

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 4, 2025

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Monday, February 4, 2025, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. The members in attendance were Chair Thor Hodges, Vice Chair Nicholas Brewer, Thomas Warner, Kim Wheeler, Joan Western, Timothy Longenbaugh and John Barrett. Others in attendance were Commissioners Banks, Schuman and Baysinger, Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Health Director Scott Wagner, HR Director Jennifer Shinabery, Judge Anthony Garza and Amy Bechtold from Superior Court, Assessor Kim Erdly, Highway Director Ryan Getts, Commissioner's Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Community Corrections Director Paula Worden, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Dale Buuck and Abbey Anthony from the EDC, Chad Whetstone, and Steve Carender with Surf Internet.

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

BROADBAND UPDATE & COMMITMENT LETTER REQUEST: Dale Buuck from the EDC was present to give Council a letter that he would like to give to Surf Internet as a letter of support to obtain BEAD funding through the State. He will also have another letter of support for Comcast once that is completed. Dale stated that there may be a personal property abatement request that could come later for Surf, but at this time a request is only for a letter of support. Steve Carender with Surf Internet also spoke with Council on the request.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUESTS: The Council reviewed and approved several additional appropriation requests.

- Judge Garza presented an additional for \$2,000 for other services in fund 2507 Supplemental Public. This will allow for extra funding for public defender services with an increased number of cases being seen. Warner made a motion to approve, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- Paula Worden was present to appropriate funds for a grant that was not approved until after the budget process, in the amount of \$75,626 in fund 9306 Addictions Recovery Court. Barrett made a motion to approve, seconded by Longenbaugh, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- Lindsey Grossnickle was present to seek additional funds that were awarded to JDAI to be appropriated into their supplies and professional services accounts totaling \$10,241. Barrett made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Western, passing with a 7/0 vote. Lindsey also gave the Council an update on JDAI and Miami Village.
- Scott Wagner was present with an initial request for \$7,000, however after speaking with State Board of Accounts Scott is only ready to ask for \$2,500. After he works with Auditor Deakins on setting up two more funds he will come back and ask for the other \$4,500.00 to be appropriated. Western made a motion to approve, seconded by Warner, passing with a 7/0 vote. Scott also gave the Council an update on health issues that are going on, such as the flu, strep throat and colds/coughs that are lingering for weeks

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE COMMISSION BOARD APPOINTMENT: The Council still has not found a good fit to fill the 4-year term of the board. Hodges has spoken with Brooks Langeloh who stated that if no one else was found to serve that he would fill in for a year but also wanted it to be known that he has family that owns a business in town that sells alcohol. The Council decided to table this board appointment until the March meeting in hopes of finding someone else to fill the vacancy.

ON HAND CASH DISCUSSION: Recorder Rosemary Brown came before the Council to see about getting her cash drawer amount increased from \$75 to \$150 as the need to make change from larger bills has increased over the years. Warner made a motion to approve, seconded by Western, passing with a 7/0 vote.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Brewer as chair of personnel let the Council know that the committee had decided to add Commissioner Banks and Paula Worden to the committee to help serve.

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Commissioner Banks gave the Council his Commissioner report.

- Commissioners opened bids on January 21st for the Highway trucks and approved the chassis in the amount of \$253,800 to Stoops and the body's in the amount of \$282,400 at the February 3rd meeting.
- Emergency elevator repairs are needed for the south elevator in the government center for the motor and door closure. \$75,580.29 will be coming out of Cum Cap.
- Veteran Service Officer Josh Smith gave information that Banks wanted to share. Veterans can go to the Community Harvest Food Bank in Fort Wayne with their DD214's and receive 50 pounds of food per month.

- The Commissioners have decided at this time not to move forward with the purchase of the old Bowen Health building as the appraisals were between \$500,000 - \$800,000 and there is approximately \$500,000 worth of repairs that need to be made.
- The Council asked about the bills that are at the legislator that could affect counties. Banks stated that from what was said counties would need to find funding other ways. Such as our Cum Cap rate is not maxed out for example. Assessor Kim Erdly also spoke on behalf of bills that are out that pertain to the Assessor and Auditors offices that would greatly impact both offices.
- Commissioners had a Board of Finance meeting in January that highlighted Treasurer Kay Gatton and the great job she has done with investments for Whitley County. 2024 was another record year for interest.
- An update was made on the Work Release building and the renovations.
- New jail punch list items are coming along great. There are already some of the staff moved in.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES: The Council reviewed the January 7, 2025, regular meeting minutes, Councilman Wheeler made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Warner, passing with a 7/0 vote.

OTHER BUSINESS: Chair Hodges stated that he will be meeting with the Commissioners at least twice a month to make sure that he is staying up to date with Commissioners. If needed he will meet with them more than twice a month. Hodges also stated that the Executive Director position at Whitley County Council on Aging is open as the current director Leslie Blakely has put her notice in. Applications can now be submitted for this opening.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Hodges adjourned the meeting at 8:46 AM.


WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL



 Chair Thor Hodges



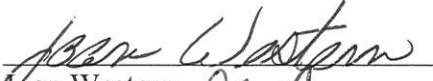
 Vice Chair Nicholas Brewer



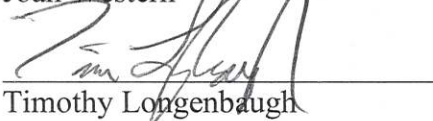
 Thomas Warner



 Kim Wheeler



 Joan Western

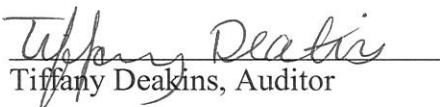


 Timothy Longenbaugh



 John Barrett

Attest:



 Tiffany Deakins, Auditor