

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

December 6, 2021

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, December 6, 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. Others in attendance were Commissioner's Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Human Resources Director Jennifer Shinabery, Judge Rentschler, County Engineer Brandon Forrester, Planning Director Nathan Bilger, Madalyn Sade-Bartl and Lisa Kensur from the Churubusco Redevelopment Commission, Sheriff Gatton and Chief Deputy Spencer from the Sheriffs Department, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Assessor Kim Erdly, Clerk Cindy Doolittle, Amy Motter WC Probation, Julie Jensen-Kelly WC Community Corrections, Joan Western from County Council, Mary Hartman from the Peabody Public Library, Nicki Venable and Cory Miller from Elevatus.

Chair Schrupf opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT: Attorney Shipman informed the Commissioners that he is working on contracts with the jail project for the owner's rep and the architect. He has reviewed the resolution regard the Churubusco TIF and it looks good.

PUBLIC DEFENDER BOARD APPOINTMENT: Judge Rentschler was present to request a public defender board appointment. Cathy Huer to replace Bill Tucker on the board. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the request, with a second by Banks. Passing with a 3/0 vote.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS/PROBATION SUPPORT DOG: Amy Motter and Julie Jensen-Kelley were present to request the County to cover insurance costs for Community Corrections and Probation to have a support dog. Commissioner Green asked who will be housing the dog, the dog will stay at the Community Corrections building. Attorney Shipman is requesting that we contact the insurance company to make sure that we are able to cover an animal on our policy. Commissioner Banks is stating that he wants to speak to insurance before the County makes any decisions. Commissioner Banks made a motion to table until the December 20, 2021 Commissioner meeting. Seconded by Green, passing with a 3/0 vote to table.

EXCLUDED EMPLOYEES' DISCUSSION: Jennifer Shinabery was present to bring forward information on job classifications, non-exempt, exempt and excluded. With the currently approved ordinance "excluded" employees are not eligible to receive over-time and/or compensation time. This needs to be addressed and decided on if we are wanting to keep the current ordinance that was adopted by Council in 2019, or if we need to make a new policy for excluded employees or update the current ordinance. This has been brought forth because we have recently found out that all departments have been doing this wrong per the approved ordinance from 2019. This covers chief deputies and the jail matron. Commissioner Banks asked if this should be a Council decision, Jennifer explained that this should be a joint decision between Commissioners and Council, per WIS. Recorder Rosemary Brown, Sheriff Gatton and Assessor Kim Erdly were present to discuss this and how it affects their offices. Commissioner Banks is in favor of department heads/Elected Officials making these decisions. Commissioner Green believes that employees should be compensated for hours worked above their normal schedules. Commissioner Banks made a motion to give a favorable pass to Council for Ordinance 2019-11 to be amended, second by Green, passing with a 3/0 vote.

CHURUBUSCO TIF AND UNSAFE BUILDING: Planning Director Nathan Bilger was present with Scott Wagner from the Health Department. The status of the property at 709 N St Rd 5 in Larwill is still the same as the last meeting this was discussed, when there was a bid for demolishing the property opened. Mr. Fitch has not reached out to the County to state that he has made any required updates to the property. Commissioner Green stated that Scott and the County have done all that they can and made a motion to move forward with the demolition, second by Banks, passing with a 3/0 vote. Attorney Shipman has reviewed the documents for the Churubusco TIF and the documents are good. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve resolution 11-10-2021, with a second by Green, passing with a 3/0 vote. Nathan also presented a 1 lot plat, Sunrise Sunset that has been approved by the plan commission. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve with a second by Banks, passing with a 3/0 vote.

DRAINAGE BOARD RE-APPOINTMENT & HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE: Brandon Forrester was present to seek re-appointment for the drainage board for Steve Sickafoose. Commissioner Green made a motion to re-appoint Mr. Sickafoose for another 3-year term, with a second by Banks, passing with a 3/0 vote. Brandon then gave an update on the highway department and what they are doing currently. Brandon stated that we can no longer get certain grit materials for snow season. He is looking into doing something different with mixing sand and other materials.

NATIONAL OPIOIDS SETTLEMENT PARTICIPATION FORM: Commissioner Schrumptf stated that we have opted in for a national settlement for opioid overdose. Attorney Shipman has reviewed the documents and stated this has his approval. There will be no obligation to the County for this, the County would just receive a small settlement from the State. This is still in the courts and a judgement has not been made yet. Scott Wagner was present to ask that the monies or a percent of the monies be given to the Opioid/Addictions Task Force that the County has put together. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the registration seconded by Banks, passing with a 3/0 vote.

FACILITY REQUEST: There is one facility request from Kelly Deacon to use the gazebo on the Courthouse lawn December 24th from 6 pm to 7 pm for Christmas music. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the request, with a second by Green passing with a 3/0 vote.

MINUTES AND CLAIMS: The claim distributions from November 16, 2021, through December 6, 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 November 15, 2021, regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Banks made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Green and passed with a 3/0 vote.

Attorney Shipman stated that the countywide sewer district had asked for 10 million in grant funds, they were awarded 5 million in grant monies. The district is trying to cut their list but he stated that at a later date the sewer district may come back and ask for ARPA funds to help keep rates low.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Schrumptf adjourned the meeting at 1:56 PM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chair George Schrumptf

Vice Chair Theresa Green

Commissioner Chad Banks

Attest: Tiffany Deakins, Auditor