

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

May 4, 2022

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Wednesday, May 4, 2022, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Members in attendance were Chair Timothy Kumfer, Vice Chair Kim Wheeler, Thor Hodges, Thomas Warner, James Argerbright, Joan Western and John Barrett. Others in attendance were Commissioner Banks, Commissioner Baysinger, Commissioner Schrupf, Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Communications Director Janelle Schmitt, Planning Director Nathan Bilger, Deputies Todd Cook and Tony Helfrich, Community Corrections Director Paula Worden, Tony Vie from Elevatus, Chad Nix from the Regional Sewer District and Steve Harsch from JPR.

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

IV-D RECLASSIFICATION REQUEST: Judge Rentschler was present to ask that Council accept the reclassification request that was sent to WIS for the IV-D Court Admin. This position has had more responsibilities and job duties added to their job description. This position's salary is 2/3 reimbursable by the state. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the request with a second by Argerbright and carried with a 7/0 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF THE RADIO QUOTES: Communications Director Janelle Schmitt was present to discuss the need for new radio consoles for dispatch. The cost to replace the consoles would be \$526,000. Janelle did state that she would be willing to use \$200,000 out of E911 funds to help pay for this upgrade of the consoles. The Sheriff's Department received a favorable pass to use the ARPA funds that were issued to Whitley County as well as the E911 funds from Commissioners at their May 3rd meeting. Commissioners feel that for the safety of our deputies that it is time to make an upgrade to the radio consoles and agrees with Janelle that we need to purchase new. There is still a 3-year contract left with our current consoles and Attorney Shipman will be looking into terminating the contract early if they have not been able to perform as expected. Council had several questions regarding the upgrade of the radios and has requested a meeting to look at the current consoles, as well as Janelle get a total of three quotes to be reviewed: not just one. Tony Vie from Elevatus was present to answer questions that Council had on the new jail and the impact of having to move the consoles if needed as compared to just having new installed at the time of construction.

EASTERSEAL PASSAGES UPDATE: Jason Meyer from Easterseal Passages gave an update on the transition of Easterseals and Passages. He stated that things are going very well for them and that they would like to thank the County for the funds that they receive, the funds are used for client transportation. Jason stated that there have been some good improvements since the merge, one of those being raising the pay for workers. Jason also shared that the Clugston in Columbia City re-model is underway.

ORDINANCE PLEDGING GENERAL & OTHER FUNDS TO BOND JAIL CONSTRUCTION: Council approved Ordinance 2022-04 stating that Council pledges to use General funds if needed and other County funds to bond the construction of the new jail. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Argerbright, and passed with a 7/0 vote.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS: Two additional appropriation requests were presented to Council.

County General

Planning & Building:

1000.11904.000.0124	Personal Services	\$7,600.00
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Planning Director Nathan Bilger was present to request \$7,600 be added to the part-time building inspector line account. This hourly rate was increased to get the rate to be as close as possible without going over the maximum part-time hourly rate to that of the full-time inspector as they have the same job duties. Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve the additional as presented, seconded by Warner and carried with a 7/0 vote.

Local Health Trust

Health Department:

1206.20000.000.0210	Office Supplies	\$3,500.00
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Health Director Scott Wagner is requesting \$3,500 to be able to fix and update some books for the health department. Councilman Argerbright made a motion to approve the additional appropriation request, with a second by Wheeler and carried with a 7/0 vote.

LANDFILL SALE DISCUSSION: Commissioner George Schrumpf was present to speak to the Council on behalf of the Commissioners selling the landfill. Schrumpf stated that the Commissioners have been approached by an individual wanting to purchase the land. Maintaining the landfill has been expensive and this sale would save the county on average \$25,000 per year. Council wants to ensure that the County will no longer be held liable for the landfill after the sale, so they have requested that Commissioners keep them updated with the process and to make sure that the County Attorney is involved.

REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT: Regional Sewer District President Chad Nix was present with Steve Harsch from JPR to give an update on phase I of the sewer project. Chad stated that the phase I is fully funded by grants and they will not be needing to ask for funds to help get phase 1 complete. Chad let Council know that the Regional Sewer District is asking that Commissioners earmark 1 million 25 thousand dollars of the ARPA funds to help with the second phase of the project which will start with the bid process in December of 2022 or January 2023.

