

Owen County Board of Commissioners
Minutes-October 3, 2022

Meeting was called to order by President Gary Burton.

Pledge of Allegiance was said with opening prayer given by Mr. Burton.

Members Present: Gary Burton, Bob Curry, and Joel Lowe. Also, Attorney Jim Bryan and Auditor Sheila Reeves.

A motion to approve the 09/19/22 minutes was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

A motion to approve the Executive 09/26/22 was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

A motion to approve the Special Meeting 09/27/22 was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Mr. Bryan gave a financial overview noting all major funds have positive operating balances. He did note that the Highway receipts for the month were a little lower than normal and needs to be watched.

A review of the ARPA Funds was also given noting that the Commissioners will be requesting of Council at their October Meeting an additional \$500000 for the Highway-Roads. The lost revenue/recovery will also be utilized to start moving claims/expenses from the general fund to reserve cash balances.

Copies of Mr. Bryans summaries, Auditor Monthly Financial Report, and Treasurers Monthly Statement attached for permanent record.

A motion to approve Regular Claims-\$249,247.25 was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

A motion to approve Out of Cycle Claims-\$29,287.37 was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

A motion to approve Payroll-\$223,560.17 was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

No Old Business was presented.

New Business-

IU Health Plans-Health Results Program Agreement was presented for approval. The Group requirements will ensure Owen County rates for 24 months. A motion to approve and allow Mr. Burton to sign was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0. Copy of the agreement attached for permanent record.

RQAW-Mr. Curry related he had talked with the Engineering Firm, and they are preparing Specifications for advertising. The specifications are expected to be presented at the next meeting.

Howesville Ditch-A letter had been received from Greene County Attorney Marvin Abshire asking if the Owen County Drainage Board will participate in the appointment of a board member and levy process. A motion to deny the request was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0. Mr. Bryan will make the notification.

EMS-Director Cris Lunsford reviewed the issue of the purchase of an ambulance. The Bid Proposal was to include power load cots; it does not with the price that was quoted. A Mutual Release Agreement was presented by Mr. Bryan. A motion to approve and sign the Release Form was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0. Lunsford will revise and present bid specs at the next meeting.

Highway-Greg Melton, Chad Walker, and Rachel Whittinger presented the following items:

Melton began by stating that he feels they are working in a hostile environment. Feels that it was inappropriate for any board to discuss him in an open meeting, and he has rights. Also added that it was not because of this board but other situations. He's not sure what to say. (Referencing the new position at the highway) Burton added that it is a huge problem and double standards--A son was hired at EMS, Daughter in law had applied for two positions, and Verl Keith's niece was an employee at the highway. Melton to Bryan—asked if he could discuss employee outside of an executive session; he replied no to Melton. Burton to Bryan—Nepotism? Bryan reviewed State Statute, OC Ordinance and Policy 105 reading the list considered as a relative. Specifically- the position would not be in a direct line of supervision of a commissioner. Burton added that they have never hired and/or fired employees in any of their appointed departments, nor have the

authority to do so. He believes social media has caused lots of problems for the county and its pathetically sad. He directly asked Melton if he was asked to hire or demanded to—Melton replied no. Lowe commented assumptions were made and flew like wildfire and 70-80% was inaccurate. He apologized to Melton for what he was going through. He said he knows a lot of people are unhappy. Only one council member has spoken to him directly. He agrees that it is not illegal, underhanded or nepotism with the employee hired and said personally he would have not done this with his wife. Burton noted it was her decision, not his. Melton related he had received two applications, did interviews, and picked the best candidate. Burton noted that he has given up his position as the Liaison to the Highway; Curry is now over them. Curry wanted it noted that he had received an email from Melton saying he was resigning. Bob called him and he asked him to cool down and give them thirty days and when he was asked in the council meeting, he said no because Melton was still at the highway. Curry had also called and talked with Council Members explaining why he said what he had. Melton related that he had left the council meeting because he was frustrated/aggravated, and no one had talked with him prior to the meeting, and he was talked about.

Hauser Road Contractor had been hired and concern for the project was related by Melton as primarily no work has been done. Equipment issues and ordering of parts was the reasons given. The contract timeline that was given was due to expire at midnight. Bryan related that the project would have to be re-bid. Melton asked to allow for the highway to do the job and they would only need to rent an excavator. It was agreed to advertise for a special meeting on Friday-7th at 9am and have the contractor present to review the project.

Bridge Plans were presented for review for Rattlesnake Creek#189 and Sand Hill Road #127. They will both be presented for approval at the next meeting.

LPA Consulting Contract for Countywide Bridge Inspections and Inventory Program from 2022 through 2025 was presented and approved with a motion made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

ARPA Highway Funding-Melton had been asked to present road plans in the amount of \$500000 additional ARPA monies. Roads presented were for Orchard Heights, Farmers Road, Hillcrest Drive and Combs Roads. The commissioners will present the request at the next Council meeting. The motion to present the plan was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Melton related that he only had twelve people at work. Three were at interviews with the Gas Company and another individual had bought his own company and would be leaving. Burton stated that the workload doesn't change, (answering phones, scheduling, staff burn-out etc.) and the raises next year aren't competitive to keep staff and revenue is going down too. Reeves added that the need to keep an eye on the revenue for the 2023 budgets.

Melton related that the 2023 Road Plan-LTAP yearly process was coming up again and they needed to be deciding on roads in their respective districts and will be discussed and due by December.

A resolution 2022-014 was presented to extend the four-day workweek through November 12, 2022. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0. It was also agreed to continue in 2023 using the spring forward-fall back timeline. A new Resolution will be presented at the next meeting for the 2023 schedule.

Burton thanked Melton and related that he would be off the rest of the week for health reasons.

Pat Conder Road Closure Petition was tabled.

Elected Officials-

Polly Chesser made a statement that her son no longer works for EMS and no other family members will work for Owen County.

Lowe to Sheriff Hobbs regarding the Generator Service on Rocky Hill and the capabilities of being WIFI so direct emails can be sent to allow monitoring was being worked on. Lowe also noted he had signed his Conflict of Interest with the Clerks Office.

Burton noted that he had spoke with REMC and fiber is currently being ran in the county and is expected to be at the highway by January.

Burton commented that there were other employees in the county working that were family members. Reeves, McBride's, VanDerMoere, and Robertsons.

Amy Casebeer commented about social media comments saying retarded was very offensive to her. Always wanting to complain but when something is done—never a thank you.

Commissioners noted the “New Blue Line” on the floor as the dividing line and no one to come forward unless invited. This is for all County Meetings. Mr. Vaillette commented that they cannot interfere with recording of a meeting. They are only asking respectfully not to come west of it. Sheriff Hobbs is glad they are drawing the line and asks for people to be respectful during the meetings with not talking also. He will escort anyone out if necessary or asked to do so. The line was approved with a motion from Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

Copy Fees were briefly discussed at what charges could be collected for black/color copies. Bryan is to review further and present information at the next meeting.

No other business came before the commissioners.

A motion to adjourn was made by Burton; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.