

Owen County Commissioners
Meeting Minutes-April 18, 2022

Meeting was called to order by President Gary Burton.

Pledge to Allegiance was said, and Prayer was given by Bill Pursell.

Present: Commissioners-Gary Burton, Bob Curry, Dale Dubois. Attorney Jim Bryan and Auditor Sheila Reeves.

Public Sign in sheet attached for permanent record.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Motion carried 3-0.

A financial review was provided by Jim Bryan; relating that all major funds have a positive balance, and the current cash balance of the general fund is \$861,024.41. He further noted that it is expected to maintain a positive balance until the expected settlement date and increases with property taxes. Settlement date has been set for May 19th. He stressed the importance of keeping positive balances to assist with the Jail Funding, as it is critical to assure the best possible interest rates can be obtained.

A financial review of the Jail Project was then also given. He provided a (Hypothetical)report to show various interest rates and a total overall cost that would be needed. Once the County commits to the project it is a twenty-year agreement. All Jail related expenses would have to be committed/budgeted first. The current Correctional Facility Fund #1233 would be used and then Fund #1000 and #1112. The current #1170 Fund is paying for all Jail Budget expenses for 2022. Copies of all information will be attached for permanent record. A review of the historical negative funds for Payroll Clearing-\$524000 and Community Crossings Grant-\$448000. It was discussed to possibly use the ARPA Funds that are to be received in May to pay other allowable expenses from the general fund; thus, to allow these to be paid/square the books so to say with the cash balance that would then be available. He also gave a reminder to all Departments the importance of having positive balances on June 30th as this is the date used by DLGF/State for the 2023 Budgets.

At this time a motion to approve the Payroll Docket in the amount of \$244,790.08 was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Motion carried 3-0.

A motion to approve the Regular Claims Docket in the amount of \$286,591.21 was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Motion carried 3-0.

A motion to approve the Out-of-Cycle Claims Docket in the amount of \$39,510.77 was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Motion carried 3-0.

Copies of the Monthly Financial Report and Treasurers Report were provided for their review.

ARPA Plan Update-Commissioners

A motion to approve the Updated ARPA Plan effective as of April 8th was made by Dale Dubois; seconded by Bob Curry. Motion carried 3-0. Copy of Plan attached for permanent record.

ARPA Funding Review-Council

Council President Polly Chesser (on behalf of Council) presented to the Commissioners a request for a modification to the ARPA Plan and utilize the existing unspent funds for Lost Revenue. It would assist in paying down debt for bills and payroll. Mr. Burton wanted it to be included/be used to give approximately twenty courthouse employees an hourly pay increase, Mr. Curry agreed with him. A motion to approve the modification/update as of was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Motion carried 3-0. Mr. Bryan added that this will not happen immediately due to the mechanics of the process, but it does all need to be resolved by 12/31/22.

New Business

Public Hearing was opened by Mr. Burton at 6:36pm

A Petition for Vacation of Roadway from Ronald & Barbara Hendricks was presented. Mr. Bryan reviewed the required process to include the proper paperwork had been submitted, review by the GIS Coordinator and Highway Superintendent, Public Hearing Notice, Adjacent Property owners notified by certified mail was all done; confirmed by Director-Suzanne Simmerman. Ordinance 2022-014 to Vacate Roadway in Freedom, Indiana was presented and read by Mr. Bryan. A motion to approve the Ordinance was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Motion carried 3-0.

CASA-Beth Eaton presented information regarding the donor agreement and donation of Office Space for the Owen County CASA at the Tivoli location. Required liability insurance is part of the agreement. A motion to allow the agreement (to be signed by Ms. Eaton) made by Dale Dubois; seconded by Bob Curry. Carried 3-0.

Jail project Update-

Dan Zuerner began with a review /timeline history of this project. He was told that there was not an option for a new jail due to the county financial situation and to look at a Fifteen million refurbish option. The current facility can be renovated with design flexibilities and have 10-15 more years use out it with no more beds being added. Increasing Interest rates are still of concern to everyone as time has continued during in the process; as well as the twenty-year commitment if approved.

