

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

June 7, 2021

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, June 7, 2021 at 1:00 PM in the Commissioners' Room located on the 1st floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Commissioners in attendance were Chair George Schrupf, Vice Chair Theresa Green and Commissioner Chad Banks. Others in attendance were Coordinator/Human Resources Director Jennifer Shinabery, Commissioner's Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Auditor Jana Schinbeckler, Chief Deputy Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Highway Engineer Brandon Forrester, Bill Etzler from Abonmarche Consultants, Inc., Drew Keil from Brooks Construction, Larry Burckhart from Phend and Brown, Chris Sosebee from Weigand Construction, Mike Maggart from Niblock Excavating, Mike Ryan from Nexus Group, County Clerk Cindy Doolittle, Councilman John Barrett, County Assessor Kim Erdly, Sheriff Gatton, Planning Director Nathan Bilger, Mary Hartman from the Peabody Public Library, Julie Jensen-Kelley from Whitley County Community Corrections, Linda Zimmerman, Don Armstrong, Joan Null, Stanley Crum and Nicki Venable.

Chair Schrupf opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT BID OPENING FOR COMMUNITY CROSSINGS: The Commissioners opened the bids for the Highway Department's Community Crossings project. The first bid was from Brooks Construction for \$796,858.00, the second bid was from E & B Paving for \$855,484.16, the third from Niblock Excavating, Inc. for \$818,278.35 and the last bid was from Phend and Brown for \$806,245.87. Commissioner Banks made a motion to take the bids under advisement, seconded by Green and carried with a 3/0 vote.

ASSESSOR BID OPENING FOR CYCLICAL REASSESSMENT: The Commissioners received one bid for the Assessor's cyclical reassessment from Nexus Group for \$129,250 annually or \$502,000 over the 4-year project. Commissioner Banks made a motion to accept the bid, seconded by Green and carried with a 3/0 vote.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: Chair George Schrupf recognized employees with more than 20 years of service. Mike Christie has 34 years of service, Toban McCoy has 21 years of service, John Barrett has 24 years of service, Greg Wilkinson has 25 years of service and Sheriff Gatton has 26 years of service.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT: Attorney Shipman presented the purchase agreement for the Armstrong property to the Commissioners for approval. There is one change in the agreement, due to the County needing to purchase the property with a one-time payment, the purchase price went from \$300,000 to \$350,000. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the purchase agreement contingent on Council's approval and allow the Chair to sign the agreement, seconded by Green and passed with a 3/0 vote.

CORPORATE CHALLENGE: Julie Jensen-Kelley was present to request the approval of funds for the County to join the YMCA Corporate Challenge. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the \$500 entry fee, seconded by Green and carried with a 3/0 vote.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT ORDINANCE: Auditor Schinbeckler presented an ordinance to the Commissioners to establish the fund for the American Rescue Plan Act funds the County will be receiving. The County will be receiving a total of \$6,597,109 over two years. An elected official from the County also must register with the Department of Treasury to receive the funds. Commissioner Green volunteered to be the Commissioner who will register. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve Ordinance 2021-06, seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote.

PLANNING NEXT CONTRACT ADDENDUM: Planning Director Nathan Bilger presented an addendum to the Planning Next contract. This addendum is due to the original agreement ending with the preparation of the final draft for the comprehensive plan. This addendum would cover any extra time and materials that it takes for the company to present the final draft to the Plan Commission. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the contract addendum with the amount not to exceed \$4,500 and allow the Chair to sign, seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote. Nathan informed the Commissioners that the final draft of the comprehensive plan will be presented to the Plan Commission this Thursday at 7:00 PM.

COMP TIME EXCEPTION TO POLICY FOR VOTER REGISTRATION/ELECTION

DEPARTMENT: Coordinator/Human Resources Director Jennifer Shinabery presented a comp time agreement that was previously in place between the County Clerk and County Commissioners. This agreement allows for the voter registration/election department to earn over the 40 hours of comp time and the additional comp is to be used by the end of the current year. Clerk Cindy Doolittle is requesting that the comp time payout deadline be extended until March 31st of the following year and to allow them to continue to earn over 40 hours of comp time. The two employees who earn this additional comp time normally earn 2 to 3 weeks of additional time each election year. Commissioner Green made a motion to allow the exception of comp time for the voter registration/election department, seconded by Banks and carried with a 3/0 vote.

IN.GOV USER ACCOUNT AGREEMENT UPDATE: Coordinator/Human Resources Director Jennifer Shinabery request that the Commissioners reinstate the IN. Gov user agreement. This would allow the County to perform background checks on individuals for potential employment with the County. There is an annual \$95 fee. Commissioner Banks made a motion to table the agreement, seconded by Green and tabled with a 3/0 vote.

