

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

November 1, 2021

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, November 1, 2021, at 1:00 PM in the Commissioner's Meeting Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Commissioners in attendance were Chair George Schrupf, Vice Chair Theresa Green and Commissioner Chad Banks was present via the web. Others in attendance were Commissioner's Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Highway Engineer Brandon Forrester, Planning Director Nathan Bilger, EDC President Dale Buuck, Jessica Hockemeyer, Council members Joan Western, Kim Wheeler Tim Kumfer and John Barrett, Amy Motter from WC Probation, Mary Hartman from the Peabody Public Library, Bill Etzler from Abonmarche, Nicki Venable, Samantha Burke, Scott Shelmadne, Kevin Pequignot, Rick Ladd, Dan Monesmith, and Al & Candy Somerlott.

Chair Schrupf opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: Chair George Schrupf recognized employees with more than 20 years of service. Nadean Lamle has 36 years, Randy Dellinger with 33, Amy Motter with 28, Jody Hollenbaugh & Troy Wolf with 27, Judge Matt Rentschler & Sean Martin with 25 years, Lora Enyert, Mike Puckett and Todd Cook all with 24 years of service.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT: Attorney Shipman informed the Commissioners that he reviewed the contract for the highway department, the well exemption for the Health Department and the information for re-districting for the Clerks office, and that he sees no issues with those. Also, for the Highway Department he is reviewing documents for the no parking order.

RE-DISTRICTING: Jessica Hockemeyer was present to discuss the orders to establish new precincts for the City of Columbia City and re-districting options for the Whitley County Council. Commissioner Green would like to go with option 1 as she feels that would better suit Union East and Union West. Commissioner Banks would like to go with option 2. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve option 1, with a lack of a second the motion died. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve option 2 with a second by Schrupf, passing with a 2/1 vote with Commissioner Green voting against. Jessica also needed to have an Order to Establish the Renaming or Renumbering Precincts approved. Current names with the census are Columbia 01-07, this will be changing to Columbia 1-7 omitting the "0". Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the renaming, second by Schrupf, carried with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners also needed to approve the Order Establishing Precincts which includes an updated map showing the new lines. Columbia 8 will be no more with this order as well. Commissioner Green made a motion to accept as presented with a second by Banks, passing with a 3/0 vote.

TITLE IV TRANSITION PLAN: The County Attorney does not see a problem with the presented plan for Title IV but does think that we should get a second opinion from a different lawyer that specializes in employee law. The Commissioners voted to table this until the November 15th meeting.

HEALTH INSURANCE WAITING PERIOD: Jennifer Shinabery Whitley County HR has made a request to change the health insurance waiting period from 60 days after the first of the month of being hired to 30 days after. This change will be very beneficial for newly hired employees to the County. Commissioner Green made a motion to accept seconded by Banks and passing with a 3/0 vote.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT UPDATE: Scott Wagner from the Health Department was present to discuss a few changes for the Health Department and a well exemption. The well exemption is a lake property for Kissingers that Scott has given his blessing to approve. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the request contingent on all the needed documents being signed by the homeowner, with a second by Green. Passing with a 3/0 vote. Scott has informed the Commissioners that the Health Board has decided to hand over the management of the WIC program. WIC will still be in Whitley County it will just no longer be managed by the County. This brings to question the WIC Director and her request to be able to work from home one day a week and go from 35 hours per week to 34. The state is only funding the 34 hours a week, so if the Commissioners do not approve for her to work 34 hours a week the County will have to cover the rest of the wages. Commissioner Green stated that we do not have a work from home policy and does not think it is fair to give one employee the opportunity to while others cannot. Commissioner Banks agreed with what Commissioner Green stated. The Health Board has re-appointed Dr. Burkett as Health Officer for another 4 years, so the Commissioners are asked to re-appoint Dr. Burkett to be Health Officer. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve, with a second by Banks passing with a 3/0 vote. Scott stated that the Health Board also voted to allow the Health Department to use grant funds to compensate Scott Wagner for his extra hours during the COVID pandemic. He is asking Commissioners for a favorable pass to Council. Commissioner Banks feels that the Commissioners should not give a favorable or unfavorable pass to Council, he feels that the Council should be making that decision not the Commissioners. Commissioner Green agreed with what

Commissioner Banks and stated that she thanks Scott for his hard work and does think he needs to be compensated for such.

PLAT APPROVAL AND REZONING REQUEST: Planning Director Nathan Bilger presented the Barbara Lynn Lane 1 lot plat to the Commissioners for approval. The Plan Commission has already approved the plat in their August meeting. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve with a second from Banks and carried with a 3/0 vote. Nathan presented a rezoning request for 18 acres to be changed from AG to RR on 200 N. He stated that it did pass the Plan Commission with a 5/4 vote. There was a lot of discussion not only from the Commissioners but a few members of the public that wanted to voice their concerns as neighbors. Samantha Burke and John Ladd spoke on behalf of themselves and the area neighbors, as well as Commissioner Green read an email that she received from Jordin Hines. Commissioner Green made a motion to keep the property in question as AG and not move forward with the rezoning request of RR. Commissioner Schrupf seconded; the motion carried with a 3/0 vote.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE: Brandon presented a right of way permit to be approved by the Commissioners. The permit is for Nipsco to install a gas service on Carroll Rd in Churubusco. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the permit request, seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote. Brandon gave the Commissioners a 4-year contract for INDOT-LPA that needs to be signed. Attorney Shipman has reviewed the contract and stated it is appropriate to sign. Green made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote. Highway Engineer Brandon Forrester gave an update on the Highway Department and let Commissioners know that he is still waiting to hear back from the award of the Community Crossings Grant.

LORI SHIPMAN CONTRACT: Commissioner Schrupf wanted to discuss the contract with Lori Shipman that we have for grants and other services. He explained that the Commissioners would like to move forward with using Region 3A for 2022. Green made a motion to table this until the November 15th meeting. Seconded by Banks, carried with a 3/0 vote to be tabled. Commissioner Green wanted to say that Lori has done a great job for the County.

FACILITIES REQUEST: There were two facility requests presented to the Commissioners for approval. The first request was for Old Settlers Day for dates 6-20 to 6-26-2022. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote. The second request was from the Columbia City Fire Department to use the Courthouse on Friday, December 24th from 3 pm to 8 pm. Mark Sturtevant has approved this request, Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Banks and carried with a 3/0 vote.

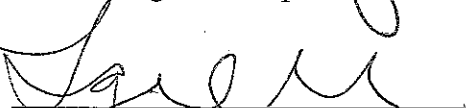
MINUTES AND CLAIMS: The claim distributions from October 19, 2021, through November 1, 2021, were reviewed by the Commissioners. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the accounts payable claims, seconded by Banks and passed with a 3/0 vote. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the payroll claims, seconded by Banks and carried with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners reviewed the October 18, 2021, regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Green and passed with a 3/0 vote.

OTHER BUSINESS: Vice Chair Green announced that at the next Commissioner meeting we will be getting an update on the jail project and the contract with Elevatus. Dan Williamson from the public stated his concerns with the current pandemic and has some thoughts to share with helping stop the spread. Commissioner Schrupf stated that he should get with Scott Wagner and discuss this further.

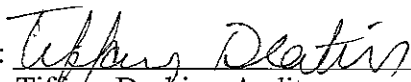
There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Schrupf adjourned the meeting at 2:18 PM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Chair George Schrupf


Vice Chair Theresa Green


Commissioner Chad Banks

Attest: 
Tiffany Deakins, Auditor