

Commissioners Meeting March 3, 2025

Date & Time: 2025-03-03 08:00

Location: Courthouse Meeting Room

Attendees: Jeremy Pasel, Gabe Nobbe, Brian Wenning

Opening

- **Welcome and Introduction**
 - The meeting was called to order, and attendees were welcomed.
 - Title VI forms are available for attendees to fill out and submit to the auditor's office.
- **Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer**
 - Leigh Ann Dashiell led the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - Prayer led by Commissioner Brian Wenning

Approval of Minutes

- **February 17th Minutes**
 - Motion to approve the minutes was made by Gabe Nobbe and seconded by Brian Wenning, motion carried.
 - The motion carried unanimously, and the minutes were approved.

Financial Matters

- **Claims**
 - Motion to accept claims was made by Brian Wenning and seconded by Gabe Nobbe, and the motion carried.
- **Payroll**
 - February 28, 2025, payroll amount: \$390,385.88.
 - Motion to approve payroll was made by Brian Wenning and seconded by Gabe Nobbe, and the motion carried.

Highway Department Update

- **Maintenance and Repairs**
 - Ongoing road maintenance, including patching, grading gravel roads, and vegetation management.
 - Bridge maintenance and log jam clearing are in progress.
 - Challenges with log jams, particularly at a bridge near Westport, requiring significant effort to clear.
- **Community Engagement**
 - Successful field trip with 31 kids and several adults, featuring activities and gifts like hard hats and vests.
 - Photos were taken for potential sharing on the county Facebook page.
- **Railroad Detour Issue**
 - Progress reported with communication from the asphalt company, indicating potential resolution.
- **New Dump Truck**
 - Awaiting payment to proceed with modifications, including air ride seat installation and painting. Payment was part of the claims approved during this meeting.
 - Opportunity to showcase automatic chains at a truck expo for a free set.
- **Guard Rail on 400 North**

- Ongoing discussions about potential solutions, including reflective signs and other safety measures.
- There is an urgent need to address safety concerns on 400 North due to recent accidents involving impaired drivers. Discussions are ongoing about potential solutions, including the installation of reflective signs and other safety measures. Immediate action is required to prevent further incidents.

Health Department Update

- **Sign Location Concerns**
 - **Current Location:** The sign is budgeted to stay in its current location. There are concerns about its proximity to the road and the need for electrical connections.
 - **Electrical Requirements:** The sign requires a 120-volt connection. Existing conduits may be used to reduce costs.
 - **Pre-construction Positioning:** The sign is currently 40 feet from the end, which is considered safe. Moving it closer to the road could allow for additional parking.
- **Parking and Variance**
 - **Parking Lot Plans:** The parking lot is planned to be squared off, potentially requiring the sign to move closer to the road.
 - **Variance Approval:** A variance was obtained for the digital sign due to residential areas nearby. The variance was for the sign's height and digital nature, not its location.
 - **Proposed Movement:** The sign could be moved closer to the road, potentially allowing for an extra row of parking.
- **Decision and Next Steps**
 - **Motion Approved:** A motion was made by Brian Wenning and seconded by Gabe Nobbe to move the sign as close to the road as possible, pending confirmation of parameters. Motion carried.
 - **Marking the Location:** Sean Durbin will mark the proposed location with flags for confirmation.
- **Disease Investigations**
 - **Investigation Overview:** The Health Department conducted 290 disease investigations, which are crucial to preventing community spread.
 - **Investigation Details:** Investigations vary in length and complexity, from simple questionnaires to extensive inquiries.
 - **Measles and Influenza:** No measles cases reported; influenza-related deaths are investigated.
- **Healthy First Indiana Funds**
 - **Service Provision:** Nearly 6,000 individuals benefited from services funded by Healthy First Indiana.
 - **Economic Impact:** The services provided resulted in an estimated \$1.896 million in healthcare savings.
 - **Future Plans:** Anticipation of increased service provision with the introduction of a van to reach underserved communities.
- **Community Efforts**
 - **Skybird Manor Assistance:** The Health Department, along with other agencies, provided significant support during the incident that left residents displaced.

Westport Town Board Animal Control

- **Current Ordinance Issues**

- **Ordinance Ineffectiveness:** The current ordinance mirrors Greensburg and Decatur County's but is not suitable for Westport's needs.
 - **Lack of Facilities:** Westport lacks facilities and personnel for animal control.
 - **Community Concerns:** Residents report issues with stray animals, such as 20 cats around one property.
- **Proposed Changes**
 - **Ordinance Revision:** Discussion on abolishing the current ordinance and creating a new one tailored to Westport's situation.
- **Background and Current Situation**
 - **Ordinance Conflict:** Westport, as its own municipality, has the power to create and enforce its own ordinances, including those related to animal control. This autonomy means Decatur County cannot impose its ordinances on Westport.
 - **Financial Agreement:** Unlike Greensburg, there is no financial agreement between Decatur County and Westport for animal control services. This lack of agreement is a significant barrier to resolving the issue.
 - **Historical Context:** The issue has persisted for several years, with attempts to address it legally and through discussions with local authorities.
- **Options for Resolution**
 - **Maintain Current Path:** Continuing without changes is not viable for stakeholders.
 - **Ordinance Withdrawal:** Westport's town board could vote to withdraw the current ordinance, prompting discussions with Decatur County and Greensburg for a new financial arrangement.
 - **Consolidation of Ordinances:** Previous efforts to consolidate multiple ordinances into a coherent framework have been challenging and have not fully addressed the issue.
- **Challenges and Considerations**
 - **Resource Limitations:** Westport lacks the resources to manage animal control effectively, such as transportation and personnel.
 - **Legal and Operational Constraints:** The legal status of Westport as an incorporated town limits Decatur County's ability to intervene directly.
 - **Potential Solutions:** Discussions are needed to explore agreements between Westport, Decatur County, and Greensburg to address animal control collaboratively.