CONSTITUTIONAL SANCTUARY RESOLUTION: The Commissioners presented a resolution supporting 2nd amendment freedom. The resolution states that the County will steadfastly and proactively support and defend the U.S. constitution and the Indiana Constitution, including, but not limited to, the 2nd Amendment and Article I, Section 32. The County shall not comply with, assist, or use any personal or financial resources to enforce, administer, or cooperate with, any Law that violates the 2nd amendment or Article I, Section 32. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-05, seconded by Green and passed with a 3/0 vote.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN LIFE: The Commissioners presented a resolution in support of human life. The resolution states that the County Commissioners as the governing body of Whitley County declare that human life, including the unborn, must always be valued and protected, and that society must protect those who cannot protect themselves. The County Commissioners encourage assisting pregnant women find health care and sources for other needs; helping mothers and fathers who make decision to parent their child find assistance if needed; supporting mothers and fathers who make an adoption plan for their child and couples who seek to adopt; and encouraging businesses and schools to provide appropriate accommodations for pregnant women and mothers. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-06, seconded by Banks and carried with a 3/0 vote.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – NEXT LEVEL: This memorandum of understanding was made between the Community Foundation of Whitley County, Inc., Mission 25, Whitley County Community Corrections and Whitko Career Academy. The purpose of this agreement is to reduce jail recidivism, expanding mental health services throughout the County including the jail, address employment shortages and reducing the burden on social service organizations responding to trauma. Lilly Endowment awarded a \$2.63 million dollar project grant under Next Level Whitley County (NLWC). The Community Foundation will administer the funds and support the community projects outlined in the Large-Scale Project Grant request and will do the grant reporting to Lilly Endowment. Mission 25 is a public charity which exists in part to provide an array of support services including counseling, transitional housing, parenting classes, etc. Mission 25 intends to expand its services over the next three years and will require additional space. It is their intent to purchase the current Work Release Center building to adequately meet programming needs. Funding for this purchase is included in the Lilly Endowment grant. Community Corrections will undergo location changes, expand mental health availability to inmates, and restructure work release to include the opportunity to expand skills and acquire certifications at the Whitko Career Academy. The current jail will become the Whitley County Work Release Center. Whitko Career Academy will offer evening classes to individuals in the Community Corrections JCAP Program. This grant will fund four vans to be owned by the County and used as transport for inmates and individuals from Mission 25. The grant will also provide the purchase of signage to promote the Career Academy on US 30. Commissioner Banks made a motion to accept the memorandum of understanding, seconded by Green and passed with a 3/0 vote.

SRI MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT: Auditor Schinbeckler presented an agreement with SRI, Inc. for the county's tax sale services. This agreement will be in effect for one year from the date it is full executed. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the master services agreement with SRI, Inc., seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners then reviewed the Tax Sale Support Services Addendum. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the Tax Sale Support Services Addendum, seconded by Green and carried with a 3/0 vote.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE: Highway Engineer Brandon Forrester gave an update on the ADA compliance project, that is a federal aid program, and stated that he has sent out request for proposals for the project. Bridge inspection is also a federal aid program that they completed but need to submit for approval after confirmation that the information is correct. Regarding the Community Crossings grant that the County received, upon review of bids, Brandon will make a recommendation to the Commissioners of who to award the bid to and will oversee the project. He is working towards another Community Crossings project, which is to modify the existing vertical profile of the roadway and soften the approach gradient on each side of the railroad crossing. Engineering Resources, Inc. has provided a proposal to prepare a preliminary design for these improvements. Commissioner Banks made a motion to accept the proposal and allow the Chair to sign, seconded by Green and carried with a 3/0 vote. Brandon informed the Commissioners that SDI has verbally agreed to partner with some material for this project. He also hopes to partner with Allen County for this project. Commissioner Green made a motion to allow him to move forward with an interlocal agreement with Allen County for this project, seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote. In the matter of unofficial detours, INDOT is replacing a structure on North State Road 9 and there have been complaints about 300 N being the unofficial detour. Brandon stated that this is the only option, and this project is almost complete. Once this project is complete, they will start working on the south structure and the tentative unofficial detour will be Cidermill Road and 150 E.

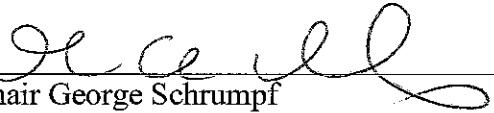
FACILITIES REQUEST: A facilities request was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The request was to use the government center alley and parking area to hold a fundraiser for the Forklift on July 31, 2021 from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Green and passed with a 3/0 vote.

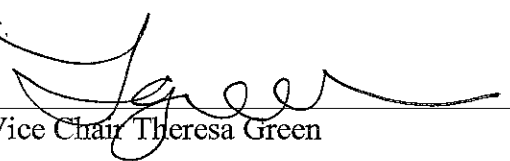
MINUTES AND CLAIMS: The Commissioners reviewed all payroll and accounts payable claims. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the payroll claims, seconded by Green and carried with a 3/0 vote. The claim distributions from May 17, 2021 through June 7, 2021 were reviewed by the Commissioners. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the accounts payable claims, seconded by Green and carried with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners reviewed the May 17, 2021 regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Banks and passed with a 2/0 vote with Schrupf abstaining.

OTHER BUSINESS: Paula Worden sent a letter to the Commissioners informing them that Patty Cook resigned from the Community Corrections Advisory Board after serving for many years. Patty was the Vice Chairperson of the board. The Board elected Judge Rentschler to serve as the Vice Chairperson and nominated Sharon Persons to replace Patty on the Advisory Board. Paula is requesting the Commissioner's approval for the updated board list and the appointment of Sharon Persons. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve Sharon Persons to the Community Corrections Advisory Board, seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote.


There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Schrupf adjourned the meeting at 1:40 PM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Chair George Schrupf


Vice Chair Theresa Green

Commissioner Chad Banks

Attest: 
Jana L. Schinbeckler, Auditor

