 6/0 vote.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT: Commissioner Banks gave a report to Council.

- Whitley County had a record number of voters, this also included a record number of early voters for the 2024 general election. Banks thanked the Clerk's office for all their hard work during the election.
- On October 29th the new jail was dedicated and there was a great turnout by the public that toured the facility. They plan on moving inmates to the new facility at the end of November.
- The jail final number came in just under the estimated 35 million, at \$34,876,471. There are contingencies that are going to be in the amount of approximately \$800,000 that will come back to the County as well, and Commissioners plan on making the final pay app with those funds.
- Commissioners would like to move forward with obtaining appraisals for the old Bowen Center to keep moving forward with the hopeful purchase of the building. This would allow for Elections to be moved out of the Courthouse and serve as storage with the underground garage as well. Council gave a favorable pass to Commissioners to move forward with obtaining appraisals as long as they return to discuss funding.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES: Council reviewed the regular meeting minutes of October 8, 2024. Councilman Wheeler made a motion to approve the October 8th minutes as presented, seconded by Hodges and passed with a 6/0 vote. The Council reviewed the executive session meeting minutes of October 8, 2024. Councilman Brewer made a motion to approve the October 8th executive session minutes as presented, seconded by Wheeler and passed with a 5/0 vote with Hodges abstaining.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Vice-Chair Warner adjourned the meeting at 8:48 AM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

ABSTAIN

Chair James Argerbright

Thomas Warner

Vice Chair Thomas Warner

Nicholas Brewer

Nicholas Brewer

Kim Wheeler

Kim Wheeler

Thor Hodges

Thor Hodges

John Barrett

John Barrett

Jean Western

Jean Western

Attest:

Tiffany Deakins

Tiffany Deakins, Auditor