WIS ANNUAL WAGE/SALARY ANALYSIS: HR Director Jennifer Shinabery is seeking to have Wagner, Irwin and Scheele preform a wage analysis. This has not been done for the County since 2019 and should be completed every 3-4 years. The cost of the analysis would be from \$8,800-\$10,240 and the Commissioners have agreed to pay for this out of their professional services line item. Councilman Hodges made a motion to table the decision until after the BakerTilly comprehensive plan report. Seconded by Warner and passed with a 7/0 vote.

BAKERTILLY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REPORT: Paige Sansone from BakerTilly gave the Council an overview of the comprehensive financial report that they had completed for the County. This plan shows the financial breakdown from 2019-2024. There are some concerns for the County if the County does not make some adjustments to the budget. Paige explained that a increase in personal services which would be salaries and benefits has driven a large part of the decline in general funds. After Paige's report Auditor Deakins requested that Council allow for her to be able to utilize BakerTilly assisting her in the budget process for the 2023 budget. The agreement has a not to exceed \$15,000, however Auditor Deakins does not feel that she will need to utilize all of the offered services. Council agreed that this is an appropriate request and to proceed.

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Commissioner Baysinger wanted to let Council know that they are working on a plan for the use of the ARPA funds to bring to the Council at their next meeting. This plan included possibly using around 3 million dollars to renovate the current jail to a community corrections facility, assisting the Regional Sewer District, the highway department is needing help with roadways, projects, and broadband. Tony Vie gave a jail update, he let the Council know that the jail design is coming along nicely and that Sean Martin has been great to work with in getting things moving along. Commissioner Baysinger wanted to thank the election staff and poll workers for all of their hard work for the election on Tuesday May 3rd. Councilman Warner made a motion to approve the WIS salary analysis and to have that paid out of professional services in the Commissioners budget, Councilwoman Western seconded with the addition of making sure that we include the Elected Officials and other employees that were not evaluated in the 2019 analysis. Passing with a 7/0 vote

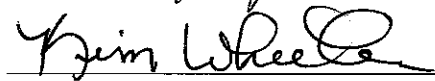
IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES: The Council reviewed two sets of meeting minutes, the joint Commissioner and Council minutes from March 28, 2022, and the regular meeting minutes from April 5. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the March 28 meeting minutes, with a second by Hodges, passing with a 7/0 vote. Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve the April 5 meeting minutes with a second by Wheeler and carried with a 6/0 vote with Councilwoman Western abstaining.

IN THE MATTER OF OTHER BUSINESS: Councilwoman Western is asking with preparations of the budget she is requesting that Council get a list of all employees and their total benefits package. Councilman Argerbright wanted to commend the individuals that were running for office this election. Councilman Warner would like to see that J&K Communications be at the meeting that Council wants to have with dispatch. Councilman Hodges wanted to verify June 29th to be the all-day budget hearings, Hodges also wanted to state that he is excited to stay on Council and continue to work with the rest of Council. Councilman Kumfer also stated that he has some things that he would like to see change in the next 8 months until his term ends.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Kumfer adjourned the meeting at 10:24 AM.

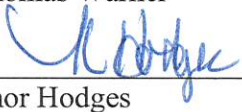
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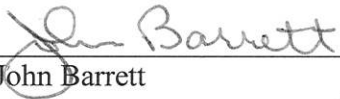

Chair Timothy Kumfer

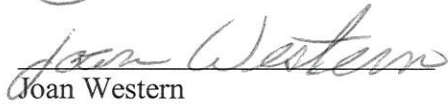

Vice Chair Kim Wheeler


James Argerbright

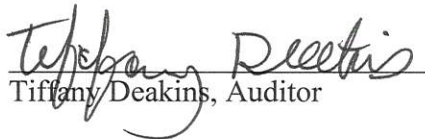
Thomas Warner


Thor Hodges


John Barrett


Joan Western

Attest:


Tiffany Deakins, Auditor