

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
NOVEMBER 2, 2009

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday November 2, 2009 in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Commissioners in attendance were Chairman Tom Rethlake, Vice Chairman Michael D. Schrader and Don Amber. Also in attendance for all or part of the meeting were Auditor Linda Gerig, County Attorney Dan Sigler, County Coordinator Amy Crickmore, Highway Supervisor Michael Barton, Sanitarian Scott Wagner, Michael Obergfell, County Assessor Angela Adams, Engineer Brandon Forrester, Sheriff Mark Hodges, Ben Beer, Marie Coffelt, Fay Busz, Steve Heaston, Cathy Heaston, Mike Sands, Brian Bills, Joe McLaughlin, Steve Clason, Jerry Lange, Keith Kohut, Mike Wilcoxson, Michael Knafel, Jim Fleck, Marcia McNagny, Alan Tio, Jeff Walker, Rick Kreischer, Brady Mullett, Bob Hoke, Verne LaRue and Chris Meyers of the Post and Mail. Chairman Rethlake called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

IN THE MATTER OF PREVIOUS MINUTES AND VENDOR CLAIMS: The minutes of October 19, 2009 and the vendor claims for November 2, 2009 were approved as presented.

IN THE MATTER OF PROFESSIONAL APPRAISER SERVICES: County Assessor Angela Adams was present for the opening of bids for Professional Appraiser Services as advertised. Accurate Assessments was the only vendor to respond. The bid for annual adjustments was \$28,900. The bid for new construction was \$15,000 up to 500 parcels. Any parcels over 500 would cost \$30/parcel. After further discussion, Amber moved, seconded by Schrader, to accept both bids as presented by Accurate Assessments. The motion carried 3/0.

IN THE MATTER OF COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT: Dan Sigler reported the Humane Society of Whitley County has agreed to a payment of \$5000 for 2009 and that county council will be releasing the funds. Sigler has provided notice to the Society that the current agreement in place is now cancelled. A recently formed committee to negotiate further funding from the county will meet again on November 3, 2009. Sigler reported a recently filed Torte Claim has been turned over to the county's insurance carrier. Work continues on the Barking Dog Noise Ordinance and Sigler will have a final version on December 7, 2009. Steve Heaston asked to comment on the Torte Claim and was given an opportunity to speak.

IN THE MATTER OF BRIDGE INSPECTIONS: Ben Beer and Michael Obergfell of USI Consultants were present along with County Engineer Brandon Forrester to present the proposal for bridge inspections. The representatives of USI were present to explain the increase in the cost for the inspections, which is \$46,000. The total proposed cost is not to exceed \$107,495.10. The federal and state regulations have been changed and the state is switching to new computer software which requires more input and analysis. These factors lengthen the time taken to do the inspections and complete data entry. The cost for future inspections should return to a more affordable level in the future. Engineer Forrester commented on the 80 percent reimbursement from the State of Indiana. After further discussion, Schrader moved, seconded by Amber, to accept the proposal from USI at \$107,495.10 for bridge inspections for 2010-2014. The motion carried 3/0.

IN THE MATTER OF NEW SHERIFF VEHICLES: Sheriff Mark Hodges was present to present a request for \$74,000 from Cum Cap funds to purchase three new sheriff vehicles. Local vendors will be used for the purchases as their prices are lower than the state bid. Schrader moved, seconded by Amber, to take a favorable recommendation to county council for the request of Cum Cap funds. The motion passed 3/0. Public comment was made by Steve Heaston.

IN THE MATTER OF REQUEST TO PAY ACCRUED SICK TIME: The Commissioners discussed a terminated employee's request for payment of accrued sick time. The department supervisor was present and did not recommend the payment. After further discussion, Amber moved, seconded by Schrader that no payment of accrued sick time would be made as set forth in the Whitley County Policy Manual. The motion passed 3/0. The manual specifically states that "If an employee with 5 or more years of full time employment is *discharged for cause*, the employee will not be paid said accrued sick time unless payment is approved by the County Commissioners in their sole and absolute discretion."

IN THE MATTER OF SCHOOL BUS SAFETY: The County Commissioners invited school corporation's transportation managers, Indiana State Police and local law enforcement officers to attend a discussion session regarding school bus safety. The Board has received several complaints of school busses being passed when loading and unloading students. Brian Bills of the Indiana State Police volunteered to be the initial contact officer when a violation is seen or reported. Whitley County will provide a cell phone to Bills to be used for this purpose.

IN THE MATTER OF HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT REPORT: Michael Barton was present to report that many clean up jobs are being completed along with preparing an emergency plan for snow. Interviews will be held in the near future to fill the vacant position.

IN THE MATTER OF COUNTY COORDINATOR REPORT: Amy Crickmore presented requests for use of county facilities. The Veteran's Marathon will take place on Saturday November 14th from 6am to 4pm and the courthouse lawn will be set up with food/drink at the end of the race for runners. Schrader moved, seconded by Amber to approve the request. The motion passed 3/0. Toys for Tots will be having Stuff the Cruiser on December 4th and 5th. The request was for the parking of the cruiser on the north side of the courthouse. Amber moved, seconded by Schrader to allow the request. The motion carried 3/0. Approval was also given for November 4th to be designated as "jeans day". Employees could wear jeans for the day by making a donation to the Christmas Committee.

IN THE MATTER OF COESSE SEWER ISSUE: Scott Wagner and several residents of Coesse were present to hear discussion on remedies for the sewage problem created with the construction of the equine hospital. The City of Columbia City is also involved and is working on a grant for future infrastructure in that area. A lengthy discussion was held with no definite conclusion being made.

IN THE MATTER OF COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

- Commissioner Amber spoke on extending the number of sick days to employees with children being affected by the H1N1 flu. No favorable discussion was held on this. Amber complimented the Auditor, Assessor and Treasurer for the good work they have achieved by putting Whitley County back on track to have a May 10th collection date for 2010. Whitley County is among the first 22 counties to accomplish this.
- Chairman Rethlake reported that EMCOR had done an energy study for government buildings and is inquiring to the possibility of prioritizing a schedule for these energy savings methods. An inquiry has been received from Passages, Inc., asking if there would be work available within the county for any of their clients. Whitley County Community Corrections submitted their 2010 meeting dates. Amber moved, seconded by Schrader, to approve the dates as submitted. The motion carried 3/0. Rethlake reported there are currently 47 participants in the Work Release Program. The co-chairs for 2010 Census campaign are Amy Crickmore and Betty Mishler.

IN THE MATTER OF APPOINTMENTS: Dr. Lisa A. Hatcher was reappointed as Health Officer of Whitley County for a four-year term expiring December 31, 2013. Elizabeth Hill and Carol Greulich were reappointed to four-year terms to the Whitley County Board of Health expiring December 31, 2013.

IN THE MATTER OF UTILITY PERMIT REQUESTS: The following permits were approved for utility work.

- NIPSCO – Work Order #90045 on Governors Drive north of Lincolnway East
- United Telephone Company of Indiana, Inc., #178031 County Road 400 East between State Road 14 and the railroad.
- United Telephone Company of Indiana, Inc., #178033 County Road 500 East and 600 East between Lincolnway and Old Trail Roads over the Solon Ditch.

There being no further business or public comment, the meeting was adjourned.

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tom Rethlake, Chairman

Michael D. Schrader, Vice Chairman

Don Amber, Member

Attest: _____
Linda J. Gerig, Auditor