Lawn Care Proposal

- **Current Arrangement**
 - **Jake Bauer's Role:** Jake Bauer is currently providing part-time lawn care at the fairgrounds using county equipment. The proposal is to extend his responsibilities to include the highway department and annex.
- **Proposal Details**
 - **Cost Efficiency:** Utilizing existing equipment and maintaining the current pay rate for Jake Bauer is expected to save costs.
 - **Bidding for Courthouse Maintenance:** The proposal includes requesting bids specifically for courthouse lawn maintenance.
- **Considerations and Future Plans**

- **Trial Period:** The arrangement with Jake Bauer may be temporary, subject to reassessment after one year.
- **Additional Support:** Discussions have been held about hiring additional help for Jake Bauer to manage the workload effectively.

Lawn Care and Bidding Process

- **Decision on Lawn Care**
 - **New Bids:** New bids will be sent out for courthouse lawn care and associated shrub maintenance.
 - **Agreement:** The bid sent around was satisfactory to all members.
 - **Motion Approved:** Motion was made by Gabe Nobbe, seconded by Brian Wenning. Motion carried.
- **Bidding Process**
 - **Deadline:** Sealed bids are due to the auditor's office by noon on March 13, 2025.
 - **Details:** All provisions and details are contained in the bid sheet.

Fairgrounds Project Update

- **Building Location and Adjustments**
 - **Initial Understanding:** The new building had to sit directly over the Optimist building due to a water bowl issue.
 - **Update:** The water bowl can be moved, allowing the new building to shift west, avoiding elevation problems.
 - **Cost Implication:** Moving the building saves approximately \$100,000 in elevation adjustments.
- **Optimist Building Considerations**
 - **Discussion:** If the Optimist building can remain, it will be connected with a breezeway.
 - **Motion Approved:** Motion to approve the removal of the Optimist building if construction dictates, with the caveat to leave it if possible, was made by Gabe Nobbe, seconded by Brian Wenning. Motion carried.
- **Construction Timeline**
 - **Remediation:** The discovery of asbestos in the current building has halted demolition at the fairgrounds. Remediation is underway, but it is critical to complete this process promptly to avoid delays in the groundbreaking of the new project.
 - **Groundbreaking:** Imminent, pending remediation completion.

Financial and Fundraising Strategy

- **Scoping Agreement**
 - **Agreement:** Entered into a scoping agreement with GM Development to cover upfront costs and future steel price increases.
 - **Motion Approved:** Motion to accept the scoping agreement was made by Gabe Nobbe, seconded by Brian Wenning. Motion carried.
- **Funding Analysis**
 - **Proposal:** There is a proposal for Baker Tilly to analyze funding up to \$1.5 million to ensure the sustainability of the fairgrounds project by county funds.
 - **Discussion:** Worst-case scenario planning to cover potential shortfalls in in-kind donations.
- **Fundraising Efforts**

- **Sponsorships:** Preliminary discussions with potential sponsors are ongoing.
- **Fundraising Committee:** A committee of five individuals is being formed to spearhead fundraising efforts.
- **External Services:** Decided against using a company for fundraising services due to high costs and limited benefit.
- **Financial Plan Review**
 - Motion made by Brian Wenning, seconded by Gabe Nobbe to have Baker Tilly look at the financial plan. Motion carried.

Fairgrounds Development

- **Extension Office and Maintenance Building**
 - Discussions on whether to demolish the extension office for additional parking or retain it for storage.
 - The extension office could provide overflow storage for the county.
 - Motion made by Gabe Nobbe, seconded by Brian Wenning. Motion carried to keep the extension building as is and modify it for maintenance as needed.
- **Parking and Accessibility**
 - Consideration of adding handicap parking in front of the new community building.
 - Discussions on the design and potential parking layout, with no final design yet.

Comprehensive Plan Update

- **Scoring Committee Formation**
 - Approval sought to create a scoring committee to review and update Decatur County's comprehensive plan.
 - The committee will consist of seven individuals and work with the Southeastern Indiana Planning Commission for grant application.
- **Committee Members**
 - Proposed members include Doug Westerfeld, Tim Ortman, Brian Robbins, Rick Hoeing, Todd Maurer, Rick Nobbe, and Doug Westerfeld.
 - Motion was made to adopt the selection committee by Brian Wenning, seconded by Gabe Nobbe. Motion passed.

County Operations and Announcements

- **Fuel Access for County Departments**
 - Encouragement for county departments to use the highway department for fuel to benefit from contract pricing.
- **Community Corrections Funding**
 - Approval of a letter supporting Decatur County's Community Corrections and Adult Probation funding for the 2026 budget.
 - Motion to accept and send the letter made by Brian Wenning, seconded by Gabe Nobbe. Motion passed.

Biosolids Testing and Compliance

- **Decatur County Biosolids Ordinance**
 - There is a need to review testing documentation in accordance with the biosolids ordinance and inform the city of Greensburg about compliance. This includes emailing the mayor regarding biosolids testing compliance to ensure all parties are informed and compliant with the ordinance.

- Motion to inform the city of Greensburg of compliance was made by Gabe Nobbe, seconded by Brian Wenning. Motion passed.

Additional Announcements

- EDC is conducting a housing study in cooperation with the city and district.
- **Ready Project Update**
 - Clarification on funding amounts for a public-private project, with ongoing communication with the state.

Meeting Adjournment

- Motion to recess was made by Gabe Nobbe, seconded by Brian Wenning. Motion passed. Meeting recessed.

The Next Commissioner meeting will be held on March 17th, beginning at 8:00 A.M. in room 106.

Attest: _____ Date: _____