Sheriff Hobbs began by stating he never wanted this to be a burden to taxpayers! He thanked all three Sheriffs Candidates for being present for this discussion. With the projected costs and County financial situation not sure where funding would come from. Just like polishing a turd was his analogy used. Flip side of a refurbish is that it is a thirty-six-year-old facility and encouraged everyone to come look at it before a decision is made. He also added that this is not the only county building of concern and used the Highway Dept and Courthouse as examples.

EMS Director Cris Lunsford related that while he was on vacation last week, he had learned that an incident had happened in another County and that Owen County had assisted with an ambulance, specifically the Morgan County EMS Directed had passed away.

He next presented a forty-one-page document that provided Ambulance Bid Specifications for their review. Mr. Bryan gave a Bid Timeline of review date, publication notices and bid due dates and Indiana Codes. A motion to approve was made by Gary Burton, seconded by Bob Curry. Motion carried 3-0.

911 Director Kathleen Lamb discussed Benefits and Wages and was to get with Mr. Bryan for further review.

Highway Superintendent Greg Melton related that Bridge Bids had been advertised the first time as required. He next presented an email regarding Kinnikinnick Road and flooding that occurs with substantial rainfalls of the small concrete bridge on that road. They feel something has drastically changed upstream causing the issues of concern. As it is a private road, they are wanting the Commissioners and County Highway to confirm that they are not able to offer any assistance and/or suggestions. A letter of confirmation from the County will possibly help them obtain Grant Funding from the State. It was agreed to have Mr. Melton draft the letter. Mr. Melton and Mr. Bryan related that Bid Packets would be presented at the May 2nd Meeting. It was agreed to table the Braysville Road Speed Ordinance again as Mr. Melton has not done monitoring yet.

Elected Official Comments-None

Public Comment-

Pat Conder asks about the Jail and fixed rates. Mr. Bryan related that no decision has been made on anything yet but that it would be a fixed rate if done. He gave a sample of payment variables toward the principals and

maybe a better way of polishing the turd so to say when looking at options.

Mr. Burton related to him that the Attorney was still in the process of writing an ordinance for the closing of Culross Road, just so he knew he was not forgotten.

Barron Barnett commented on the concern of interest rates from ten to eleven months ago compared to now and that he now thinks they will obviously be higher/worse maybe 11-12%. He feels that there will be a recession by the end of the year and a need to cut now.

A gentleman from the audience suggested that it is wiser to stick with the same kind of Chassis (to Cris Lunsford) Also added that If you want to draw people to Owen County—Make it more attractive.

Zach Weishert began by commenting to Greg Melton that what he was getting ready to say was in no way directed at him or his employees. To the Commissioners he stated that they owe the Voters-Taxpayers an apology for the previous comments made about them being idiots. He asked each of them what their terms were and districts. To Bob Curry-two years left-answered yes. To Dale Dubois-won't you possibly be gone soon from pending charges-answered yes. To Gary Burton-answered term expires 12/31. He sees roads in this community being paved for personal interest. Mr. Weishert further added that there are holes on Flatwoods Road that you can lose a Volkswagen in, and roads being repaired are of personnel interest to him. He also is a government employee and gets shit on too but would never call anyone an idiot in his job. They should never in a Public Meeting say/call idiots and think about it the next time. He might even take action next time and run for office.

Bill Pursell explained the how/what money that the county receives is only for passenger cars—not trucks for gas tax. The State needs to change the rules on gas tax and cars only. Mr. Burton agrees. He is trying to get things addressed with a new director with public affairs.

Attorney Comments

Mr. Bryan presented/read Resolution 2022-007 establishing procedures in the event of a claim filed against County Policy. A motion to approve the Policy was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Carried 3-0. A copy will be sent to all Departments; they will share with their employees.

The next item presented and read was for a Personnel Policy 702(A) on Drug Free Workplace Procedures. A motion to approve the Policy was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Motion Carried 3-0.

Policy 715

A motion to approve the Policy was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois. Motion carried 3-0.

Auditor Comments-None.

Commissioners Comments

A motion to adjourn was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Dale Dubois.